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THE ETHICS OF SPACE, SECRECY, AND SOLITUDE: DOMESTIC SPACE IN FRENCH
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE AND VISUAL CULTURE

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in French
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011

Urbana, Illinois

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the representation of domestic space in Gilles Corrozet's *Blasons domestiques* (1539), Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* (1549), and Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* (1580-1595), as well as attitudes towards the building of family homes expressed in architectural treatises by Leon Battista Alberti, Sebastiano Serlio, and Philibert de l'Orme. The study demonstrates how the changing use of domestic space in sixteenth-century France corresponds to the nascent individualism of the period and affects textual production, the ethics of personal behavior, and the notions of solitude and secrecy.

Alberti, Serlio, and De l'Orme use their architectural treatises to both propose their ideal ways of building the family home and to present projects that they have completed on commission for noble property owners. Each architect incorporates rooms into his buildings that we would today call private. Corrozet's imaginary house in the *Blasons domestiques* is posited as a reaction to the dual nature of the home as a place of both business and family life, an overlap which the writer and bookseller finds incompatible with leading a moral life. For Corrozet, solitude is an essential means to protect family members from what he considers lascivious material such as the poetic images of the *blasons anatomiques*, but also to keep the female body from becoming the subject of poetry. The separation of the household from the outside therefore prevents the production and consumption of morally dangerous texts. In the *Heptaméron*, solitude implies secrecy, one of the main driving forces behind narrative, since secrets are often made into tales. I argue that the collection exhibits a consistent condemnation of solitude, presenting it as antithetical to the idea that an ethical life can, and must, be examined out in the open. For Montaigne, solitude at home is an essential condition of self-exploration and therefore

of writing about the self. But he also finds it almost impossible to find solitude, even at his family home to which he retires, and seclusion is condemnable if one can still be useful to society. His house cannot be isolated in space; neither can the essayist, and this tension between enforced presence in and desired absence from the world informs the writing of the *Essais*. Faced with two possible modes of representation, the essayist eventually favors writing over building as a means to depict the self in public, abandoning the conceit of building as a meaningful activity.

Together the texts create a sixteenth-century imaginary of the home from both the user's and the builder's perspective. They contribute to our understanding of how domestic space was built, lived, perceived, used, dreamed, and subverted. The ethics of secrecy and of building the home become entangled with textual production in an ongoing debate between the desire to publish and the need to carve out time and space for the self within the home. This tension between the opposite movements of the physical self into the home and the textual self out of the printing press inform our twenty-first-century debates surrounding privacy and virtual space.

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Introduction

Home / *Domicile* / *Chez soi*

Home might be considered a simple concept: the place where a person, alone or with family or friends, sleeps and keeps personal possessions. Implicated in the twentieth-century term “homeless” is the idea of having nowhere to sleep; the French equivalent, *sans domicile fixe*, indicates the fixity, or permanence, that comes with the idea of having a home. Home is a place of comfort and privacy. Yet it is also a psychological notion: we often feel as though we can be ourselves at home. The English word is of Germanic origin and hence has no single equivalent in French. Several terms, such as *résidence*, *demeure*, and *domicile* indicate the place of residence. *Domicile* is used in legal contexts: according to the *code civil*, for example, an individual can only claim one *domicile* for legal purposes, even if he or she possesses more than one house.¹ The *Cour de cassation*² defines a *domicile* as “le lieu où la personne peut se dire chez elle” indicating that in legal contexts the word encompasses the right of individuals to a place they call home, and the localization of the psychological individual in that place. However, in general parlance the term is not often used by people to refer to their homes. *Chez soi* or *à la maison* are much more commonly used, the latter implying *à la maison où j’habite* and suggesting that the link between person and place is so clearly understood that it does not need to be stated. The major concern of this study is to identify the full range of meaning attached to places of residence in sixteenth-century French texts. Beyond examining the home as a place to lodge the body, I seek traces of the house as a place of comfort, retreat, repose, and the identification of the individual with a particular place.

1 See section 102 of the *Code civil*.

2 France’s equivalent of the Supreme or High court.

It is clear that the home in Renaissance France functioned quite differently to how we understand home today. Very few people had any kind of personal space, although a general desire to seclude oneself was growing. My analysis pinpoints the different types of discourse that appear around the subject of the home in sixteenth-century France. Two pivotal discussions emerge. Firstly, there is a constant questioning of the ethical dimension of solitude and secrecy in the context of domestic space. I examine how the control of access to bodies and texts is exercised or denied in the home in a period before the idea of privacy was a clear and accepted notion. Secondly, writing becomes a means to take a stance either in favor of secrecy and solitude in the home or against them. While privacy as an accepted concept is not fully established, characters in texts find ways to create recognizably private space. In addition, many aspects of the home that have previously been thought to be absent from sixteenth-century domestic space—concern for comfort, intimacy, and a projection of the self—are regularly part of the way people imagine and write domestic space.

Interest in space and spatial theory has recently increased in the field of Renaissance literary studies. Studies of cartography, urban planning, landscape, gardens, and countryside have broadened our understanding of spatial tropes in sixteenth-century France beyond the Vitruvian and Albertian correspondences between architectural and human proportions.³ I seek to widen the field further by considering the home sphere—domestic space—and its implications in French Renaissance literature. Depictions of domestic space, like maps, city plans, and countryside descriptions, demonstrate analogies between the human and the spatial which go beyond physical measurements, and venture into the realms of emotion, politics, society, and morality.

3 For example, see: Conley, *Self-made Map*; Hodges, *Urban Poetics*; Liaroutzos, *Le Pays et la mémoire*, and “L’Appréhension du paysage,” Lestringant, “Chorographie,” and Joukovsky, “Qu’est-ce qu’un paysage?”

The literary texts of sixteenth-century France raise numerous issues surrounding the use of domestic space, including how it differs from clearly public space, why the two should differ, and how the individual develops in relation to personal space. The projection of individuality into an enclosed space, an imagined selfhood that is mapped on to the space inhabited, is a focal point of debate throughout the century. I examine how a variety of texts—essays, short stories, and illustrated poems—describe the home, and to what ends their descriptions serve to develop notion of personal space. To further elucidate this process, I also investigate how personal space is constructed as architecture begins to be thought of as a science,⁴ and how the new conception of architecture incorporates the affective and psychological ties between individuals and their home environment. Finally, I consider how the concept of domestic space in the sixteenth century compares to our current ideas, which often date from the nineteenth century.

When Walter Benjamin writes about the reorganization of space in the Paris of the July Monarchy, he addresses the question of domestic as opposed to work space in France under Louis-Philippe (1830-1848):

For the private individual, the place of dwelling is for the first time opposed to the place of work. The former constitutes itself as the interior. Its complement is the office. The private individual, who in the office has to deal with reality, needs the domestic interior to sustain him in his illusions. This necessity is all the more pressing since he has no intention of allowing his commercial considerations to impinge on social ones. In the formation of his private environment, both are kept out. From this arise the phantasmagorias of the interior—which, for the private man, represents the universe. His living room is a box in the theater of the world.⁵

The moment to which Benjamin refers is clearly marked by the possibility of separating the spaces which define human activity in the modern era—broadly speaking, the domains of work

4 Architecture is considered to be a physical rendering of abstract mathematics, and capable of revealing divine truths. According to Wittkower, “The conviction that architecture is a science, and that each part of the building, inside as well as outside, has to be integrated into one and the same system of mathematical ratios, may be called the basic axiom of Renaissance architects.” See Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 101. See also pages 27-34 for a discussion of the religious significance of mathematical ratios.

5 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 8-9.

and non-work. What stands out in this statement, besides the establishment of a strict division of space, is the idea that man “needs the domestic interior to sustain him in his illusions.” Benjamin sees the home as a place where the individual can project a notion of him or herself, with no risk of disillusionment from other, more worldly concerns. The strongest manifestation of an individual’s idea of the self is therefore tied to the home. But is this conception of the home specifically specific to this moment in history? Does any trace of it exist beforehand? Can an individual project an idea of the self into home space before this moment? What of this idea, indeed what of domesticity itself, in earlier times?

The idea that domesticity is a nineteenth-century invention is beginning to be challenged by historians and literary critics alike. Felicity Riddy, a medieval English historian, argues that domesticity did not emerge in the nineteenth century, and that it dates back even further than seventeenth-century Holland, the time and place identified by Simon Schama and others as the true origin of the idea.⁶ Riddy contends, as do the other contributors to the collection *Medieval Domesticity*, that the late medieval period in England had its own set of ideas governing home life, dependent on very different social and economic attitudes and practices from those in nineteenth-century Britain. There exists therefore a domesticity of medieval England, just as there exists one of the modern period. It would appear, then, that the question is not when “domesticity” appeared as a concept, but rather, what kind can be discerned based on a specific time and place.

In *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, Witold Rybczynski aims to locate the concept of domesticity historically and geographically. As a twentieth-century architect, he expresses his amazement that the concept of “comfort” was never addressed in his architectural studies. To satisfy his own curiosity and to fill in a gap that he saw in his education, he goes in search of the

⁶ See Riddy, “‘Burgeis’ domesticity.”

notion of comfort in the home, seeing it as the defining element of domesticity. However, he discovers that comfort is not the only aspect needed to create the notion of the home. He also finds himself obliged to consider what the objects which make a home comfortable reveal about comfort as a concept, and how it is strongly linked to psychological notions of intimacy and privacy.⁷ While most of the book focuses on the home from the eighteenth century onwards, the first chapter deals with earlier periods in an attempt to trace the beginnings of the notion of domesticity that comes into play fully in the age of Enlightenment. Much attention is given to the difficulty of obtaining any time alone in the Middle Ages, and the seventeenth century is rightly hailed as the time when furniture production—and more importantly, production of physically comfortable furniture—increases dramatically. Yet a scant four pages are devoted to the sixteenth century. In these Rybczynski identifies a new phase in the architectural history of Europe with the introduction of Italian-style suites of rooms, but argues that privacy is still a non-existent phenomenon since families would be housed under one roof and would share cabinets and *garde-robes*. In terms of comfort, which is Rybczynski's main marker of the home, he states the following:

Comfort in the physical sense was still awaiting the eighteenth century and the improvement of such technologies as water supply and heating, as well as refinements to the internal subdivision of the home. But the transformation from the public, feudal household to the private, family home was under way.⁸

For Rybczynski, comfort comes to exist through the acquisition of objects and soft furnishings, a distinctly seventeenth-century phenomenon. In referring to representations of Northern (Dutch) homes in the seventeenth century, he defines domesticity in the following way: “To speak of domesticity is to describe a set of felt emotions, not a single attribute. Domesticity has to do with

7 Rybczynski, *Home*. The titles of Rybczynski's chapters, indicating the scope of the project and the semantic field in which he imagines the home are as follows: nostalgia; intimacy and privacy; domesticity; commodity and delight; ease; light and air; efficiency; style and substance; austerity; comfort and well-being.

8 *Ibid.*, 74. Rybczynski's analysis is rooted mainly in observations of upper-class homes.

family, intimacy, and a devotion to the home, as well as with a sense of the house as embodying—not only harboring—these sentiments.”⁹ This “intimacy” and “devotion to the home” is evidenced through the depiction of clutter—personal objects—in the paintings he is describing.

What he identifies is the notion that individuals can put a personal stamp on their living space: they can project something of themselves into the space they inhabit. Home space is therefore linked to the notion of individuality. The sense of self—what Charles Taylor calls “radical reflexivity,”¹⁰ or the turn inward in order to reflect on the capacity for reflection—is generally thought of as gaining prominence in the early modern period, taking two different paths that filter through to modernity: according to Taylor, Descartes’ journey inward to know universal truths and Montaigne’s turn inward to express individual difference. Both are rooted in an Augustinian view of the interior self, and an individual’s capacity for self-reflection. Self-interiority therefore parallels the development of physical personal space, or architectural interiority. At the same time as the self becomes more self-aware, and the difference between interior and exterior existence becomes crucial to Western thought, physical barriers are being placed between individuals and the outside.

For Mario Praz, the idea of a self projected into a room or a home is always a given.¹¹ He argues that all lived-in rooms have their own *Stimmung*—feeling, atmosphere, mood, spirit, sentiment—which is dependent on the presence of the occupant. The room is automatically given *Stimmung* by a person infusing it with his or her life. Praz opens his illustrated history of interior decoration with a long discussion of the types of interior encountered throughout Europe between Roman times and the early twentieth century. *Stimmung* as he identifies it is somewhat difficult to pin down, but occurs in the reflection of the occupant in the room. Praz sees the house

9 Ibid., 75.

10 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, especially Part II.

11 Praz, *Interior Decoration*.

as a representation of the self, and the most apt or moving interiors are those that reflect the character of their owners or decorators.

While dominant architectural traits of the Renaissance render living spaces somewhat harsh to our eyes, or even sterile (straight lines, little ornamentation, symmetry, etc.) there is still evidence for personalization of spaces and some comfort. Coupled with a deemphasis on religious subject-matter, the home is increasingly depicted in painting:

A little later [than 1416] Jan van Eyck, in the well-known Arnolfini portrait, freed interior painting from its religious pretext. The relationship between the interior and its occupants thus became the real relationship of daily life, and the *Stimmung* of bourgeois intimacy was explicitly stated.¹²

It would appear that for Praz, the concept of *Stimmung* in the home always existed but was not always expressed in representative works of art. This conclusion corresponds better with the more nuanced view of the Middle Ages and domesticity proposed by Felicity Riddy and others, as mentioned above. It is important to note that Praz does not limit his perception of *Stimmung* to Germanic cultures, but proposes it as a pan-European phenomenon. If his mid-twentieth-century sensibilities to atmosphere reflect a Heideggerian approach to the concept of self in the world, it is not surprising given Praz's context: traveling around Europe after World War II, he observed the senseless destruction and loss of many great buildings and works of art. That he might seek a sense of unity and meaning in the artwork that predates Heidegger's description of nihilism belies a nostalgia for a different, more stable identification of the self.

The search for unity of self and place seems to haunt the postmodern era, while its beginnings are not always clearly identifiable. Philippe Ariès also detects an "iconographical evolution" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries across Europe, explaining that depiction of the home corresponded to "a hitherto unknown desire for homeliness, for familiar if not yet

¹² Ibid., 83.

precisely ‘family’ life” that was emerging.¹³ Ariès links changing ideas about the home and family life with a new emphasis on the importance of children, especially their increased access to schooling from the fifteenth century onwards, and the decline in the numbers of children sent to work in other people’s homes.¹⁴ He also outlines a change in room usage; as furniture becomes less mobile, there are fewer possibilities for using rooms for multiple purposes. Yet for Ariès, the home “remains a public place” despite architectural innovations, new furniture styles, and an increasing focus on the family’s place in the home.¹⁵

Although some data on home usage is available, there is little discussion of how sixteenth-century home-dwellers thought and felt about the spaces they inhabited, since many writers focus on the newly domestic seventeenth century that contrasts clearly with the feudalism and urban realities of the late Middle Ages. One aim of this project is to focus on sixteenth century attitudes toward the home. Therefore it is imperative to consider literary production as an important means of understanding how home-dwellers of the Renaissance engaged with their dwellings on psychological, philosophical, and moral levels. Although architectural norms were changing, social historians such as Ariès and Rybczynski still consider the sixteenth century to be void of privacy since large houses are filled with so many people. Another aim of this study is to examine how authors and architects portray the crossover between increasingly “private” space and the protection of mental interiority. I examine how the shift from communal living to individual apartments and private homes took place in both the architectural and literary imagination, and ask how proto-privacy was constructed, proposed, lived, or denied. Since it is my proposition that architectural space shapes the ways in which people construct their notion of the self, it is vital to consider architectural production in conjunction with literary texts. If

13 Ariès. *Centuries of Childhood*, 343.

14 Ibid., 365-371.

15 Ibid., 395.

different spaces shape the self in different ways, then the changing ways in which space is constructed will influence not only how people act, but also how they think about themselves.

Privacy is inseparable from the idea of home, as the most private and intimate of acts take place mostly in the home. Since homes house single people, families, or small groups, the space of the home comes to be analogous with the family unit or the individual. Putting walls between one's body and the rest of the world allows for a sense of intimacy, and ultimately, privacy. The house as a building therefore becomes synonymous with the notion of having a private life; private life is constructed through the imposition of spatial barriers. *Le Dictionnaire des sciences humaines* explains under the entry "La vie privée" that the concept of private life is inseparable from the space in which it is enjoyed. The authors first quote from the *Littré* to give a dictionary definition of private life:

'La vie privée doit être murée. Il n'est pas permis de chercher à savoir ce qui se passe dans la maison d'un particulier'. Telle est la définition que le dictionnaire Littré (1863-1872) donne de la vie privée au milieu du XIXe siècle. Trois traits frappent: le secret, l'interdit, les références spatiales. La maison est consubstantielle à la vie privée; le mur clôt le jardin fermé.¹⁶

['Private life must be walled. It is not permitted to try to know what happens in an individual's house.' Such is the definition that the Littré dictionary (1863-1872) gives of private life in the middle of the nineteenth century. There are three striking aspects: secrecy, interdiction, and spatial references. The house is consubstantial with private life; walls seal off the enclosed garden.]

It is forbidden not only to know what happens in a person's house, but also to seek to know what happens. Secrecy is linked to use of space, may indeed be dependent on it. Clearly this definition of private life is historically and geographically specific, as is Walter Benjamin's observation on the division between public and private space during the July monarchy. I would also argue that "la vie privée" covers more than access to the person. The phrase "ce qui se passe dans la maison d'un particulier" reveals private life, or privacy, to be personal time or space, in which one's

¹⁶ Mesure and Savidan, *Dictionnaire des sciences humaines*, 1214.

actions, thoughts, objects, or documents do not have to be revealed to others. During the Renaissance, a period where the “individual” as a modern concept was only just taking shape, this concept of clearly “private” space did not exist, even within the home.¹⁷ Yet characters in sixteenth-century texts do exhibit a desire to act out of sight, especially when their behavior is unconventional or might be judged unacceptable.

The idea of privacy—time and space to oneself, in which details of one’s actions do not have to be revealed to others—is almost taken for granted today as an inherent right of the individual. Privacy is a state, but it is also a contract between people, sometimes articulated, sometimes implicit. It is often enabled by devices such as locks and passwords, but the basic premise is an agreement between people that the limits of access to space, the body, or information will be respected. To adapt an example from Patricia Meyer Spacks, an expert on eighteenth-century privacy: if in a hotel the employees do not respect a sign on a guest’s door saying “Privacy please,” then there can be no privacy.¹⁸

In what has come to be known as the West (America, Europe, Australia) the concept of privacy has become so entrenched as to be encoded in law. In France in particular, it is a long-established premise. It includes protection of access to the home, correspondence, the family, and personal data. Today it is guaranteed by the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, to which France is a signatory, and the European Court of Human Rights. France itself took

17 Dominique Barthélémy and Philippe Contamine conclude that while individual homes became more and more common during the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, “even during the Renaissance communal housing was still considered the best, whether that of religious communities, schoolchildren, invalids, soldiers, or individuals whose power, prestige, and wealth were reflected first of all in the numbers of people who moved permanently in their orbit.” Even the bedroom doubles as a place of business as well as sleeping quarters for nobles. See “The Use of Private Space” in *A History of Private Life*, ed. Duby and Ariès, vol. 2, 505. Joan DeJean has shown that our modern understanding of the word “privacy” came into being when Madame de Montespan and the children she bore Louis XIV requested rooms in Versailles that would never be on show to the regular flow of court visitors. See *The Age of Comfort*, 3-7 and 22-27.

18 Spacks, *Privacy*, i-ii.

earlier measures such as protecting the contents of letters in the late eighteenth century and declaring the publication of private facts to be a crime in 1858.¹⁹

But privacy was not always a given. As we confront issues of privacy arising from twenty-first-century phenomena such as social networks, I find this a compelling moment to reexamine questions of secrecy, solitude, and the birth of privacy. Characters in sixteenth-century texts, although they do not enjoy the same right to privacy as in later centuries, do exhibit a desire to act out of sight, without others knowing what they are doing or thinking.

Our modern notion of private spaces corresponds better to the French sixteenth-century concept of the word *secret*. I designate spaces such as *garde-robes*, *cabinets*, and galleries as “secret” spaces rather than “private,” opposing “secret” to “public” as a division more fitting for sixteenth-century France and its understanding of space—especially domestic space. There is a certain amount of semantic overlap between *privé* and *secret* as defined by Edmond Huguet in

19 For these and other details of the long history of privacy legislation in Europe, America, and Australia, see the Caslon Analytics website, written and maintained by Bruce Arnold, professor of law at the University of Canberra, Australia. The first instances of legislating personal space appear in the fourteenth century in England, and the idea of the house being an individual’s castle is again an English one, dating from the seventeenth century. In the late eighteenth century, France declares that the contents of letters are inviolable, while in 1858 the publication of private facts is prohibited. Looking more recently, the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, to which France is a signatory, includes provision for an individual’s protection: “No one should be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks on his honor or reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interferences or attacks.” The language is vague enough that it covers interference both by governments and by other private individuals. Two years later, two provisions of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights & Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) declared that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence, and there shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except as in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health of morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. The first provision seems to cover privacy in general, while the second specifies the limitations set on governments with respect to their own citizens. In 1976 the European Commission of Human Rights, established under that Convention, commented, “For numerous Anglo-Saxon and French authors, the right to respect ‘private life’ is the right to privacy, the right to live, as far as one wishes, protected from publicity ... In the opinion of the Commission, however, the right to respect for private life does not end there. It comprises also, to a certain degree, the right to establish and develop relationships with other human beings, especially in the emotional field for the development and fulfillment of one’s own personality.” When the European Community examined privacy provisions in order to write Europe-wide standards on privacy, it found that most national legal provisions were inadequate, but that France’s were wide-reaching. In more recent times, the European Court of Human Rights has upheld broad provisions for the protection of personal data and communications, including in the workplace, across the European Union.

his *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle*. As an adjective, the definitions given for *privé* are *familier*, *intime*, *affable*, and *simple*. These all describe qualities relating to people. By contrast, the first five synonyms given for *secret* are *séparé*, *écarté*, *éloigné*, *intime*, and *privé*. According to the examples given, these uses are all related to space or places. A person who is *secret* is *discret* or *dissimulé*. The compound idioms of *privé* all relate to being on one's own or to individuality: *en privé* or *en son privé* means *en particulier*, *dans l'intimité*, or *chez soi*, while *à privé* means *en particulier*. The compound idioms using *secret* have a mix of meanings relating to solitude and spatial distancing: *à secret* and *au secret* mean *à l'écart*, *par un chemin détourné*, or *en particulier*; *en secret* means *séparément* or *à l'écart*.²⁰

Both *privé* and *secret* can mean familiar or intimate, and relating to the individual. People can be on their own *en privé* but that does not necessarily mean that the place where an individual is located is private. However, Huguet gives numerous examples of *secret* being used to describe places. *Secret* can be used to refer to space, while *privé* generally cannot. Secret spaces include dressing rooms and galleries, since they can be closed off, and those using them can be fairly certain that they will not be disturbed.

For the purposes of this study, I link the two concurrent trends that contribute to a rise in the concept of personal space: a move away from communal living, encouraged by new types of architectural space that allow for more discretion, and a growing self-awareness and access to isolated mental interiority that heralds the arrival of the modern individual.

The corpus comprises Gilles Corrozet's *Blasons domestiques* (1539), a series of illustrated poems dedicated to the home; short stories from Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* (1558); Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* (1580-1595); and architectural treatises by Leon Battista Alberti, the fifteenth-century father of perspective; Sebastiano Serlio, the Italian architect who

²⁰ Huguet, *Dictionnaire*. See in particular the entries for *privé*, vol. 6, 193-194, and *secret*, vol. 6, 736-737.

lived for a time in Lyon and who built for Francis I; and Philibert de l'Orme, France's most important home-grown architect in the sixteenth-century. This corpus gives a cross-section of writers by social order in France in the sixteenth century and also bridges a variety of genres. Each text was chosen for the way in which it adopts a particular ideological positioning when approaching questions of secrecy, solitude, comfort, and intimacy, producing a wide-ranging and complex imaginary of the home.

In chapter one, I investigate three architectural treatises prevalent in France during the sixteenth century to examine what kind of attitudes towards homeliness—comfort, secrecy, and intimacy—can be found amongst the men who influence the very shape of domestic space through their architectural creations. No matter what the ideals of each architect when it comes to geometrical harmony and proportions, their treatises demonstrate the many ways in which a modern sense of the home—as a comfortable place for the body to rest, or as a space with a growing sense of individuality and intimacy—is already present in the home-building practices of sixteenth-century France. The identification of self and space appear in the ways the architects craft their buildings to reflect the personality of their commissioners.

A second identification of the individual and domestic space occurs in two tales from Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* when characters project a hidden part of their persona—their true heart's desires—into secluded rooms in the home. In chapter two I analyze the implications of characters attempting to act in secret. Secrecy is in fact one of the main driving forces behind the tales, with the needs of narrative taking precedence over the withholding of information. Marguerite's text exhibits a general condemnation of solitude and secrecy, presenting them as antithetical to the idea that an ethical life is one that can, and indeed must, be examined out in the open. I argue that the text exhibits a consistent condemnation of solitude,

presenting it as antithetical to the idea that an ethical life is one that can, and must, be examined out in the open.

In chapter three, I analyze a volume of illustrated *blasons* dedicated entirely to the home and its contents: Gilles Corrozet's *Blason domestiques*. I explore the way in which Corrozet, a bookseller, establishes the home as a place where a family can live morally, without influence from the outside world. Corrozet would impose isolation for the family—especially female members—inside the house. Solitude is an essential means to separate family members from poetic images of women, but also to discourage the use of the female body as poetic inspiration. Corrozet's imaginary home is posited as a reaction to the dual nature of the home as a place of both business and family life, an overlap which he finds incompatible with leading a moral life. The identification between person and place in the *Blasons domestiques* occurs on a physical level, since the home is set up as the lodging place of the human body.

Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* combine both a bodily and a psychological parallel between the self and the home. In chapter four, I probe the relationship that the author creates with his family estate through his *Essais*. From his examination of solitude to the re-acceptance of his need for society, the house serves as personal refuge, as neutral territory during the wars of religion, and as possession. For Montaigne, solitude at home is an essential condition of self-exploration and therefore of writing about the self. But it is also almost impossible to find solitude, and it is condemnable if one can still be useful to society. His house cannot be subtracted from the world; neither can Montaigne, and this tension between presence and absence informs the writing of the *Essais*.

While ideas about individualism are taking shape, the variety of attitudes towards solitude demonstrate that a uniform idea about personal space is far from being realized. Domestic space

is perceived and constructed in different ways: as a device to control behavior, as a place of personal and familial identity, and as a safe harbor for body and mind. Privacy, although a nascent concept, is sometimes desired, sometimes dismissed as inappropriate. Each text shows the extent to which walls and bodies can be porous—access to closed-off space or the body is always a possibility. Access to the self’s interior space, though, is a different matter. Textual production is the catalyst where mediation of access to that interior space occurs.

Chapter One

Architecture:

The New Scientists of Space Define the Home

In the sixteenth century, a new discourse about the home emerges from architectural treatises in France. The trend to adopt classical architectural principles follows Italy's lead in the fifteenth century, where the rediscovery of *De architectura*—the ten-volume treatise by the Roman architect Marcus Vitruvius Pollo, known as Vitruvius, dating from the first century BCE, launches a spate of translations, transpositions, and imitations. While Vitruvius is recognized as the grandfather of the Renaissance architectural movement, Sebastiano Serlio's and Leon Battista Alberti's rewritings and adaptations of Vitruvius' treatise that exert the most influence on other French architects.

Here the focus will be on three architects whose work is the most influential or widespread in France: Leon Battista Alberti, who brought Vitruvius and the Classical theories to a wide European audience with *Libri de re aedificatoria decem*; Sebastiano Serlio, architect to Francis I who toiled his whole life to publish his seven *Libri d'architettura*; and Philibert de l'Orme, the most important and innovative Renaissance architect born in France, whose *Nouvelles inventions pour bien bastir* mark sixteenth-century architecture with a distinctly French flourish. Their treatises are considered here not as secondary sources which influence the depiction of domestic spaces in the *Heptaméron*, the *Blasons domestiques*, and the *Essais*, but rather as primary texts which contribute to the same debates on secrecy, solitude, intimacy, comfort, and privacy, that are found in the works of Marguerite de Navarre, Gilles Corrozet, and Michel de Montaigne. The architects' descriptions of homes are a mix of the factual and the

imaginary. There are instances where an architect explains how he has approached a building problem, or where he describes an example of a feature that he has witnessed. Yet for the most part, the designs and concepts presented are for imagined and imaginary buildings. These architects create a fictional architectural description of how they would construct homes, given the right conditions and clients. As with the literary texts, they propose an architectural vision underpinned by guiding principles of how space should function and how its inhabitants should be allowed to use it. In a sense their proposals constitute something of a quasi-official architectural discourse relating to the home. Renaissance architects newly define their craft as a science, with their authority emanating from ancient Rome. They are employed by princes as part of the court retinue, they influence how buildings are conceived and constructed, and they are commissioned to fashion the living-space of France.

Although the new architects may have pulled away from the practicalities of the *chantier* or building-site to consider architecture in its abstraction in order to develop their theories of building based on Classical principles, Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos explains that the theory can only result from practice. As he proposes, “l’architecture savante n’est que la part raisonnée de l’architecture vernaculaire; l’architecture moderne est l’héritière directe de l’architecture médiévale; l’architecture française ne se comprend que dans le concert européen.”¹ [Learned architecture is just the reasoned part of vernacular architecture; modern architecture is the direct descendant of medieval architecture; French architecture can only be understood within the European context.]

This is not to suggest, however, that all European architecture after the Middle Ages is uniform. Montclos argues that whereas some consider the Renaissance the moment when

1 Pérouse de Montclos, *Architecture à la française*, 12. All translations mine.

national sensibilities in architecture were replaced by a pan-European neo-classicism born out of the Italian tradition, he sees a specificity that is particularly French:

Mais le cas de la France est peut-être plus exceptionnel qu'il n'y paraît d'abord. La France est en effet la seule nation européenne des Temps modernes qui ait réuni au plus haut degré les trois traits suivants: une grande réceptivité à une influence étrangère, celle de l'Italie, nation qui est elle-même particulièrement introvertie; une industrie artistique très expansive qui n'a pas d'équivalent en Espagne ou en Allemagne; enfin une tension interne produite par la centralisation autour de la capitale et du monarque, qui conduit la manière nationale, comme la nation elle-même, à se définir par rapport aux particularismes régionaux, phénomène que l'on ne retrouve ni en Grande-Bretagne, ni en Hollande.²

[But the case of France is perhaps more exceptional than it at first appears. France is effectively the only European nation in modern times to unite to such a high degree the three following traits: a great receptivity to foreign influence—that of Italy, a nation which is itself particularly introverted; a highly expansive artistic domain which has no equivalent in Spain or Germany; and finally an internal tension produced by the centralization around the capital and the monarch, who brings national manner, and the nation itself, to define itself in relation to regional particularities, a phenomenon which is not found in either Britain or Holland.]

Italian architecture is adapted, translated, and converted to French taste and sensibility. The publication of treatises in French did not commence until the mid-sixteenth century, but Italian influences arrived much earlier. Following the first campaigns in Italy launched by Charles VIII, French nobles came back with a new taste for the Italian way of life. Among others, Leonardo da Vinci was brought to France to work on designs for Chambord; his untimely death just at the moment when the project was getting underway meant that the plans had to be remade, as only he knew how to execute them.³

But what is new about this architecture, and why is it important for home design? As a more unified idea of France emerges, building for the nobility moves away from constructing fortresses for defense towards more airy and showy structures with a great number of windows. The arrangement of apartments in suites of rooms, already in evidence in the Louvre in the

2 Ibid., 12.

3 See Pérouse de Montclos and Polidori, *Châteaux du Val de Loire*, 122-32.

fourteenth century under Charles V, spreads across the social orders and is undertaken even by merchants.⁴ Even in the realm of furniture, there is what Mario Praz describes as “the first systematic attempt to conceive furniture in perfect accord with contemporary art (use of grotesques, herms, etc. according to the School of Fontainebleau)”⁵ on the part of architects such as Jacques Androuet Ducerceau, copying the Italian Mannerist style.

As Europe transitions from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, a shift in the definition of creative builders also takes place. Master builders and craftsmen are joined by professional architects, as the field is newly described as a science and thought of in a similar way to mathematics.⁶ From the sixteenth-century architect’s perspective, the home becomes subject to a treatment similar to that of churches and civic buildings: namely, a mathematical, “scientific,” and symbolic systematization corresponding to the use of classical orders of columns and the application of the harmonic ratios. Rudolph Wittkower, in *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, discusses the use of geometrical harmony in sixteenth-century construction.⁷ It is driven by the idea that certain mathematical ratios that recur throughout the natural world—in the measurements of plants, animals, humans, etc.—are examples of mathematical harmony throughout the universe. It was thought that this harmony was divine; therefore, the body of man was a scaled-down version of the universe and manifested godly ratios.⁸ These same ratios were

4 See Erlande-Brandenburg and Mérel-Brandenburg, *Histoire de l’architecture française*, 389-90.

5 Praz, *Interior Decoration*, 108-9.

6 See Recht, “‘Théorie’ et ‘traités pratiques,’” 23-4.

7 See Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 9-18.

8 As discussed by Wittkower, the harmonic ratios derive from the perfect circle, which is the form preferred by Nature. Five other geometrical shapes are derived from the circle: square, hexagon, octagon, decagon, dodecagon—the length of their sides calculated from the circle’s radius. From the square can be calculated three other forms: the square plus one half, the square plus one third, and the square doubled. These nine shapes are the basic forms for building. “According to Alberti’s well-known mathematical definition, based on Vitruvius, beauty consists in a rational integration of the proportions of all parts of a building in such a way that every part has its absolutely fixed size and shape and nothing could be added or taken away without destroying the harmony of the whole. This conformity of ratios and correspondence of all the parts, this organic geometry should be observed in every building but above all in churches.” Wittkower explains that the mathematical relationships between notes on a musical scale correspond to the mathematical relationships between the different shapes derived from the circle and square. Wittkower reveals that “for Alberti [...] music and geometry are fundamentally one and the same; that music is geometry translated into sound, and that in music the very same

then used in construction, where buildings were considered as a three-dimensional representations of divine harmony. Architecture was the purest way to represent mathematics in the physical world. Buildings were visible materializations of intelligible mathematical symbols. For these reasons, the use of divine ratios was particularly important in the construction of churches. The proportions are not necessarily perceptible to the human eye without using some kind of measuring device, but the emotional reaction to a harmonically perfect Renaissance church would bring the eye and the mind closer to God. Such visual harmony would resonate with an image that all people carry of divine harmony.⁹

One might be tempted to ask what relevance divine harmony might have in home-building. According to Wittkower, the most highly charged examples of the new philosophy of architectural science are temples, since their purpose is to elevate the mind to discover divine truth through universal harmony. However, he does not discount the use of the same principles in secular buildings. Some architects did in fact follow these principles of symmetry and harmony as strictly as possible when constructing homes. The most notable example of this practice is Palladio's work:

Once he had found the basic geometric pattern for the problem "villa," he adapted it as clearly and as simply as possible to the special requirements of each commission. He reconciled the task at hand with the "certain truth" of mathematics which is final and unchangeable. This geometrical keynote is, subconsciously rather than consciously, perceptible to everyone who visits Palladio's villas and it is this that gives his buildings their convincing quality. Yet this grouping and re-grouping of the same pattern was not as simple an operation as it may appear. Palladio took the greatest care in employing harmonic ratios not only inside each single room, but also in the relation of the rooms to each other, and it is this demand for the right ratio which is at the centre of Palladio's conception of architecture.¹⁰

harmonies are audible which inform the geometry of the building." See Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 3-9.
9 Ibid., 94-124.

10 Ibid., 66. Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) was a Venetian architect influenced highly by Vitruvius, and is often considered to be one of the most influential architects of his time.

Palladio, however, proves to be an exceptional case, although his principles were admired widely:

His peculiar reasoning led him, in fact, to ennoble aristocratic domestic architecture by using the principal motif of ancient sacred architecture. With this unclassical transposition, the motif acquired a new vitality which he fully exploited. He was the first consistently to graft the temple front on to the wall of the house, and through him the type was most widely disseminated.¹¹

Palladio's villas, inside and out, conform to the mathematical formulas of Plato and Pythagoras which played an essential role in Renaissance philosophy. But while a regard for harmony and symmetry become necessities in the planning of buildings, the practical application of theoretical rules is more problematic. As Wittkower explains, "Renaissance architects always regarded symmetry as a theoretical necessity in design [...]. But in practice this theory was hardly ever applied."¹² Palladio had the luxury of building several commissions from scratch. But many architects found themselves in the position of having to plan buildings on existing sites, incorporating medieval structures, and following foundations laid possibly centuries earlier. One glance through *Châteaux du Val de Loire* confirms the frequency with which medieval castles are incorporated into their Renaissance (and later) incarnations.¹³

While the treatises produced in France in the sixteenth century mostly discuss how to apply the numerical ratios and classical orders of columns to the art of building, there is also a substantial engagement with other aspects of the home that were presented in the introduction. Issues of comfort and secrecy are addressed amongst the ideal measurements and room dimensions, as the architects reconcile their theoretical knowledge with the practical realities of building for habitation. Palladio manages to make the dimensions of the house correspond to physical human dimensions. Other architects make it correspond to human characteristics of a

11 Ibid., 67.

12 Ibid., 63.

13 See Pérouse de Montclos and Polidori, *Châteaux du Val de Loire*.

more abstract variety: personality, desire, magnificence, tyranny. Their aim is to make the building fit the client.

Palace, castle, and home space demonstrate the transition between predominantly communal homes and individual dwellings. Rooms in sixteenth-century French homes where an individual could escape from the prying eyes of society were few. As Jean Guillaume explains, domestic life was centered around the two poles of the visible and the hidden, and thus domestic space in palaces and castles was centered around two staircases—one public, grand, giving a general means of access to the house; the other, small and obscure, often leading to bedrooms, landings or closets. Guillaume specifically marks the small staircase as one used to avoid passing through public spaces.¹⁴ Movement through the public part of the lodging is visible to everyone else. And yet the amount of space that is cut off from public access in some ways is increasing. According to Jean Guillaume, two different concepts of the gallery existed: the *galerie de circulation* [gallery of circulation] and the *galerie-pièce* [gallery room].¹⁵ André Chastel, cited by Guillaume, describes the gallery humorously as “un lieu de passage où l’on s’arrête” [a place of passage where one stops moving].¹⁶ The *galerie-pièce*, following Henry VIII’s influence, reached its apogee in France with Francis I’s elaborate renovations at Fontainebleau which were fully completed in 1539. Francis shut off his gallery to make it a private space (and had to rearrange staircases) although it may not have been totally private or even just for the family.¹⁷

The two aspects of domestic space are reflected in the arrangement of apartment rooms. The long suite of rooms adopted from Italian houses and palaces still dominated noble living quarters, although the size of an apartment was not consistent. In addition, the bedroom was not a private room as it is today, but rather a ceremonial room where state visits and important

14 Guillaume, “Logis,” 7.

15 Guillaume, “Galerie,” 32-33.

16 Ibid., 33.

17 Ibid., 32-34.

business occurred, and where the dressing of a prince or princess was a highly controlled, daily event with sanctioned visitors. A less grand trend has been outlined by Guillaume for royal apartments during the early sixteenth century:

[...] le logis royal qui occupait toute une aile du Louvre au XIVE siècle se réduit à une salle, une chambre et quelques petites pièces annexes sous Charles VIII, Louis XII et François Ier: bien loin de marquer leur rang par une longue suite de pièces, les rois de France se vantent d'être visibles et accessibles à tous.¹⁸

[...the royal lodging which occupied a whole wing of the Louvre in the fourteenth century is reduced to an antechamber, a bedroom, and a few small annexed rooms under Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I. Far from denoting their rank with a long suite of rooms, the kings of France prided themselves on being visible and available to everyone.]

There seems to be a concurrent move inwards and outwards. While secret business retired to the “*petites pièces annexes*” such as *garde-robés* and *cabinets*, the other rooms of the suite become more accessible to more people. Françoise Boudon and Monique Chatenet explain that, within Francis I's household, not every apartment would have a *salle*; there would only be one when the occupants maintained a table for their staff, which was not always the case.¹⁹ Individual apartments were also reserved only for certain members of the household; Marguerite de Navarre herself makes reference to a “*chambre des demoiselles*,” indicating a common sleeping area that was also a place of social gathering among lower-ranked members of a royal household.²⁰

Boudon and Chatenet indicate that apartments on the ground floor of a castle would generally have a *chambre* and a *garde-robe*.²¹ They describe Francis I gradually changing the function of the two rooms for his own usage. The *garde-robe* contained everything necessary for the king to get dressed; it was also where the valets de chambre slept, and where he would hold his morning meetings with the high nobles of his court. The *cabinet* was for other business, rest and prayer. Boudon and Chatenet tell us that during Francis' reign, the morning meetings

18 Guillaume, “Logis,” 8-9. Translations mine.

19 Boudon and Chatenet, “Logis,” 67.

20 See *Heptaméron*, tale 21.

21 Boudon and Chatenet, “Logis,” 67.

gradually moved to the *cabinet*.²² Thus the function of the two spaces overlap somewhat, with the *cabinet* growing in importance as a meeting space. Francis was also building up his collections of paintings and other precious objects in his *cabinets* throughout his reign, and therefore it would seem logical to use those spaces to impress important visitors.

Cabinets and *garde-rob*es have different functions depending on the gender of their owners. Men use them for business, rest, prayer, and locking away precious objects, while women's are intended for prayer and reading.²³ It is difficult to assess how much time would be spent in each space. What can be traced is the spreading practice of incorporating rooms with restricted access into many homes. Uwe Albrecht has analyzed how over time nobles and the upper middle-class imitated royal households for domestic spatial arrangement.²⁴ The emulation of noble houses by middle-class owners is first proposed by Leon Battista Alberti.

I. Leon Battista Alberti: Builder of Secret Space

Leon Battista Alberti's treatise, *Libri de re aedificatoria decem*, was written in Latin around 1450 and first printed in Florence in 1485.²⁵ The first full French-language edition was translated by Jean Martin and published by Kerver in Paris in 1553. His work was known in France far prior to that date through a Latin edition published in Paris in 1512 by Geoffroy Tory, which was in fact only the second printing of the work, after the original Florentine edition.²⁶

Although Alberti's treatise is structured similarly to that of his Roman predecessor, his aim is quite different. Joseph Rykwert, in his introduction to the 1988 English translation of *De Re Aedificatoria*, explains the architect's stance as follows: "The essential difference between

22 Ibid., 68.

23 Ibid., 65-70.

24 Albrecht, "Petit château," 193.

25 Allsopp, *History*, 47.

26 Rykwert, "Introduction," xix.

Alberti and Vitruvius is therefore that the ancient writer tells you how the buildings that you may admire as you read him *were* built, while Alberti is prescribing how the buildings of the future *are to be* built.”²⁷ Alberti establishes the architect as the planner of buildings, a position that gives him influence over Europe’s architectural future. The new profession also gains a new gravitas through his writing: “whereas Vitruvius . . . writes to confirm his position as the custodian of a tradition, and to claim imperial patronage in its name, Alberti writes to claim a high place in the social fabric for the re-formed discipline of the architect, which has to be established anew.”²⁸

His work is divided into ten books in the manner of Vitruvius’ treatise. It deals mostly with the orders and their application in building churches, but his fifth book specifically treats the living spaces of individuals and families.²⁹ Alberti explains that he has focused on designing buildings that correspond to the needs and station of their users: “la diversité des manufactures se doit accommoder aux usages des hommes tant que pour les champs que pour la ville.”³⁰ [the variety of buildings must be accommodated to the uses of both country-dwellers and city-dwellers.]³¹ Usage will be the guiding principle, and Alberti thus sets his stake as a practical builder. Moreover, the variety of possible buildings must be tailored to home dwellers’ needs; this will be an architecture in the service of man, rather than an adoption of abstract principles dictating how residents are to use their living spaces. Yet utilitarian function is not the sole characteristic which should determine a building’s features. Indeed, the classifications of buildings go beyond the location or status of a resident. Especially in the case of noble homes,

27 Ibid., x.

28 Ibid., x.

29 Alberti, *Architecture et art*. It is Jean Martin’s 1553 French version that I will study here.

30 Ibid., 75r.

31 No English translation exists of the French translation, and while an English translation of the Latin text has been produced, the French and Latin versions vary in places. I therefore choose to use my own translations to better reflect the French text quoted.

the character of the owner in question must also be taken into consideration: “Car la raison ne veult pas qu’on face les bastimens particuliers ny la disposition des villes d’une mesme façon tant pour les mauvais princes, que lon appelle communement Tyrans, que pour ceulx qui auront receue la souveraine puissance.”³² [Because reason will not allow individual buildings nor town plans to be made for bad princes, commonly known as tyrants, in the same way as they are made for those who have been granted sovereign power.]

Both towns and individual houses will reflect their owners and rulers. In the introduction I discussed how the sense of home depends on a house exhibiting something of the personality of its inhabitants. Today, this is usually achieved through decoration and furnishings. Already Alberti seems to adapt his building theory to this idea: “est necessaire qu’elle [la demeure] sente son prince.”³³ [It is essential that the home feels like its prince.] A prince’s home must project the attitude, magnificence, and liberality of its owner. A building’s appearance will demonstrate the moral status of a city’s leader. But this correspondence is not limited to the exterior of the building. When the inner chambers where the family resides are designed, the rooms must also correspond to an idea that the owner wishes to project of himself: “Et si fault que les retraictes sentent le naturel du seigneur qui les possede.”³⁴ [And it must be that the retreats feel like the nature of the seigneur who owns them.] This is the case whether he is a prince or not, as Alberti makes clear. The house thus becomes an outward representation of its owner’s character, which the architect is obliged to depict faithfully. Alberti also implies that an intangible quality such as personality can be made manifest in stone and ornament.

The house must also act as the barrier between public and secret space. Part of Alberti’s task is to interpret what he believed to be the function of rooms in ancient times. Thus he

32 Ibid., 75v-76r.

33 Ibid., 79v.

34 Ibid., 77v.

believes that corridors, galleries, vestibules, and the main *salle* were not reserved for servants, but were open to all citizens, making them an extension of the public space of a city. Proposing that houses will be built on similar lines in his own day, he follows this set-up and explains how to make the space function practically and for the greater glory of its owner. Visitors need to be impressed; therefore the doorway, vestibule, and view from the vestibule must be beautiful. He then explains how more intimate spaces should be arranged:

Les salles haultes au dedans, & chambres secrettes, tant pour banqueter, que pour se retirer, seront disposées en lieux convenables pour bien a l'aise garder ce que lon y aura mis dedans: de sorte qu'elles aient l'air, le soleil, & les ventz a gré, afin qu'elles se puissent bien accommoder aux affaires que lon aura pretendu: & seront distingueés en sorte que la communication & hantement des hostes ou survenans avec les ordinaires ou domestiques, ne vienne a diminuer aux uns leur dignité, aisance, ou plaisir: & augmenter aux autres leur insolence & incivilité.³⁵

[The rooms high up inside, and the secret bedrooms, for banqueting or for retiring, will be arranged in places where it is convenient to keep easily what you put inside, such that there is air, light, and breezes when needed, so that they will be suitable for the affairs for which you use them. And they will be separated in such a way that the communication and visitation of guests or visitors with servants will neither diminish the former's dignity, comfort and pleasure, nor increase the latter's insolence or incivility.]

The arrangement of the interior rooms of the house is essential in order to maintain the dignity and comfort of those inside while letting servants do their jobs discreetly, without giving offense. Some rooms are identified directly as “secrettes”—the notion that an owner will wish to retire is mentioned in passing, almost incidentally. The courtyard and *salle* should be as accessible as the public plaza in any city, and should make it easy to reach the other parts of the building. These parts of the house are therefore an extension of public space. Yet it is a version of public space that should be regulated, and access to it observed at all times. Alberti even proposes that the house should only have one entry so that nobody and nothing can enter or leave without the

35 Ibid., 77r.

knowledge of the porter. Finally, the architect expresses a concern for secrecy, or at least discretion:

Au demourant il fault bien prendre garde a ce que les ouvertures des portes & fenestres ne soyent aysees aux larrons, n'y sujettes a la veue des voysins, qui pourroient troubler, veoir, savoir & entendre tout ce que lon feroit & diroit chez vous, dont quelque fois cela vous desplairoit.³⁶

[Besides, you must pay attention that doorways and windows are not easy for thieves to get through, nor subject to your neighbors' gaze, who could disturb, see, know, and hear everything that is said and done in your home, which would sometimes displease you.]

The safety and integrity of a household and its business are paramount. Not only must the practical problem of thieves be addressed, but also the idea that not everything that occurs within your household should be observable by your neighbors. While this semi-public space is open to visitors, it must still be monitored. Large houses lodge numerous people in the retinue of the head of the household, as Alberti explains: "Une maison n'est autre chose qu'une petite ville."³⁷ [A house is nothing other than a small town.] The sheer size of such an estate, or a suite of buildings, presents challenges to its owner regarding access, discretion, and secrecy, which are difficult to control in a town setting.

Secrecy is to be regulated at the behest of the house owner, and visitors' comings and goings should be observable. It is quite a different matter for the head of the household, however, who might need to come and go without anyone else knowing. While the ideal form of the symmetrical house would allow for only one doorway, a house owner may, for personal reasons, need more than one. Escaping surveillance from others inside the house can be made possible by the addition of a second, more secluded doorway or passage:

mesme encores y voudra il avoir une poterne secrette, par ou il (comme seigneur de la maison) puisse sortir a sa volonte, recevoir & envoyer messagiers secretz sans que personne de sa maison le sache, selon les occurrences qui se presenteront pour le bien &

36 Ibid., 77v.

37 Ibid., 91r.

commodité de ses affaires. A la verité je n'improove point tout cela, ains encores me sembleroit il bon, que lon fiest dedans le pourpris certaines cachettes & destours secretz a grand peine cogneuz par le propre pere de famille: dedans lesquelz (advenant le besoing) il peust sauver sa persone & ses biens ou les choses qu'il à [sic] plus cheres.³⁸

[He will even want to have a secret door, through which he (as master of the house) can leave at his discretion, receive and send secret messengers, without anyone else in the house knowing, depending on the instances where he must consider the good of his business or ease with which he conducts his affairs. In truth I do not really approve of all that; even so it would seem to me a good idea to make a few hiding-places and highly secret passages known to the father of the family, in which (when needed) he can save himself and his property or whatever is dearest to him.]

Secrecy is a question of not only who is allowed into a particular space, but also who can leave a space without being seen. Alberti makes clear that these more “secret” developments can be added to both princely homes and to the homes of *particuliers*. The house owner is allowed the privilege of secrecy, even though Alberti suggest that he does not fully approve of it. It is a necessary, practical, but morally questionable, addition to any house. The addition of multiple entrances to a building will be exploited by other members of the household, who appropriate the house owner’s privilege of free movement for their own ends. Characters in tales 8 and 43 of the *Heptaméron* may make use of this second dimension, going into a space publicly, but leaving it secretly, as will be discussed in chapter two.

While the owner can come and go unobserved as he pleases, the same cannot be said for anyone else in the house, at least according to Alberti’s prescriptions. We have already seen that visitors’ movements must be tracked. It would appear that the women of the house should not even leave the house. In a nod to his ancient predecessors, Alberti mentions that the Greeks restricted the appearance of their women to gatherings in their own houses or those of close relatives. But, for his own times, he does not necessarily agree that this should be the case:

A dire vray je suis d’avis que les lieux ou elles se retirent, doivent estre dediez a chasteté, aussi bien que les conventz des Religieuses. Mais raison veult que le pourpris &

38 Ibid., 77v.

tous ces accessoires soyent plus joyeux & recreatifz que faire se pourra, afin que les filles residentes leans y demeurent plus volontiers enfermées, & a moins d'ennuy de leurs tendres courages. Toutefois la chambre de la dame sera (par mon conseil) située en part d'ou elle pourra veoir & entendre tout ce qui se demeine en la maison.³⁹

[Truth be told, I am of the opinion that the places where they (the women) retire should be dedicated to chastity, as much as nuns' convents are. But reason requires that the courtyard and all its accessories be as merry and as fun as possible, so that the girls residing there remain more voluntarily enclosed, and with as little hardship to their tender spirits. However, the lady's bedroom will (following my advice) be situated in a place from where she can see and hear everything that happens in the house.]

Alberti raises the issue of forcing people, in this case women, into restricted space and limiting their movement. He shows some of the same concern as Corrozet in the *Blasons domestiques* for protecting female members of a household from having any contact with the outside world imagined as predatory, but admits that such limited scope is hard for them to bear. In a concession that Corrozet does not make, Alberti would not be as strict in banishing visitors from spaces where women can be found. The *pourpris*, the first space inside the building once one has passed the threshold, including the courtyard and possibly the garden, is where visitors to the house stay and socialize while waiting for the prince or master to receive them: "Mais apres la porte passée, je suis d'avis qu'on rencontre un pourpris, ou les clients attendent leurs patrons, en se promenant & devisant de leurs affaires: mesmes ou le prince voulant rendre droit a ses sujetz puisse faire mettre son tribunal, ou siege de justice."⁴⁰ [But after the threshold has been passed, I am of the opinion that there should be a courtyard, where clients wait for their patrons, wandering around and discussing their business; or even where the prince, wishing to settle legal matters between his subjects, can hold his tribunal, or seat of justice.] The female members of the household therefore have a much more active life in the public part of the house than might be originally supposed. The *pourpris* must be sufficiently interesting to keep the women

39 Ibid., 97r.

40 Ibid., 79r.

entertained. They are therefore expected to stay “volontiers enfermées”; even though their movement is restricted to the house, women will inevitably have contact with outside guests. The positioning of the wife’s bedroom such that she can observe the house makes her almost as much a public figure in the house as her husband.

The need for secrecy is also expressed in the arrangement of the apartments in any given house. The main concern Alberti expresses is for the “modestie” of its occupants. To be observed at all times is an affront to one’s dignity, and time alone or at least in a more secluded place is desirable:

Et s’il est homme particulier, aussi bien veult le devoir que les portions de sa maison soient divisées deument, comme celles d’un Roy, mais la modestie gardée, c’est a dire, que le maistre ayt sa retraicte a part, la dame la sienne, les familiers la leur, & les survenans en pareil, sans qu’il y ait confusion.⁴¹

[If he is a private man, duty requires that the sections of his house be divided appropriately, like those of a king, but retaining all modesty; that means that the master needs his separate retreat, the lady hers, family members theirs, and visitors the same, so that there be no confusion.]

Each important family member and visitor must have a clearly-demarcated space, such that there be no confusion of who belongs where.

The master and his lady must each have their own room so that they can sleep better and not bother each other when sick. But they must be able to get to each other without anyone else knowing: “neantmoins chacun doit avoir sa porte expresse pour entrer devers sa partie: & entredeux une petite allée secrette pour s’entretrouver sans moyen de tierce personne.”⁴²

[Nonetheless, each one must have his or her own door to enter into their section: and between the two a little secret passage so that they can go to each other without recourse to a third person.]

The use of the term “secrete” indicates a growing concern about the ability of the main

41 Ibid., 77v.

42 Ibid., 97v.

occupants of a house to retire unobserved. Their movement is nobody's business but their own. According to Alberti, not only individuals but also couples need their own space that is uniquely specified for their joint needs, an early inkling of family intimacy. When designing "secret" space, not every apartment will have the full suite of rooms: "Du costé de la chambre de la dame, sera la garderobe: & de celluy du maistre, la librairie & retraicte de papiers"⁴³ [On the lady's bedroom's side will be the *garde-robe*; and on the master's side, the library and document retreat.] In Alberti's mind the division of the smaller, more intimate rooms is along gender lines, but this will not be consistent among architects; often the contingencies of space will dictate which configuration of a floor plan is possible, and how rooms are arranged.

Secrecy is not an aspect limited to the residents of a house. Guests also must be afforded their own space: "Le dict hoste aura un cabinet, pour retirer ses besongnes plus secrettes & plus cheres, mesmes ou il pourra s'enfermer toutes et quantes fois que bon luy semblera."⁴⁴ [The guest will have a cabinet where he can place his most cherished and secret items, or even where he can shut himself in at any time he sees fit.] It is therefore expected that a host provide guests with their personal space, not only for possessions, but also for time alone. The idea of secrecy in the home—proto-privacy in Alberti's time—is incorporated into the fabric of the building.

The housing of people does not simply divide into nobles and their servants, however. Alberti recognizes that merchants may have the means to build houses of their own. While the division of space in the noble household gives servants and laborers no possibility to increase their space or improve their living conditions, the merchants experience some economic shift which can be reflected in their lodgings:

Les personnes de moyenne condition se logeront (selon leurs facultez) a l'exemple des riches, afin d'avoir le plus de commodité que faire se pourra: toutesfois si se devront ilz

43 Ibid., 97v.

44 Ibid., 97v.

conduire en cest endroit par tele modestie que tousjours ce qui est de profit, soit preferé a ce qui se faict pour le plaisir.⁴⁵

[People of middling condition will house themselves (according to their means) following the example of the rich, in order to have as much comfort as possible. However, they must behave with such modesty in this place that whatever is good for profit be preferred to whatever is done for pleasure.]

Alberti advocates a trickle-down effect in architectural culture, and indeed recent architectural historians such as Uwe Albrecht have detected evidence that this was the case. Merchants can imitate the homes of the rich, just scaled down to meet their means. Merchants must beware, however, that their social aspirations do not carry them too far from the care of their business; they cannot abandon business for pleasure as the rich do, for fear their businesses may suffer. Following the same logic, Alberti explains that if space is limited, merchants must make choices about the kinds of rooms they can afford. A space more expressly designed for business is preferable to one which is richly decorated: “Au regard de la maison de ville pour un marchand, j’aymeroy mieulx qu’il y eust une boutique bien fournye, qu’une sale bien parée, car apres que lon s’est fait riche, il est aysé de prendre son plaisir.”⁴⁶ [With regards to the town house for a merchant, I would prefer there to be a well provisioned shop than a beautifully decorated *salle*, because after you have made yourself rich, it is easy to take your pleasure.] Far from being able to dedicate a large part of their domestic space to personal use, or reserve space apart for the family, merchants must always look to their affairs; their domestic space, like that of the servants, will be defined by their work.

Any discomfort that Alberti may exhibit with the idea of secret space is mild and rarely expressed. His proposals for building individual homes incorporate numerous methods for granting intimate and personal space to main members of a household, both for the protection of

45 Ibid., 99r.

46 Ibid., 99r.

the household's affairs, which should not be exposed to outside inspection, and for the dignity of inhabitants who need time and space to themselves. The modesty of a house's female inhabitants can also be protected by the right kind of home building, although the imposition of seclusion can bring its own problems regarding women's wellbeing and boredom. Concern for the integrity of the married couple also gives rise to architectural designs that take their needs into consideration. Alberti's individual houses are designed around seclusion and discretion, although the power to withdraw from or to observe a household's business is not distributed equally. An Albertian home affords a great deal of control to its owner, allowing him full freedom of movement while giving him the tools to survey how visitors enter and leave the house and to limiting other family members' movements. More than any other architect's writings, Alberti's designs reflect the complex dynamics of family life in upper-class households, and reveal an architect highly in tune with the human beings for whom he builds.

II. Sebastiano Serlio: A Master of Comfort

Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554), an Italian architect from Bologna, came to Fontainebleau in 1541 as Francis I's architect. After Francis' death in 1547, Serlio found himself out of favor and moved to Lyon where he undertook the completion of his seven-book architectural treatise. Although the books of the treatise were published independently of each other, they nonetheless constitute a single, overarching project. He spent the last few years of his life at Fontainebleau, living in a property on the estate that he had designed and built for Ercole d'Este's brother, Ippolito.⁴⁷ According to Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks, Serlio authored "the first ever wide-ranging fully illustrated architectural treatise. Before Palladio only the Roman author Vitruvius

⁴⁷ Hart and Hicks, *Serlio On Architecture*, xv (introduction).

and the Renaissance master Leon Battista Alberti can be said to have rivalled Serlio's influence on those wishing to design buildings *all'antica*—in the antique manner."⁴⁸

Hart and Hicks describe Serlio's *Sesto Libro*, in which he lays out his ideas and designs on domestic architecture, as his most important. This sixth book consists of a series of descriptions of buildings designed for owners of differing means, from one-room buildings for modest budgets to the most elaborate princely accommodations. Some plans were actually realized, whereas many others inspired other architects. Each description of a building is accompanied by woodcut images of floor plan and elevations.

Serlio takes a particularly didactic approach so that other architects can easily follow his designs. He is credited with making the art of architecture much more accessible to a wider audience. Yet it is not only measurements that he explains. In many places he demonstrates how he tailored a building to suit the needs and desires of a client. The result is a range of techniques and solutions that give an idea of the surprising level of comfort that could be achieved in the home. As a result, however, Vitruvian measurements were sometimes abandoned in order to make houses more livable. In winter high ceilings make rooms cold. Serlio therefore compromised on ideal proportions for the sake of preserving heat:

in speaking about the heights of habitable rooms I paid more attention to the decorum and grandeur than to the commodity of living. Because the fact is, the higher the ceilings in bedrooms, the colder are those rooms, particularly in winter. But please note well that I kept the public habitations of important men to a suitable height [...] all of which are in the public eye, but I kept the heights of the bedrooms for wintertime lower, making mezzanines of some of them.⁴⁹

Although the lofty appearance of the rooms is important, when they are less frequented by the public, Serlio will sacrifice beauty for comfort. He makes a clear distinction between “public”

48 Ibid., ix.

49 Serlio, *On Architecture*, vol. 2, 154. Since the sixth book has only recently been integrated into the complete works, no French full edition has yet appeared, and the original versions of the sixth book are few and far between, I make use of the recent English edition by Hart and Hicks.

space and space used for sleeping, dividing living space into a public and a personal realm, a rare move for this period. Serlio's approach is practical and guided by the realities on the ground. He underscores his flexibility in what almost seems like an effort to reassure the reader that he is not slavishly following abstract theory, attesting that he knows how to build for real people. Their needs must be factored in to make the home suitable for their *commodità*. Later in the same paragraph he refers to Vitruvius' measurements for passageways and galleries, only to counter the Roman's instructions with his own preferred ratios based on his experience and his clients' needs. For Serlio, the comfort of the occupants trumps any adherence to principles as laid down by the ancient patron of Renaissance architecture.

Beyond the concerns of heating and cooling for which every architect proposes a solution, Serlio manages to propose some luxurious features that even most homes today cannot boast. In book six he previews features whose actual construction he will explain in book seven, including “water pipes and fountains, baths, hot rooms and other delights.”⁵⁰ Cultural historians of the European sixteenth century have observed a lack of features that would be considered necessary to make twentieth- and twenty-first-century homes comfortable. Yet Serlio is pronouncing his ability to install running water, and even have it heated. He can also install underfloor heating: “Camera E [...] is to be the place for disrobing—and there are two beds and a fire—because next to it is the hot room [...]. This is to have underfloor heating, and the same fire will heat the water for the bath.”⁵¹ Clearly these features are only within reach of a handful of home builders, and the twentieth-century notion of comfort in the home refers to a universal concept in the West according to which everyone has access to a degree of comfort. But Serlio shows that the technical knowledge exists in the early sixteenth century, and more importantly,

50 Ibid., 155.

51 Ibid., 66.

that comfort is a central idea for the parts of a house where the family is lodged. Comfort is a key aspect of the home that will encourage residents to spend more time in secluded and personal spaces. Comfortable furnishings will not become widely available until the seventeenth century, but Serlio's text hints at the kinds of amenities that will make the home a more welcoming place, turning society inward, and making privacy a reality.

Perhaps just as outlandish as heated floors, but seemingly more practical, are his suggestions for dealing with the coldness of marble floors and the height of ceilings that cannot be built any lower, by building false ceilings and floors out of wood:

[If a nobleman] wants to use this apartment all year round, he could employ the following method. At the springing of the vaults he should arrange a wooden ceiling which is carefully constructed so that it can be set up and taken down [...]. And since these apartments, being noble, might also have pavements of marble or other fine stones which render great coolness, it would therefore be good to make their pavements out of wood so as to make the places underfoot warmer. And when the hot weather returned, these pavements could be taken away and stored for the other season.⁵²

This method is an extension of the common use of tapestries hung to reduce drafts from door frames and provide some warmth along walls. Serlio claims that he has seen these false floors and ceilings at Ferrara. A bifurcation of home style is beginning to appear: public rooms will conform to one set of ideas, but apartments will fit a person's particular needs. Public rooms will have an outward-looking demeanor, designed for the admiration of visitors, while personal rooms will adopt more intimate style, décor, and level of comfort, reflecting the personal needs and tastes of individual inhabitants.

Serlio discusses the issue of individual members' sleeping places from a less moralistic point of view than Alberti. In every suite of rooms, an alcove for a bed is included in either the *camera* (bedroom) or the *camerino* (small bedroom or cabinet). In almost all his drawings, the suites of rooms interconnect with each other through passageways or doorways, rendering each

52 Ibid., 154.

apartment part of one structure encompassing them all.⁵³ Secrecy for the individual would appear to be less of a concern for him. Yet there are moments when the need for secrecy is factored into a building especially for high-ranking inhabitants, as for the king: “That lowermost [elevation] is a part of the loggias at the sides of the garden, above which are the secret *gallerie* so that the King, if he wanted, could get secretly and under cover to the stables.”⁵⁴ As in Alberti, space can be fashioned in order to give an important resident the secrecy he needs to go about his business without being observed. The trend, at least in architecture for the wealthy, is to build secret space into the very walls of the house. Unlike Alberti, however Serlio does not raise moral questions about the use of secrecy or equate it with tyrants. In Serlio’s treatise, secret space is a necessary, everyday phenomenon that is expected to feature in the home. This practice will spread as personal space in the home becomes more acceptable and deemed an essential part of family life.

Nevertheless, some of Serlio’s prescriptions about sleeping space are marked by a growing insecurity brought about by the wars of religion. One house is designed for a family of more modest means—a “rich peasant.” It contains a central *sala* (meeting room) and a suite of rooms further inside the building. Rather than suggest that the owner and his wife sleep in the more secluded rooms, Serlio advises them to sleep in the *sala* while holding on to all the keys of the house.⁵⁵ This reversal of the expected living arrangements, and the fear pervasive in the house, will find an echo in Montaigne’s *Essais*. During the civil wars that dog the latter part of the century, Montaigne describes the lack of protection that his house afford. His house might be attacked any night and the family slaughtered. The potential threat is not only from marauding neighbors, but also from valets within the house who might defect to the other side. Montaigne laments the lack of trust that can be felt in houses across the land.⁵⁶

53 Ibid. See any woodcut from Book Six.

54 Ibid., 152.

55 Ibid., 6.

56 Montaigne, *Essais*, II.15, “Que nostre desir s’accroit pas la malaisance,” especially 616-7 in which Montaigne

The very concept of using physical barriers to protect the body from outside threats is shown to have its limits. Walls will not guarantee safety, no matter how thick they are:

The noble Prince who is liberally minded, just and kind to his subjects and who fears God, has no need of fortresses; the hearts and minds of his subjects will be his protection and impregnable bastion. [...] On the other hand, for the cruel, greedy tyrant, who steals other people's goods, who rapes virgins, wives and widows, who dispossesses his subjects, all the fortresses in the world could not protect him.⁵⁷

Serlio sees it as his duty to propose buildings for all types of men, including tyrants, and therefore accommodates their treachery as best he can with thick walls, moats, and spatial configurations that make a building difficult to attack. But what he reveals here is the fallibility of human building; the inability of walls to protect those inside in the face of a determined attack either from inside or outside. Physical walls between people, like the figurative walls of secrecy, will only provide protection if everyone agrees to abide by the barriers they create. Secrecy and physical protection can be built into residences, but those architectural features can be superseded by people with the willpower to destroy them. Walls, just like bodies and minds—as we will see in later chapters—are revealed as becoming porous in the face of human invention. Access into a building, and access to the body, is always possible. Comfort, protection, and secrecy are all features of Serlio's homes, although they are not absolutes and not guaranteed by architectural features. His buildings do, however, help to advance acceptance of such features as normal features of the home.

III. Philibert de l'Orme: Building the Secrecy of Kings

Philibert de l'Orme is the most important French architect of the sixteenth century. When Serlio's star fades after the death of Francis I, De l'Orme's is ascendant; he is made Henri II's

discusses the ongoing civil wars, and the idea that one can no longer know which side one's valets might be on.
57 Serlio, *On Architecture*, vol. 2, 58.

official architect, builds first for Diane de Poitiers, and later for Catherine de Médicis and Charles IX.⁵⁸ In his ten-volume treatise, first published in 1567 by Frederic Morel, his main concern is to adapt Vitruvian practices for French architects by going directly back to Vitruvius' text rather than readapting Alberti's. He thus focuses on materials and building conditions specific to France, and proposes a new order of columns, purportedly dating from ancient times, but specific to France.⁵⁹ In addition to his adaptation of architectural principles to the French terrain—a transposition more than a translation—he also aims to elevate the status of the architect as artist and technician. De l'Orme works mainly on commissions from individuals, with the result that much of his production centers around individual residences.⁶⁰

Like Alberti and Serlio, he reconciles his principles of orders and divine harmony with the practical work he is doing on the ground. His treatise includes many first-hand narratives of problems that he has solved, making his written work a rich source for considerations about the practical, ideological, and aesthetic reasons behind the architectural techniques and skills he has developed. As Jean Guillaume explains, de L'Orme was at pains to stress his practical prowess as well as his theoretical expertise:

Les bonnes proportions ont une réalité objective: l'homme d'expérience, formé par l'étude de l'architecture antique (à ne pas confondre avec le 'savant' qui ne connaît que la théorie) donne aux ordres leur juste mesure en fonction des conditions d'emploi et de l'effet recherché. Par une contradiction qui n'est qu'apparente, de L'Orme affirme à la fois l'absence de toute norme et l'existence de proportions vraies que l'expert sait, dans chaque cas, découvrir. Mieux encore, ces proportions se réduisent à quelques rapports simples indiqués dans la Bible.⁶¹

[The good ratios have their own objective reality: the man of experience, trained through the study of ancient architecture (not to be confused with the 'savant' who only knows theory) gives to the Orders their just measure depending on the conditions under which they are employed and according to the effect desired. In a contradiction which is all too apparent, De l'Orme affirms both the absence of any norm and the existence of true

58 See Allsopp, *A History*, 106.

59 See Guillaume, "On Philibert de l'Orme,"

60 De l'Orme, *Premier Tome*. All translations are mine.

61 Guillaume, "On Philibert de l'Orme," 350.

proportions that only the ‘expert’ knows how to find in each case. Even better, these proportions can be reduced to a few simple ratios indicated in the Bible.]

De l’Orme’s first-hand accounts of designing and building for France’s nobility include references to both his application of the classical orders and his accommodation of individuals’ spatial needs. A palace built for Catherine de Médicis therefore receives the idealized, symbolic, and geometrical treatment that a regent’s residence requires: “L’autre raison pourquoy j’ay voulu figurer & naturellement représenter ledict ordre Ionique au Palays de la majesté de la Royne, c’est pour autant qu’il est féminin, & a esté inventé apres les proportions & ornements des dames & déesses.”⁶² [The other reason why I wanted to employ and naturally represent the aforementioned Ionic order in Her Majesty the Queen’s palace is that it is feminine and was invented following the proportions and features of women and goddesses.] Catherine’s status as a female member of the French royal family, whose heritage is regularly traced by sixteenth-century genealogists back to the Roman gods, is reflected in the choice of columns used in her palace.

By following Italian-style architectural principles and fashions, De l’Orme adheres to the now necessary suite of rooms for a nobleman’s lodging: *salle*, antechamber, bedroom, *garde-robe*, and cabinet. To highlight his own inventiveness and ability to satisfy the expectations of his royal clientèle, he expounds in the fifth book of his treatise on how he resolved a seemingly impossible quandary at Diane de Poitiers’s Château d’Anet, which he extensively rebuilt at her request. At the time, De l’Orme was court architect to Henri II. Henri’s apartment at Anet needed a cabinet and De l’Orme had to find space out of nowhere for it. Chapter one of book five contains his description of the *trompe* that had to be built at Anet:

Laquelle trompe fut faicte par une contraincte, à fin de pouvoir accommoder un cabinet à la chambre ou le feu Roy Henry logeoit estant audit chasteau. La contraincte y estoit pour

62 De l’Orme, *Premier Tome*, 155v.

n'avoir espace ou lieu pour le faire au corps d'hostel qui ja estoit commencé ne aussi au vieil logis qui estoit fait: de sorte qu'on ne trouvoit rien à propos en ce lieu pour faire ledict cabinet. Car apres la salle estoit l'antichambre, puis la chambre du Roy, & aupres d'elle, en retournant à costé, estoit en potence la garderobbe. Voyant doncques telle contraincte & angustie du lieu, & outre ce cognoissant qu'il est necessaire & plus que raisonnable d'accompagner les chambres des Roys & grands Princes & seigneurs d'un cabinet (afin qu'ils se puissent retirer en leur privé & particulier, soit pour escrire ou traicter des affaires en secret, ou autrement) je fus redigé en grande perplexité, car je ne pouvois trouver ledit cabinet sans gaster le logis & les chambres.⁶³

[The aforementioned *trompe* came about because of a constraint when we were trying to accommodate a cabinet for the bedroom where the late King Henry used to stay when he was at the castle. The constraint was that we did not have space or place to build it in the body of the house which had already been started, nor in the old building which was already completed; such that we saw absolutely no way of putting a cabinet in that place. For after the *salle* came the antichamber, then the King's bedroom, then at the side was the L-shaped *garde-robe*. Seeing such a constraint and the narrowness of the place, and in addition knowing that it is necessary and more than reasonable that the bedrooms of kings and great princes should be accompanied by a cabinet (so that they can retire entirely on their own, either to write or attend to their affairs in secret, or otherwise) I was left greatly perplexed, because I could not establish the cabinet without ruining the apartment and the bedrooms.]

The result is that Philibert de l'Orme constructs a suspended *voûte* on the corner of the bedroom, extending the outer wall of the building but not its footprint. The bedroom gains its needed cabinet while the apartment remains intact. De l'Orme would argue that there was no other solution—that the size and proportions of the rooms could not be altered. The suite of rooms adapted from classical palaces and filtered through the Italian *trattatistica* tradition is standard practice for architects across Europe at the time De l'Orme is writing. It is inconceivable that the king's apartment should not have a cabinet, or some kind of secret space to which the king can retire. The function of the cabinet is also clearly defined as a retreat for the individual, in contrast to the *cabinets* and *garde-robes* of Francis I's time which were changing function as the king changed the way he used his domestic space.⁶⁴ Yet this cabinet, jutting out from the outside wall,

63 Ibid., 88r.

64 See Boudon and Chatenet, "Logis," 65-82. See also the discussion of *cabinets*, *garde-robes*, and *armoires* in the following chapter of this dissertation.

with its windows visible to the world, can hardly be considered the most interior space in the castle, even though the most important person will stay in this most intimate space. The very structure of the *trompe* draws attention to itself as a highly visible addition to the façade of the building, with windows that give the king a view of the outside, but also a view of the inside to those outside. Henri II's cabinet, although nominally his inner sanctum, is situated between inner, personal space and publicly visible space, occupying a place both on the façade and at the end of the suite of rooms making up his apartment. Diane adds her own note to the *trompe*, topping it with her personally adopted symbol of the crescent moon. The cabinet and its contents—including the king—are marked as hers, for anyone to see who walks past that particular bit of wall.

This space is designated for use by the highest authority in the land. It is the architectural feature that will correspond closest to the king as an individual. But his authority and individuality seem to be undermined by Diane's personal symbol on the *trompe*, suggesting that everything inside the château falls under her control. The trend in domestic space is towards increasing an individual's ability to retreat into personal space, and nobles were the first to adopt cabinets and *garde-robes* as secret spaces. But this particular cabinet draws attention to itself as secret, straddling interior and exterior space. It reflects the king himself, who is both an individual and a public person, and whose personal business will always be the public's business. Such public personal space will be reflected in Marguerite de Navarre's attitude towards secret space in the *Heptaméron*, in which the outcome of tales 8 and 43 suggest that no space can be designated as secret.

De l'Orme's *trompes*, which are his invention, can be used for all kinds of small rooms or even passageways. The crossover between secret and public space as in Henri II's cabinet

described above is repeated in other places. De l'Orme designed and built one structure in Lyon consisting of two corner cabinets linked by a gallery, all jutting out from the wall, such that the gallery is only accessible from either of the two cabinets, "à fin de servir pour aller d'un corps d'hostel à l'autre, & accommoder les cabinets pour les chambres"⁶⁵ [in order to serve as a passage to go from one wing of the building to the other, and accommodate the cabinets for the bedrooms]. Since getting from one part of the building to the other requires access to the cabinets, it will be restricted to certain members of the household. With such structures, the potential for secret movement around a building increases dramatically; this type of movement made without others' knowledge will be found in tale 43 of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, when Jambique disappears into a cabinet and can subsequently move around the palace undetected. But with De l'Orme's structures sticking out from the façade of buildings, the awareness of such space is increased, too; it becomes clearly visible that such secret space exists.

De l'Orme not only considers questions of secrecy and intimacy for the residents after the building is completed, but also reflects on the disturbance of family life during the construction period. The architect's role is a delicate one since he is aware that he will be invading others' personal space:

Il suffit doncques estre homme de bien, & monstrier que lon fait droictement & vertueusement son devoir. Souventesfois on a veu qu'aux riches maisons, la femme, les enfants, les parents & serviteurs en veulent à l'Architecte, & ne scavent pourquoy, sinon qu'ils ont peur que la marmitte se diminue, & que lon ne face si grande despense qu'on a accoustumé, pour le soing que le seigneur a de despandre, à fin de faire depescher tous ses bastiments.⁶⁶

[It is enough to be a good man, and show that you are doing your work correctly and virtuously. Often in rich houses it has been seen that wife, children, relatives, and servants get angry at the architect, and they do not know why, except that they are afraid the purse might dwindle, and that as much will not be spent as they are used to, because the master is concerned with spending in order to advance all his buildings quickly.]

65 De l'Orme, *Premier Tome*, 90v.

66 *Ibid.*, 12r.

The architect may be seen as someone who is meddling in a household that is not his own, and taking resources away from other members of the household. He is conscious of being an intruder, and must therefore act cautiously so as not to give offense or he may be sent away for causing trouble. If this is the case, the building will be ruined, as the workers will make mistakes without him. Far from thinking of architects as being detached from the spaces they create and alter—designers whose task is separate from the eventual running of the household for which he is building—De l’Orme realizes the effect his work has on people’s everyday lives, especially while he is working on a building. His engagement with the lived reality of his clients’ families highlights the real-life implication of the architect’s work. Abstract principles produce a polished treatise, but a real architect cannot work from principles alone.

As well as secrecy and family harmony, De l’Orme also looks to take care of the comfort of a house’s residents, much as Alberti and Serlio do. Although less inventive than Serlio, and less prone to proposing luxurious comfort—especially since he touts his work as one that will save the homeowner money—De l’Orme does do what he can to make homes more pleasant to live in. Balconies are a new idea borrowed from Italy. They are a way to add ephemeral aesthetic touches to a building as fireworks can be launched from them, and trumpeters can be placed there. But they are also a way to add pleasure to the home by providing a way to step outside and enjoy the view: “vous mettez sur les entablements & niveau des terrasses, (au droict des fenestres qui seront au dessous) des petits balcons, ainsi qu’on les appelle en Italie [...]. Tels lieux sont propres pour prendre le plaisir des belles veuës qui sont autour des logis.”⁶⁷ [You will put on the entablatures and at the level of the terraces (directly over the windows, which will be

67 Ibid., 258v.

below) little balconies, as they are called in Italy [...]. Such places are good for enjoying the scenic views around the apartment.]

Access to nature and opportunities to step outside are complemented by tall windows to give as much natural light as possible. Windows which are too low render a room melancholic:

Quant à la hauteur, j'ay tousjours cogneu par experience que pour rendre un logis fort plaisant, la hauteur des fenestres croisées doit estre en arriere-voulsure fort pres des planchers, ou solives, comme d'un demy pied, ou environ: autrement si le derriere des fenestres demeure beaucoup plus bas que les solives [...] cela rend les salles melancholiques.⁶⁸

[As for the height, I have always learned from experience that to make a residence very pleasant, the highest tip of the arching windows must be very close to the joists, approximately half a foot away. If the back side of the windows is much lower than the joists, [...] that makes rooms melancholic.]

The house must contribute as much as possible to the health and mental well-being of its inhabitants. De l'Orme dedicates a whole chapter to how to stop fireplaces from making rooms too smoky, which brings the additional benefit of making the fires more efficient in heating the house.⁶⁹ Houses need light, as little smoke as possible, and a good heat source. Like Serlio, De l'Orme takes care in his designs to heat the house from sources in as many rooms as possible. Despite a widespread idea today that sixteenth-century houses were only heated in one spot, and therefore cold almost everywhere, De l'Orme explains what kinds of fireplaces should be built in all kinds of rooms, including *garde-robes*. One concern is that the fireplace should be sized such that the room itself does not become cluttered.⁷⁰ Occupants need enough room to move around.

Comfort, secrecy, and solitude characterize the domestic spaces constructed and imagined by Philibert de l'Orme. Yet his task as royal architect brings with it an eye for pomp and ceremony that eludes Alberti. De l'Orme does echo Alberti in other ways by matching the

68 Ibid., 249r.

69 Ibid., 267v-268v.

70 Ibid., 260r.

opulence of the building to the status, gender, and character of his patrons. Only Serlio, also building for kings, is less obviously concerned by the spectacle of royalty as represented in the buildings they inhabited. De l'Orme's building of secrecy for Henri II reflects the always-public nature of the king's body. While it can be isolated, it is still for public consumption, a visible symbol of the kingdom.

IV. Conclusion

Alberti, Serlio, and De l'Orme all figure elements into their designs that we today recognize as necessities in the home. Occupants must be comfortable; they must have spaces designated for both individuals and the family; secrecy and intimacy, the main elements of privacy, must be accommodated. As much as a noble house is something of a public place, family life is recognized as needing special treatment and spaces so that it can escape public scrutiny and develop in isolation. A house must reflect the status, aspirations, and character of its owner, representing its inhabitants to the outside world. These aspects are often class-dependent, although Alberti proposes that features in noble houses be adopted by merchants in their homes, an idea which is borne out over time. The modern home is recognizable in all its physical and psychological incarnations.

The morality of secrecy and solitude seems relatively clear; heads of households and visitors are afforded time and space to themselves, while the family needs to be shielded from outside influence. However there is some variance between the three architects. Serlio factors secrecy into his plans, but often leaves entryways so that cabinets cannot be fully closed off. Alberti recognizes secrecy as necessary but occasionally hesitates over its general use in the home. De l'Orme's version of secrecy for Henri II puts secret space out into public view. All

three build secret space into their houses, but the ability of individuals to close themselves off fully from the world remains in flux. The *Heptaméron*, as shall be seen in the next chapter, puts forth contradictory attitudes, demonstrating that many do not approve of this development.

Chapter Two

Space, Secrecy, and Storytelling:

Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*

Estant l'home en
son privé, on ne sçait
pour certain quel il est.¹

This chapter investigates what spaces are available to those who wish to conceal their thoughts and actions from others in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*.² In tales 8 and 43, the protagonists attempt to compartmentalize physical space in order to try out illicit behaviors and not be discovered. The way in which space and secrecy function does not allow for the compartmentalization to be maintained, and the events are converted to stories despite the protagonists' efforts to prevent any tale being told at all. In these cases, as elsewhere in the *Heptaméron*, the tale is revealed when an object or sign unexpectedly leaves the room where the secret action takes place. At that moment, those who believed they could restrict the flow of information lose control of the story, and the information they were attempting to suppress spreads without restriction.

It becomes apparent throughout the *Heptaméron* that the text's focus on secrecy is often linked to characters' use of space, especially spaces that are less frequented, such as closets, dressing rooms, galleries, and staircases. Tales 8 and 43, and the *Heptaméron* in general, exhibit tensions between, on the one hand, the presumption made in court culture that all events should be publicized and, on the other hand, individuals' drive to establish personal boundaries in their lived space in order to escape from society's pervasive gaze. The *garde-robe* in tale 8 and the

1 Rabelais, *Tiers Livre*.

2 Section II of this chapter was previously published as "Secret Space in the *Heptaméron* (I.8)" in *Mediaevalia* 31 and appears with the permission of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Binghamton University (SUNY). My thanks to Dana Stewart.

gallery in tale 43 are examples of what I call “secret spaces” within domestic space, chosen by characters who believe that by cutting off these rooms from clearly public space, their actions will be concealed from the rest of the world. While the division of space initially allows the characters a greater degree of freedom to act, the conclusion of the tale, and the *devisants*’ discussion of whether it is ever acceptable to conceal actions and feelings from public scrutiny, indicate an overall condemnation of the creation of secret space. Since anything that takes place in a secret space is prone to publication, it can be argued that all space belongs to the public realm, and in the end every event will be narrated, no matter where it takes place. By extension, there is nothing about an individual—behavior, actions, or intentions—that can truly be concealed from the outside world. The interior world of the heart is always subject to inspection. Interior and exterior, secret and public, become indistinguishable.

I. Privacy, Secrecy, and Observation

With few exceptions, the tales of the *Heptaméron* take place in houses, palaces and castles. Marguerite’s sparse narrative often specifies individual rooms and spaces within these buildings such as bedrooms, closets, dressing rooms and staircases. This is of little surprise since the tales tell largely of sexual trysts, which one can reasonably expect to occur in quiet corners of private residences where one is less likely to be disturbed. The spaces of the tales are therefore resolutely domestic, even though the buildings in which they are set are often monumental in nature—palaces, as well as being dwelling places, would also be the setting for royal ceremony and affairs of state. Far from being a banal feature of Marguerite’s collection—a neutral backdrop for the important considerations of self, spirituality, and morality—the settings of the tales shape the narratives themselves.

Marcel Tetel sees the *Heptaméron* as metaphorically divided between light and darkness in Marguerite's examinations of the human condition and an individual's relationship to God and reason:

The dialectic of light / darkness and its correlate sight / blindness forms a most important metaphoric part of Marguerite's aesthetics. It opposes love to lust, dissimulation to discovery, the earthly realm to the divine one, and human judgment to divine judgment, and it occurs as a very successful narrative technique.³

This division, according to Tetel, is marked spatially. He argues that the binary metaphor of light and darkness that he sees throughout the *Heptaméron* carries over into the use of space. Some places can be considered "dark" and some "light":

Conscious of the metaphoric prevalence of darkness enveloping man's condition, Marguerite creates a cellular universe that allows no light into it. Characters seek out above all dressing-room closets, but attics and narrow winding staircases will serve as well as places to meet in or to wait for and reach the partner. In these enclosed locales, the protagonists abandon reason and moderation and usually give in to their base desires; when in the attic or the staircase, they are already prey to their concupiscence. Marguerite likes to use the image of the door, or the trap door, as the object that separates reason from lustful passion.⁴

Although Tetel sees the world of Marguerite as "cellular," full of binaries between the inside and the outside, light and dark, the binaries introduced are false and designed to be broken down as the tales play out. Space does not divide easily into inside and outside, or into public and non-public, and concupiscence has already taken hold before characters find a space in which they can act upon it.

In the *Heptaméron* the distinction between what is closed off and what is generally accessible to all is not necessarily clear. The status of spaces vacillates between being closed off and publicly accessible. Certain places are taboo, and their limits are generally respected, and some spaces have more restricted access than others; antechambers, bedrooms, *garde-rob*es, and

3 Tetel, *Marguerite de Navarre's Heptaméron*, 96.

4 *Ibid.*, 99.

cabinets, for example, are on a sliding scale of accessibility. The *garde-robe* of tale 8 is enclosed and set apart, and all characters in the tale believe that access to it is limited to a select group of people. Today we might call it “private,” but our idea of privacy is far from any concept of space that might have existed in the sixteenth century.⁵ Jambicque in tale 43 converts a public gallery into a personal boudoir simply by closing the doors; nonetheless she and her lover are never discovered inside. Tale 8 demonstrates a moment in which the *garde-robe* even with its status as a secret space will be forced back into the public domain. In tale 43 the gallery is converted from a public space into a secret one, yet the events that occur there will be recounted, and the space regain its public nature through narrative. These types of spaces exhibit a particular kind of incontinence—the inability to contain what is enacted within them. This is not to attribute agency to space, but rather to recognize that it is the inactive nature of space that makes it resist characters’ attempts to use it secretly.

In the *Heptaméron*, secrecy and the way it functions are closely related to storytelling. Linking space to narrative, Richard Regosin’s reflections on secrecy in the *Heptaméron* in “*Désir du secret, secrets du désir*”⁶ and his excellent analysis of tale 70 (the *Châtelaine de Vergy*) in “*Leaky Vessels*”⁷ show that the idea of secrecy is critical for the development of the tales themselves. Regosin identifies a constant tension between “the folly of secrecy itself, the impossibility of its carriage, the necessity of its circulation and communication.”⁸ As he observes, secrets only subsist with the counterpart knowledge that they are secret; therefore secrets only exist in relationship to their being revealed, or to the knowledge that they are secret.⁹ In tales 8 and 43, it is precisely this battle between secrecy and publicity that is described.

5 See the discussion of the differences between *secret* and *privé* in the introduction to this dissertation.

6 Regosin, “*Désir du secret*.”

7 Regosin, “*Leaky Vessels*.”

8 *Ibid.*, 186.

9 Regosin, “*Désir du secret*,” 44.

Characters attempt to prevent news of their actions from traveling outside the spaces in which the actions take place, but as we will see, their efforts are futile. This leads not only to their humiliation, but also to the conclusion within the *Heptaméron* that it is not acceptable to have any inconsistency between what the heart desires and what is shown in public.

In both tales 8 and 43 the members of the households pass through closets and gallery space believing that their movements will remain undetectable. They hope and expect their paths will be untraceable. Yet their supposedly invisible paths are made visible by the porosity of the spaces they choose. Neither the *garde-robe* nor the gallery can be fully sealed from the outside world, implying that the secrecy of the affairs is doomed from the beginning. With Regosin we might call these rooms “leaky.” The ring and the chalk mark are interpretable signs, and because they make their way out of the *garde-robe* and gallery, they make those spaces narratable. They allow for a textual mapping of the space in the tales.

Domestic space in the *Heptaméron* is governed by a principle that competes with the aims of the protagonists: everything that happens in it has to be fully disclosed. While the characters seeking to act out of sight presume anonymity, that anonymity is broken by the drive of others to reveal and examine all events out in the open. The protagonists clash with other characters who would rather have all space in royal homes be fully observable. In *Surveiller et punir*, Foucault describes the ultimate structure for controlling delinquents’ behavior: the panopticon prison, in which prisoners modify their behavior based on the knowledge that they are being observed. Foucault notes that the same techniques of discipline are not exclusive to the prison, but manifest themselves in every urban space. The spaces depicted in the *Heptaméron* are monitored by their inhabitants so that each deviation from normal behavior can be highlighted and discussed with a view to each story serving as an example of behavior to follow or not.

Whether the characters are punished or not, their stories serve as examples to future transgressors, with the threat that they, too, will be seen, and therefore judged. Instead of judging behavior by the norms established by human sciences such as medicine and education, the characters in the tales are judged against competing models of behavior: Platonic love, courtly love, married life, Christian theology, etc. The *devisants*' approaches all engage with the fields of sexuality and psychology. Each *devisant* critiques the behavior of the tales' characters based on the set of norms to which he or she subscribes. Authority in Foucault's text lies with the State, which uses empirical science to justify its methods of control. Authority in the *Heptaméron* comes from God, and no single theological interpretation can be scientifically proven. Rather, the overlap and conflict between the sets of norms leads to an open-ended discussion of acceptable behavior. While the panopticon prison itself was developed in the late eighteenth century, Foucault traces the origins of its power structure back to the seventeenth century. I propose it is possible to see elements of its observational principles at work in the *Heptaméron*. Although a single reading of any character's behavior or diagnosis for correction is impossible given the very nature of the collection of tales, the *Heptaméron* sets up court as a space designed to allow the observation of characters' behavior and correct their mistakes, just as punitive and as controlling as the later panopticon. On the other hand, the collection's behavioral modification techniques are more permissive, since they allow characters to choose which spaces they frequent at court. In addition, the lesson to be learned from transgressive behavior is not necessarily for the transgressors themselves, but often for those observing their actions. The idea is not to prevent the characters themselves from committing indiscretions, but to allow them to make those choices so that others can observe and learn from them. In this way, the discipline is transferred from the original sinner to those who might be tempted to commit the same sins.

II. Tale 8: The *garde-robe* as Revelatory Space

In tale 8, a husband, Bournety, thinks that he is going to sleep with a maid in a *garde-robe* but he actually has sex with his wife, who has taken the maid's place. Afterwards, his friend and neighbor, Sandras, goes into the *garde-robe* with Bournety's permission, also to share the bed with the "maid." At dawn, as he is leaving the *garde-robe*, Sandras tears the wedding ring from the wife's finger and takes it with him. The husband sees Sandras wearing the ring, which reveals that the wife—not the maid—was in the *garde-robe*. When the truth is subsequently publicized, the husband is called "coqu sans la honte de sa femme" [cuckold with no shame to his wife].¹⁰

The debate following the tale concerns the husband's infidelity and his subsequent cuckolding: Bournety's desire for the maid is thwarted by his trickster wife, who is then the victim of her husband's trickery when he accidentally allows his friend to, as the text puts it, "avoir part au butin" [have part of the spoils].¹¹ The husband's trick backfires on him, and he is the one humiliated. Yet the configuration of two men pursuing the same woman reveals the latent concern found throughout the *Heptaméron* surrounding homosocial relationships, and the worry that a male-male friendship can cause serious disruption to heterosexual marriage.¹² The tale also demonstrates the importance of the way in which tales are told. All three elements—the trickery, the male-male friendship, and the focus on storytelling—are enabled by the figure of the *garde-robe*.

10 Marguerite de Navarre, *Heptaméron*, 56. All references to the *Heptaméron* are to the Droz "Edition critique," edited by Renja Salminen, and will appear in the footnotes as *Heptaméron*. All translations are mine.

11 *Heptaméron*, 52.

12 See Ferguson, "History or Her Story?" and "Péchés capitaux," Johnson, "Male Relationships," and Reeser, "Male Androgyne" for more discussion of homosocial and homoerotic themes throughout the *Heptaméron*.

Ila. The *garde-robe*

As explored in the previous chapter, the terms *garde-robe*, *cabinet* and *armoire* do not necessarily mean the same thing, although all refer to a smaller room which is essentially a privileged space with limited access. In Marguerite's text there seems to be some class division over which houses will contain a *garde-robe* or a *cabinet*. Middle-class houses all seem to have *garde-robes*, but rarely (if ever) a *cabinet*, whereas noble houses tend to have both. The two terms are not entirely separable, however. The overlapping vocabulary seems to be reflected in tale 10, where Marguerite employs both words to refer to a single space.¹³ In tale 32, *armoire* and *cabinet* are also used interchangeably.¹⁴

The importance accorded to the *cabinet* and its *décor* is reflected in tale 42: Louise de Savoie, mother of Francis and Marguerite, is decorating a *cabinet*, an occasion so important that it is imperative for all her children to be present. The decoration of a *cabinet* is therefore depicted as a family affair, and with somewhat ceremonial significance; but it does rob the young Francis of an occasion to pursue a chambermaid.¹⁵

The *cabinet* as a repository for precious objects sometimes takes center stage in Marguerite's narratives. In tale 25, the *cabinet* is confirmed as a place where pictures are displayed, but this detail is buried within the playful reference to Francis I and his lawyer's wife having fun inside. They go into "ung cabinet le myeulx en ordre qu'il estoit possible, combien que les plus beaulx ymaiges qui y feussent, c'estoit luy et elle, en quelques habillemens qu'ilz se voulsissent mectre" [a most well-appointed cabinet, although the most beautiful images in it were him and her, whatever adornments they decided to wear].¹⁶

¹³ *Heptaméron*, 66-105.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 298-299.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 356.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 252.

The subversion of expected use of space is not uncommon for this collection. Again in tale 32, the idea of the *armoire* as a place to keep precious items is altered slightly, as the reader discovers that the precious items in question are in fact the bones of a noble woman's dead lover. Locking the woman in her room with the body is the unusual punishment that her husband devises in return for her infidelity.¹⁷ In tale 15, in the context of another noble woman's confession of infidelity, Marguerite shows that one of the sanctioned uses of a *garde-robe* is prayer. She proclaims the following: "le plus souvent qu'il m'estoit possible, je n'allasse parler à luy dans une garderobbe, faignant d'aller dire mes oraisons" [As often as possible, I went to talk with him in a *garde-robe*, pretending to go and say my prayers].¹⁸

The make-up of *cabinets*, *garde-rob*es and *armoires* adds another dimension to our understanding of them. While they are often presumed to be lockable and locked spaces off other rooms, the *Heptaméron* allows for other possibilities. If the text is followed logically, the *garde-robe* in the lawyer's house where Francis initially hides before being taken to the *cabinet* (tale 25) is independent of other rooms, opening directly onto a stairwell.¹⁹ Boudon and Chatenet also signal this possibility as corridors and passages separate closets and dressing rooms from their apartments.²⁰ In tale 70, the *cabinet* in a duchess' bedroom has no door, only a curtain pulled across the opening. The lamentation of the protagonist's lover can thus be heard clearly by another *demoiselle* in the bedroom. Nevertheless, the taboo of entry remains intact; the protagonist needs the duke's permission before he can enter the *cabinet*.²¹

In tale 8, the *garde-robe* attracts the characters with an illusion of secrecy which encourages them to act in ways they would not consider if they were in clearly public space. The

17 Ibid., 295-301

18 Ibid., 152.

19 Ibid., 251-252.

20 Boudon and Chatenet, "Les logis du roi," 67.

21 *Heptaméron*, 477-502

wife, when she instructs the maid to arrange to sleep with her husband in the *garde-robe*, believes that she can choose who enters the *garde-robe*, and that it will be only her and her husband. The husband, in turn, thinks that he knows who will be in the room, and that it could only be the maid. Both husband and wife believe that the use of the *garde-robe* guarantees limited knowledge of the affair. Yet the wife cannot determine the neighbor's movements, nor does she have any say in how the night's events are finally revealed. The husband cannot really know whether the chambermaid is actually inside, and he is also incapable of controlling the spread of information. The maid has better instincts than either husband or wife. She is the only one to realize that the way to resolve the situation safely is complete spatial separation; she must remove herself entirely from the scene: "La chambriere [...] le alla dire à sa maistresse, la priant luy donner congé de s'en aller chez ses parens, car elle ne pouvoit plus vivre en ce tourment." [The chambermaid went to tell her mistress about it, begging her to give her permission to go home to her parents, because she could no longer live in such torment.]²² The wife does not send the maid away, but does remove her from the scene of the action, taking her place in the *garde-robe*. The maid is saved from the husband's pursuit, but the outcome for the rest of the family is less than ideal.

IIb. Neoplatonism, Marriage, and the *garde-robe* as Transformational Device

Once the plot is put in motion, the *garde-robe* has a transformational effect on the characters' relationships. It allows the male-female marriage to be reconfigured into a male-male marriage, and highlights the collection's recurrent examination of male-only relationships through the lens of Neoplatonism. Marcel Tetel describes tale 8 as being "of a fabliau type"²³ and

²² Ibid., 52.

²³ Tetel, *Marguerite de Navarre's Heptaméron*, 17.

remarks that the discussion following the tale is “the first theoretical presentation of Platonic love” in the *Heptaméron*.²⁴ Yet it is not only the discussion that contains Platonic language, but also the tale itself, although the Platonic element does not refer to the husband’s relationship with either his wife or the maid. He is disinterested in his wife, and his pursuit of the maid is purely sexual (and therefore falls outside the prescriptions of Platonic love). His friendship with his male neighbor, on the other hand, is so close that “y avoit entre eulx telle amytié que, horsmis la femme, n’avoient rien party ensemble” [there was such great friendship between them that, with the exception of the wife, there was nothing that they did not share].²⁵

Their perfect friendship is made complete when they do indeed share the wife, and therefore share everything. However, the completion of their partnership results in a breakdown of their friendship and a reestablishment of the marriage on a solid footing. This reading mirrors Todd Reeser’s interpretation of three other tales in the collection, and his argument that Platonic *parfayte amytié* is a phenomenon that can occur between two male characters. In each case, however, Marguerite condemns the possibility of a male-male union. According to Reeser, Marguerite attempts to establish that “masculine oneness must be fractured to make room for, or to create, heterosexuality in the text” with the ultimate result that heterosexual marriage can become the ideal form of partnership.²⁶

In the discussion of the husband’s adulterous desire, the *devisants* raise the issue of men falling in love with, and then marrying, women who are not their Platonic “other halves.” Simontaut asks Dagoucin, perpetual defender of Platonic ideas, “Mais que feriez vous à ceulx qui n’ont pas trouvé leur moictyé? Appelez vous inconstance de la chercher en tous les lieux où on la peult trouver?” [But what would you do about those who have not yet found their half? Do

24 Ibid., 16.

25 *Heptaméron*, 52.

26 Reeser, “Male Androgyne,” 16.

you call it inconstancy to search for it in all the places where it might be found?]²⁷ Simontaut here is humorously suggesting that Platonic love can be found through sexual experimentation. But the use of “lieux” takes us back to the husband’s site of experimentation: the *garde-robe*. This room as the site of experimentation becomes more important than the object of desire; in fact, when the original object of desire—the maid—is secretly replaced with another—the wife —, the two men are no less capable of performing sexually. The *garde-robe* becomes the locus of desire, where objects are interchangeable and replaceable. The irrelevancy of specific objects of desire is even suggested in the opening of the tale, where we learn that Bournety would gain nothing from pursuing the maid except to add a little variety to his diet: “Il alla estre amoureux de sa chambriere, au change de quoy il ne gaignoit, sinon que la diversité des vyandes plaist.” [He went and fell in love with his chambermaid, from which alteration he gained nothing, except that a variety of meats is pleasant.]²⁸ In a schema of substitutable objects, desire can be transferred to any other object. At the very end of the tale, the husband realizes how devoted his wife has been. His affection is reattached to his wife, and they reportedly live happily ever after; the marriage is fixed, and one of the main structures at the basis of society is restored. However, in the meantime, desire is revealed to be taking a detour away from both the wife and the maid. The husband goes into the *garde-robe* believing the maid to be inside. After actually sleeping with his wife (unbeknownst to him), he spends the rest of the night in the company of his friend: “Ilz se vont tous deux repouser le plus longuement qu’ilz peurent. Et, au matin, en se habillant, apperceut le mary l’anneau que son compaignon avait au doïd, tout pareil de celluy qu’il avoit donné à sa femme en mariage.” [They go off together to rest as long as they could. And, in the morning, as they were getting dressed, the husband noticed the ring that his companion had on

27 *Heptaméron*, 57.

28 *Ibid.*, 52.

his finger, exactly the same as the one he had given his wife in marriage.]²⁹ The friend not only takes the wedding ring but is also wearing it, and the text makes it clear that they leave the husband's house together, rest awhile, and then dress together in the morning. A symbolic male-male marriage takes place, mediated by the characters' passage through the *garde-robe*. The revelation of this same-sex union is what brings the husband to his senses with regards to his own behavior. The limits set on their friendship state that the two men shared everything but the wife. Those limits were broken, and the friendship takes on dimensions which threaten the viability of Bournety's heterosexual marriage. He is shocked into seeing the danger of having too close a friendship with his neighbor.

Dagoucin explains during the *devisants*' discussion that if you love someone who is identical to yourself, you run the risk of falling in love with yourself:

Pource que l'homme ne peult savoir, dist Dagoucin, où est ceste moictyé, dont l'unyon est sy esgalle que l'un ne differe à l'autre, il fault que l'homme s'arreste où l'amour le contrainct, et que pour quelque occasion qui puisse advenir, ne change le cueur ne la volonté. Car, sy celle que vous aymez est tellement semblable à vous et d'une mesme volonté, ce sera vous que vous aymerez et non pas elle.

[Since a man cannot know, said Dagoucin, where this other half is, union with which is so equal that one does not differ from the other, man must stop where love constrains him, and no matter what opportunity may arise, change neither his heart nor his will. Because, if she whom you love is so similar to yourself and has the same will, you will be loving yourself and not her.]³⁰

Dagoucin, who is usually the proponent of Platonic ideals, is the one who argues here against continuing the search for one's "other half" after falling in love. The tale itself suggests that one's other half might possibly be your male neighbor. There is no difference between Bournety and Sandras; they are described as being "de pareille condition." Their "volunté" is

29 Ibid., 54.

30 Ibid., 57.

identical; they both pursue the chambermaid; and indeed the only difference between them—possession of the wife—is erased.³¹

IIc. Revealing the Story and Telling the Tale: the *garde-robe* as Public Space

In addition to revealing a dangerously close male-male friendship, the *garde-robe* is a place in which different versions of events occur for different people. All protagonists are convinced that what they think happened actually took place; the husband and his friend only discover the truth when the wife's wedding ring escapes the *garde-robe* and instructs them otherwise. It must not be forgotten that the events take place at night, meaning that the *garde-robe* would be pitch black, allowing nobody to see anything. In addition, both the wife and the neighbor take care not to speak so as not to reveal their identities. It is only the ring's status as evidence that allows the real story to be known and the tale to be fully told at all. Yet the narrative never states exactly who makes the tale public. The text lingers over the moment when the ring leaves the *garde-robe*: “Sur le point de l'aube du jour, cest homme se leva d'auprès d'elle, et, en se jouant à elle, au partir du lict, luy arracha l'anneau qu'elle avoit au doigt, duquel son mary l'avoit espousée.” [Just before daybreak, the man got up from lying next to her, and, tussling with her as he left the bed, tore from her finger the ring with which her husband had married her.]³² It is a physically aggressive action; the phrase “se jouer à elle” indicates that the neighbor struggles with the wife. He has to tear the ring from her finger—*arracher*—it must be wrestled out of the secret space of the *garde-robe*. The neighbor's movement out of the bed is marked twice in the phrase “cet homme *se leva d'auprès d'elle* et, se jouant d'elle *au partir du lit*” (emphasis mine), again highlighting the moment when the information about the tryst,

31 See Girard, *Vérité romanesque* for a detailed discussion of the literary trope in which two male characters demonstrate their desire for each other through the desire for the same object or person.

32 *Heptaméron*, 53.

revealed by the ring that he should not have, makes its move from the secret space of the *garde-robe* into the wider world.

While Sandras, the neighbor, is responsible for the ring leaving the *garde-robe*, he has no real motivation for taking it. The ring is obviously a sign of identity; to the husband, it identifies his wife as the woman in the *garde-robe*. The friend, however, has no reason to suspect that the woman in the *garde-robe* is not the maid. There is no indication in the text that he has any doubts about the woman's identity; as far as he is concerned, he "knows" that it is the maid. This leaves the reader to wonder, if the friend was not looking to establish someone's identity with the ring, why he would take it at all. In the *fabliaux*, rings do not only symbolize marriage but more generally represent the vagina and therefore women's sexuality.³³ Far from being given freely, as in marriage, the ring here is taken forcibly, suggesting that for Sandras it is a trophy of his conquest.

Trophy it may be, but Sandras is not aware of the potential repercussions of his action, and the ring can reveal its hidden truth. The *garde-robe* yields its secrets in a way that suggests that the information itself is trying to escape. After the truth of the night is initially revealed to husband and friend, the husband tries to limit how far the story will spread. He goes back to his wife to patch up their marriage, but asks his friend not to talk about what has happened. But, as so often happens, "comme toute chose dicte à l'aureille est preschée sur le toict, quelque temps après, la verité en fut congneue, et l'appelloit l'on coqu sans la honte de sa femme." [since everything whispered in the ear is preached from the rooftops, a short time afterwards the truth was known, and he was called cuckold with no shame to his wife.]³⁴ It is clear that once the story leaves the *garde-robe*, its spread is inevitable. The story is "preschée sur le toict"—broadcast in

33 Bibring, "Of Swords," 151-167. White, "Sexual Language," 203-10.

34 Ibid., 56.

the most public way possible. Sandras is the most likely candidate, but he is not named as the storyteller; the use of the passive voice in “la vérité fut connue” hides the identity of the secret-teller, and gives agency to “la vérité” which seems to act on its own in order to become known.

The narrative’s need to be told trumps any logic that can be ascribed to the characters’ actions. Following Richard Regosin’s observations about tale 70, it becomes clear that the revelation of a secret is a function of narrative itself; the truth must be revealed in order for the tale to be told:

Narratives in Marguerite’s text are generated by secrets but we might also say that secrets are in turn characterized by their narratability. Only the possibility of disclosure makes a secret a secret, and in its paradoxical and seemingly inevitable exposition what is produced is not an unmediated truth but a narrative.³⁵

Regosin highlights how the Châtelaine de Vergy’s story is overheard while she is lamenting in a *garde-robe*, and transported by the listener to the wider world. Similarly in tale 43, Jambicque’s efforts to restrict the flow of information by closing off a gallery are undone when her lover puts a chalk mark on her back, making her carry the evidence of their affair into public space on her own body. In tale 8, the narration dwells on the way in which information spreads from one place to another, but it is even less clear how exactly the information moves; it is simply broadcast. In terms of the space of the tales, tale 8 and others demonstrate that in order for all tales to be told, all domestic space, including secret space, must be made accessible.

For Regosin, the revelation of a secret is a necessary element in the art of storytelling, and comes as a logical reaction to the climate at court:

In the world of courtly love everyone knows that secrets exist everywhere, and the urge to find and enter or expose them is constantly stimulated by the assumption that there is always some forbidden knowledge masked beneath the denial and dissimulation that characterize the formal or public practice of courtship and of life at the court.³⁶

35 Regosin, “Leaky Vessels,” 183.

36 Regosin, “Leaky Vessels,” 192.

He also remarks that the revelation of secrets, although expected and a part of court life, is an element that some characters (including the *devisants*) resist:

If Dagoucin, and for that matter the Châtelaine de Vergy, had their way, secrecy would stifle and even eliminate narrative. But the desire to keep a secret, and the will to do so, are pressured from within by the equally strong and paradoxical inclination to betray secrecy, to share and to tell stories.³⁷

The protagonists of tale 8 join the Châtelaine in her attempts not to fall prey to the spreading of secrets. Both the husband and wife believe that their use of a secret space will allow them to control any revelation of what happens in that space. But as Regosin explains, secrets depend on the possibility of their being told; secret knowledge feeds into the public domain, making it impossible to cordon off events into the spaces in which they occur. The connection between the secret spaces and public space is effected by the trajectories of the characters who carry the information with them. Secrets must travel from place to place in order to be revealed; what the *Heptaméron* often shows is their movement. As Regosin says of the duke in the Châtelaine de Vergy's story, "the Duke functions as a leaky vessel, charged with a secret that he transports from one place to another and where it seeps out; what breaches the vessel and causes the leak is the breach of faith that is the broken promise."³⁸ Characters harbor secret desires. These desires are revealed by their eyes, words, or actions in a secret space. The space in which they are revealed is presumed to be "safe"—the revelation should not be revealed further. However, someone else sees or hears what is revealed. That person then moves from one place to another, carrying the information which is revealed in a different place. It is therefore possible to trace the information's trajectory from secret space to clearly public space.

The heart's revelations function in the same fashion as those coming out of the *garde-robe*; it is equally a secret space that is carried around with you wherever you go. Feelings

37 Ibid., 192.

38 Ibid., 195.

contained in the heart can be revealed by eyes, careless speech, or actions, in both public and secret space. The *devisants* make clear the link between secret space, public space and the interior life of the heart in their discussion about Platonic *parfaite amitié* following tale 8. The revelation of love, according to Dagoucin, is contrary to the notion of loving perfectly:

Mais j'ay si grant peur que la demonstacion face tort à la perfection de mon amour que je crains que celle de qui je devrois desirer l'amour semblable l'entende. Et mesmes, je n'ouse penser ma pensée, de peur que mes yeulx en revelent quelque chose; car, tant plus je tiens ce feu cellé et couvert, et plus en moy croist le plaisir de savoir que j'ayme parfaitement.

[But I am so afraid that showing my love will lessen its perfection that I fear that the lady whose love I should desire will hear of it. I dare not even think my thoughts, from fear that my eyes might reveal something; because, the more I keep this love hidden and concealed, the more the pleasure of knowing that I love perfectly grows in me.]³⁹

The secrecy of the *garde-robe* creates the illusion that characters can act on their desire and still keep the love “celé et couvert,” a common topos in French sixteenth-century symbolic thought.⁴⁰ Just as secret space will not conceal secret actions, Dagoucin’s eyes are not capable of concealing what is happening in his heart. The heart is no more a truly secret space than the *garde-robe* or gallery. In tale 8, it takes the revelation of characters’ movements through space to make known the movements of their hearts. The reader may wonder why the ring leaves the *garde-robe*, but the logic of Marguerite’s text—in which all aspects of human nature must be examined—will simply not allow it to stay there.

III. Tale 43: Mapping the Self onto Gallery Space

In tale 43, Jambicque, a lady in waiting to a princess, attempts to conduct an affair in secret and not reveal her identity to the gentleman she loves. To conceal herself, she chooses a

³⁹ *Heptaméron*, 58.

⁴⁰ For example, Maurice Scève’s emblem “Celer ne le puis” depicts a lamp with an open door which is incapable of hiding what is inside. The lamp is an analogy for the poet, who cannot hide his love.

gallery which she can close off at both ends, and meets the gentleman only at night, so that he cannot see her. During the day, she uses a page boy to communicate with him so that she has no direct contact with him in public. Her plan is undone when, in his curiosity to learn her identity, the gentleman draws a chalk mark on her back in the gallery, and identifies her by the mark after she reappears in public. When confronted by the gentleman, she denies any knowledge of the affair, even when he describes how he recognized her. She reports him to the princess, who banishes him from the court and makes him swear never to talk of the matter again.

The gallery as employed by Jambicque plays a critical role in determining the scope of her actions and the possibility for her lover to undermine her authority. Its place at the juncture between clearly public space and secret space makes it the ideal frame through which to consider the debate over seclusion, secrecy, and separable space. Three issues arise from the tale. Firstly, a general discussion of how the gallery functions in terms of public and secret space. Secondly, the equivalence that Jambicque creates between the gallery space and her heart, and her attempt to separate off a gallery space in the castle in the same way that she conceals the movements of her heart. Tying the two together results in a dependency that makes her heart vulnerable; although Jambicque believes she can make the gallery an impermeable space, the nature of the space as both open and closed betrays her. Once the events that take place in the gallery are publicized, the secrets of Jambicque's heart are automatically revealed, as she has made the gallery the space in which her heart and its desires are housed. Finally, the tale demonstrates how secrecy in the home is destroyed by narration. While the secrecy of the gallery is broken by the gentleman when he writes on Jambicque's back, the story which tells the gallery's secrets undergoes multiple retellings before its final version is given by Geburon. The issue of the continuity of space is closely linked to the circulation of information. Just as in tale 8, the spatial logic of the

Heptaméron as a whole becomes clear: no space can be designated as secret, because all space must be narratable.

IIIa. Gallery Space

As observed in the previous chapter, the gallery in the sixteenth century can be both a public passageway and a room where people spend time. In the *Heptaméron*, galleries of both types feature in several tales. Part of tale 15 could easily take place in Francis' new *grande galerie*. During a complicated story involving many deceptions carried out by a husband and wife against each other, the husband at one point talks with a gentleman suspected of being his wife's lover "en une gallerie près de la chambre du roy" [in a gallery near the king's bedroom].⁴¹ The floor plan of Fontainebleau indicates that the *grande galerie* was indeed close to Francis' bedroom. The gallery in the tale is not a narrow or secluded passageway where the two gentlemen can talk in secret, but their conversation is witnessed by "ung grant nombre" [a great number]⁴² of the husband's friends and family who had been instructed to kill the other gentleman the previous evening. Far from being a simple *lieu de passage*, the gallery in tale 15 is clearly a gathering place to which nobles would have access as they would the king's *chambre*.

More of a passageway is described in tale 58, where two *demoiselles* in a gallery observe a gentleman making his way around one of Francis I's castles, trying to find a secret way to approach the stairway leading to his lover's bedroom. The gallery where the women stand gives a unique vantage point, as the gentleman's path is described from their position, from where they can also see up to their friend's bedroom window and can warn her that he is on his way. The castle in tale 58 may also be based on Fontainebleau, as Francis had moved his court there

41 *Heptaméron*, 155.

42 *Heptaméron*, 154.

towards the end of his reign, and one of the characters in the tale is an adult Marguerite de France, Francis' daughter who was born in 1523. Suspecting that the gentleman might be up to no good in the pursuit of their companion, Marguerite and a friend walk from a communal room where many men and women are playing games, to watch from a gallery as the gentleman, starting from the same place, descends a staircase into the courtyard, comes part-way back up the staircase, meets someone he does not want to see, goes back down into the courtyard and uses another staircase to reach the second floor. They then watch him progress around another gallery and reach a third staircase which will take him up to his lover's bedroom on the third floor. This description gives a unique insight into how the castle functioned in terms of public space and observation. The castle space seems to be transparent for its occupants; everyone's movement is visible to everyone else if they are interested in paying attention. Here, the three women—two in the gallery and one upstairs at her bedroom window—signal the gentleman's approach to the bedroom by shouting so that the whole castle can hear. The gallery here functions in two different ways: for the gentleman, it is part of his tortuous path through the castle which he takes in trying to make himself unobservable; but for the young women, the gallery where they station themselves has the opposite result since they can easily follow the gentleman's movements. The fact that they have a look-out post that suggests their omniscience with regard to the gentleman's movements and use their observations to make the man stop his pursuit of their friend, gives the castle layout panopticon qualities. In the castle, knowledge of being watched alters and corrects the observed person's behavior.

In tale 14, a man in Milan tries to steal into his lover's house and evade her husband, father-in-law, and brothers-in-law. In order to underline the difficulty of the project, the narrator has the noble woman give detailed instructions on how to get into the building without being

seen. We learn that the house is constructed around a courtyard, and has a main staircase which is public and highly visible, and a second, more hidden staircase which will allow the lover to avoid the courtyard. The small staircase leads to a gallery, which in turn leads to the doors of at least four bedrooms: the woman and her husband's, and those where many other male family members sleep. The tale emphasizes the need for characters to be resourceful and flexible in their use of space. The courtyard in this case is avoidable, but the gallery is not, and it becomes the most dangerous space for the hopeful lover. The gallery is therefore the place of potential discovery, of the chance encounter, where the hoped-for invisibility can turn quickly into hyper-visibility as characters are discovered in places where they should not be.

All three tales—14, 15, and 58—demonstrate the gallery's role in the game of seeing and being seen that is so important to life at court. It is the site of intense anguish about the possibility of being seen. Tales 15 and 58 show how likely it is to be observed while in a gallery, since others will often linger there, or one side of the gallery will be open for others to see you pass through it. Indeed, the gallery is specifically chosen in tale 58 as the place to have a particular conversation precisely because others will be there to witness it; the deceptive husband exploits its function as a place of spectacle. Yet tales 14 and 15 show how often a character comes to presume that he or she can pass through a gallery unseen. In tale 14, the protagonist is successful; in tale 15, he is not.

The dual purpose of the gallery—the *galerie de passage* and the *galerie-pièce*—is expressed in tale 43. Here the gallery is noteworthy for its conversion from passage to enclosed space. When Jambicque meets her lover in the gallery, she closes off the doors at either end: “Quant le gentilhomme fut arrivé où elle estoit, elle va incontinant fermer les deux portes par où l'on pouvoit venir sur eulx”[When the gentleman arrived where she was, she hastened to close

the two doors from where they might be disturbed.]⁴³ The purpose is clear: to prevent other people from entering the gallery. Jambicque seems confident that closing off the gallery at both ends is security enough. Closing the doors is supposed to guarantee that they will not be disturbed, a presumption that is in fact borne out throughout the tale. The public, circulatory space therefore becomes an exclusive space through the main character's action of simply closing the two doors. The tale reenacts Francis I's rearrangement of the circulatory space at Fontainebleau when he modified his gallery for more personal use. But this reenactment is problematic in the tale, because it allows a character at court to act in a way that is not observable by other court members and thus hide a discrepancy between her heart's desires and her outward actions. Closing off the gallery allows Jambicque to act on her heart's desires without any evidence of those actions appearing in public, something which was roundly criticized in the *devisants'* discussion of tale 8.

Closing off the gallery's ends is not the only precaution that Jambicque takes to ensure that her identity does not leak into public space. Before she gets to the gallery, she creates a zone of anonymity between the public space of the princess' bedroom and the gallery. When she has made contact with the gentleman via the page boy, she takes a different route to the gallery than the one he will take: “Allez luy dire qu'il y a quelcun de ses amys qui veult parler à luy en la gallerie du jardin de ceans.’ Et, ainsi que le paige y alla, elle passa par la garderobbe de sa maîtresse et s'en alla en ceste gallerie, ayant mis sa cornette basse et son touret de nez.” [‘Go and tell him that there is one of his friends who wants to speak with him in the garden gallery of this building.’ And when the page went over, she slipped into her mistress' *garde-robe* and went to the gallery, having put on her veil and mask.]⁴⁴ By entering the *garde-robe* attached to the

43 *Heptaméron*, 361.

44 *Heptaméron*, 361.

princess' bedroom, she assures that only a very small number of people would ever be able to follow her. The gentleman would certainly not be among them. As the discussion of tale 8 shows, the *garde-robe* has a special taboo status which is for the most part respected by court residents; Jambicque cannot be easily followed in there. The *garde-robe* here acts as a cloak for her whereabouts. It clearly has more than one exit since Jambicque can pass through it to get to the garden. Should she be observed entering, the observer would still not be able to know whether she remained in there or went elsewhere; once inside, her movements and activities become unknowable to people in the princess' bedroom, who are on the public side of the door. Jambicque can disappear as if she were a magician's assistant entering a magic box. She will reappear at a given moment, but until that time, she can move around without being observed and identified. What is observable to the people outside is her presence in the closet; anything else would be pure speculation.

Since seeing is knowledge and knowledge is power, Jambicque needs to break the visual links between her physical presence, her movement, and her ultimate whereabouts. When Jambicque leaves the *garde-robe*, she manages to transport the anonymity it affords her beyond its walls. When she puts on "sa cornette basse et son touret de nez" [her veil and mask]⁴⁵ she is assured of her anonymity even though she is once again entering "public" space. The closet's promise of seclusion can be expanded beyond its boundaries. She succeeds in creating a buffer zone between the court and the gallery where she meets the gentleman, with the result that even if someone were to observe her exiting the closet back into the princess' bedroom on the other side of the *garde-robe*, that person would not be able to deduce that she had been in the gallery.

From Jambicque's use of court space it is possible to surmise that while private space does not exist, it is possible for members of the court to adapt public space to make it secret. The

45 *Heptaméron*, 361.

garde-robe, as revealed by tale 8 and here in tale 43, already has secret status since convention dictates that only select people are allowed in it. But Jambicque also demonstrates the malleability of public space as she manages to circulate in it without her identity being revealed. At first sight, court space seems not to be fixed in one role; a skillful tactician can adapt it at will.

IIIb. The Concordance between Heart and Gallery

Jambicque's efforts provide her with the cover she needs to act on her desires without being discovered. In creating a zone of anonymity between the bedroom and the gallery, it is as if she has separated the two spaces and made a break in court space. She disappears from the bedroom and resurfaces in the gallery although her "appearance" is not visual. She is present in the bedroom as her public persona, but in the darkness and seclusion of the gallery, what she presents is herself as anonymous desiring subject.⁴⁶ Her heart cannot be revealed in public as it does not correspond to her outward appearance: "Et, quant à elle, jamais ne parloit à homme, sinon tout hault et avecq une grande audace, tellement qu'elle avoit le bruit d'estre ennemye mortelle de toute amour, combien que le contraire estoit en son cuer." [And, for her part, she never spoke to a man, except loudly and with great audacity, such that she had the reputation of being the mortal enemy of any love, even though in her heart it was quite the opposite.]⁴⁷ The gallery becomes the space in which she stores what she cannot contain "en son cuer." When the gentleman writes on her clothing, the contents of her heart are shown on her visible surface, allowing him to construct a tale based on what he can see.

Lionello Sozzi outlines the various metaphors pertaining to the heart. It is almost invariably set up as interior space, a fortress to be protected or a repository for precious goods.

⁴⁶ See Gates, "Telling Stories," in which she argues that Jambicque manages to keep her identity secret even after the revelation, thereby allowing her to act as a desiring subject.

⁴⁷ *Heptaméron*, 360.

He examines the nature of the individual's mental or spiritual space. As he describes, "pour Marguerite le seul bonheur possible a une source intérieure, il est de nature exclusivement spirituelle: le royaume de Dieu ne peut être atteint que dans ce que Montaigne appellera plus tard l'arrière-boutique de l'âme" [for Marguerite the only possible happiness has an interior source; it is of an exclusively spiritual nature. The kingdom of God can only be reached through what Montaigne will later call the back-room of the soul.]⁴⁸ If the heart is the source of spiritual happiness, then its movements must be morally above reproach. Jambicque's inner desires and behavior do not conform to her outer behavior.

The heart and secret desires are the subject of much debate amongst the *devisants* throughout the volume. Regosin, in discussing secrecy, argues that it is not possible to keep desire secret, and that the desiring subject will always give some signal of his or her desire: "le désir troublant se fait voir, ou se fait entendre, mais sous une forme inévitablement dissimulée et souvent à l'insu du sujet désirant." [troubling desire lets itself be seen, or heard, but in a form which is inevitably dissimulated and often unbeknownst to the desiring subject.]⁴⁹ In the case of the Seigneur d'Avannes, he examines whether the *devisants* judge the characters' intentions or actions to be culpable:

Saffredent fait double reproche à la dame: "pour se monstrier plus vertueuse par dehors qu'elle n'estoit au coeur, et pour dissimuler ung amour que la raison de nature vouloit qu'elle portast à si honneste seigneur." Contre toute sagesse, la "saige dame" s'est laissée "morir, par faulte de se donner le plaisir qu'elle desiroit couvertement!"

[Saffredent is doubly reproachful of the lady, "for having shown herself to be more virtuous on the outside than she was in her heart, and for having hidden a love that reason and nature wanted her to reveal to such an honest gentleman. Contrary to all wisdom, the "wise lady" let herself "die, by not allowing herself the pleasure that she desired secretly!"]⁵⁰

48 Sozzi, "Espace intérieur," 43.

49 Regosin, "Désir du secret," 44.

50 Ibid., 49.

Parlamente advances that the woman's reason should not have allowed the love to develop, whereas Saffredent sees her desire as natural.⁵¹ Saffredent's interpretation depends on a vision of the woman as a fragmented character whose desire is unknown to the woman herself; Parlamente sees her rather as a unified individual whose virtuous actions do not contradict the purity of her soul.

John Lyons identifies the heart as the repository for desire, which, if it is not allowed to be expressed, becomes harmful:

More common in these tales is the description of the heart as the repository of certain pressures which could lead to action, especially to sexual activity, or could be kept under tight control. The physiological manifestation of the passions, when they are *stored* in the heart, is violent and often mortal.⁵²

If characters do not act on their passions, the stored feelings will eventually manifest themselves through the body. But in tales 8 and 43, the protagonists are not storing everything in their hearts. They find an outlet, releasing their heart's store in a limited space, relieving the pressure on the heart, and reducing the risk to the body. In both these tales, the protagonists' efforts to avoid showing their passions via their bodies are thwarted when their amorous encounters in secret spaces leave them carrying a visible sign denoting their actions. The mark on Jambicque's back, and the wedding ring in the possession of the neighbor and then the husband, carry out the same function of revealing the truth of the heart as consumptive illnesses or nosebleeds suffered by other characters in the *Heptaméron*.

Dagoucin, the *devisants'* recognized Ficinian, argues this issue from the Platonic point of view, proclaiming that it is better never to be in the presence of a beloved person for fear of revealing his heart, which would make his love less perfect. He makes the case that perfect love will never let itself be revealed for fear that it will fail, and that a perfect lover will be content

51 Ibid., 51.

52 Lyons, "Cueur," 110.

with the knowledge of his love, and not need to express it or have it known. He proposes a model in which a difference between the heart and outward action would be acceptable, but it is a model which is roundly dismissed by the other *devisants*. Evidently Jambicque does not love perfectly, revealing her desire and acting on it.

As discussed above, in order for Jambicque to use the gallery as the receptacle for the contents of her heart, she must isolate it from the rest of court space. The ability to treat space as fractured and not continuous echoes an idea about Renaissance space put forward by Mircea Eliade in *The Sacred and the Profane*. Eliade identifies a distinction between sacred and profane space, in that space for the religious man is ruptured and discontinuous: “For religious man, space is not homogeneous, he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others.”⁵³ He argues that profane space, on the other hand, is homogeneous, and cannot be thought of in the same way.

Daniel Russell uses this difference between sacred and profane space to examine one instance in the *Heptaméron* where Francis I has sex with his lawyer’s wife in the lawyer’s house, then prays for forgiveness in a church on his way home from every rendezvous. Francis’ behavior is not condemned outright by the *devisants*, provided that his repentance is sincere. In interpreting tale 25, Daniel Russell proposes a fragmented idea of the self which manifests itself spatially, based on Eliade’s theory. In tale 25, Russell argues that Marguerite can see her brother as a “lustful young rake” when in his lawyer’s closet, and a “devout, prayerful and repentant man” when in the monastery.⁵⁴ Russell explains that the conception of self within which Francis and Marguerite worked had multiple possibilities; the self was not fixed throughout time but changeable, and environments influenced the changes. In analyzing tale 25, he describes a series

53 Eliade, *Sacred*, 20.

54 Russell, “Conception of Self,” 168.

of places that are distinct and separated by indeterminate space: “The various incidents of which the story is composed occur in a series of enclosed places that are isolated from, and largely unrelated to, each other. In each of these places, the king plays a slightly different role.”⁵⁵

Between the closet and the monastery are the dark and treacherous city streets; between the closet and the bedroom, shady staircases and corridors. The streets and corridors are transitional spaces, ill-defined and not integral to the formation of Francis’ character or the plot of the tale: “these are the opaque narrative voids between the places.”⁵⁶ There is a changing perception of space, as Russell outlines: in the sixteenth century, the view changes to a more modern concept, one in which space is infinite, continuous, and homogeneous.

Russell explains that because a single tale is typically made up of one *fait divers*, character development that would become common in later narrative forms cannot occur: “No given event ever entirely reflects the whole Renaissance self.”⁵⁷ Russell identifies this trait with a self that is spatially and temporally more medieval than modern: “The only way a life can be seen primarily as a series of different roles is through a sense of time that is not linear and systematic; then, each moment in a person’s life can be perceived as relatively discrete and separate, in some sense, from both past and future.”⁵⁸ Each role, then, is formed according to the space in which the individual finds himself. In the monastery, Francis can be thought of as pious, despite coming there directly from a secret rendezvous with his lawyer’s wife. The recognition of a fragmented self is played out in the debate amongst the *devisants* following the tale. Some argue that his behavior is immoral, whereas others argue that his prayer in the monastery is sincere. Russell argues convincingly that a favorable view of Francis’ behavior only makes sense if the self is not conceived as being continuous: “Marguerite could admire her brother in this

55 Ibid., 171.

56 Ibid., 171.

57 Ibid., 171.

58 Ibid., 169.

instance only if she saw the different moments of his adventure as no more than loosely and superficially related by mechanisms much different from, and much less strict than, the all-encompassing modern laws of psychological causality.”⁵⁹ Time and space, therefore, do not function according to our modern linear perception of them, leading us, in Russell’s view, to misinterpret Francis I’s motivations. The king in tale 25 can move freely but “[p]lace in the Renaissance, like costume, must often have had a vague, but real influence on personality.”⁶⁰

Jambicque’s use of space is a similar attempt on her part to maintain different personas based on the spaces in which she finds herself. One persona exists based on her desired public reputation, while another reflects her heart’s desires that she herself cannot admit in public. If we compare Jambicque’s use of space with Francis I’s, there is again a conflict between whether a character’s persona is considered to be continuous or fragmentary. In this particular case, Jambicque makes every effort to divide her actions between different places in the castle, corresponding to the truth of what her heart feels and the reputation she wishes to maintain in public. When she meets the gentleman in the gallery for the first time, she tells him: “Il y a long temps, mon amy, que l’amour que je vous porte m’a faict desirer de trouver lieu et occasion de vous pouvoir veoir, mais la craincte de mon honneur a esté pour ung temps si forte qu’elle m’a contraincte, malgré ma volonté, de dissimuler ceste passion” [For a long time, my love, the love that I feel for you has made me wish to find the place and opportunity to see you, but the fear for my honor was for a time so strong that it forced me, despite my will, to hide this passion.]⁶¹ Jambicque does not need simply an opportunity to meet the object of her love, but also a separate place: *occasion* and *lieu*. Finding a separate place where she can speak to him signals her need to keep her actions out of clearly public space. She is conscious that publicizing her feelings would

59 Ibid., 168.

60 Ibid., 174.

61 *Heptaméron*, 361.

ruin her reputation, and readily admits to him that her aim has been to “dissimuler ceste passion.”⁶² She becomes the gentleman’s lover on condition that knowledge of their affair remain strictly within the limits of the gallery:

[S]i vous me voulez promectre de me aymer et de jamais n’en parler à personne ne vous vouloir enquerir de moy qui je suis, je vous assureray bien que je vous seray loyalle et bonne amye, et que jamais je n’aymeray autre que vous. Mais j’aymerois myeulx mourir que vous sceussiez qui je suis.

[If you will promise to love me and never talk of it to anyone nor try to find out from me who I am, I can well assure you that I will be your loyal and good love, and that I will never love anyone but you. But I would rather die than have you know who I am.]⁶³

Even though they occupy the same space every night, Jambicque manages not to communicate her identity to the gentleman. By her dictate, the only communication about the affair can happen in the gallery, through the contact of their bodies, separating that particular space from the rest of the court. The closet acts like the zones of indeterminate space identified by Russell in tale 25; Jambicque passes through it to reemerge in the gallery with a different persona. For Jambicque’s purposes, the gallery marks the division between her public persona and her secret one.

Yet according to Eliade, since none of the spaces in which she operates are sacred, the type of division she enacts cannot properly function. In contrast to young Francis’ transformation into a pious penitent under the influence of the chapel building, no such true transformation can take place for Jambicque because she remains forever in profane space.

Her attempt to establish two different personas based on her use of space are met with derision both by other characters in the tale and by the *devisants* themselves. Even when confronted with what she knows to be the truth, Jambicque does not acknowledge that the gentleman is right. She insists that her persona in court space should not be impugned. She calls on the gentleman’s own knowledge as her evidence:

62 Ibid., 361.

63 Ibid., 361.

Avez-vous jamais veu ne ouy dire que je aye eu amy ny serviteur? Je suis seure que non, et m'esbahys d'où vous vient ceste hardiesse de tenir telz propos à une si femme de bien que moy, car vous m'avez assez hantée ceans pour cognoistre que jamais je n'aymay autre que mon mary.

[Have you ever seen or heard it said that I have a love or servant? I am sure you have not, and I wonder where this boldness comes from that you can suggest such a thing to a respectable woman such as me, because you have spent enough time with me in this place to know that I have never loved anyone but my husband.]⁶⁴

Jambicque asks him to rely on his own knowledge of her behavior in this particular space —“ceans”—meaning the space of the court. The Jambicque of public space could not possibly be the woman in the gallery. She relies on her solid reputation to defend her, even to the point where he laughs at her claims: “Le gentilhomme, voyant une si grande fiction, ne se peut tenir de se prendre à rire et de luy dire: ‘Mademoiselle, vous ne m’estes pas tousjours si rigoureuse que maintenant’”⁶⁵ [The gentleman, seeing such a great fiction, couldn’t stop himself from laughing and saying to her, “Mademoiselle, you are not always so rigorous with me as you are now.”] Her attempt to separate one persona from another—spatially or otherwise—comes across as a calculated attempt to do so, described by the gentleman as “fiction.” The tale’s insistence on her own awareness of the discrepancy between the truth and her reputation suggests that unlike Francis, her two personas are consciously constructed. He is genuinely influenced by his surroundings; she is not. Geburon and the other *devisants* conclude that Jambicque’s actions are hypocritical, and her identity is therefore seen as being singular and continuous throughout the tale.

Hope Glidden, in her elegant article which redefines Jambicque as a desiring subject, expresses the concern that many critics judge Jambicque’s behavior based on the short description introducing the tale that was added well after the tale’s composition: “L’hypocrisie

64 Ibid., 363.

65 Ibid., 363.

d'une dame de cour fut découvert par le déménagement de ses amours, qu'elle pensait bien céler."

[The hypocrisy of a lady at court was uncovered by the violence of her love, that she thought she could hide.]⁶⁶ Glidden argues that many readers see Jambicque through the lens of hypocrisy because of this description. Yet the label of hypocrite is given to Jambicque by Geburon even before the tale begins, in the lead-up which concludes tale 42:

Il y a, dist Geburon, des personnes qui n'ont point de Dieu; ou, s'ilz en croyent quelcun, l'estiment quelque chose si loing d'eulx qu'il ne peult veoir ny entendre les mauvaises euvres qu'ilz font, et, encores qu'il les voye, pensent qu'il soit si nonchalant, qu'il ne les pugnisse point, comme ne souciant des choses de ça bas. Et de ceste oppinion, Mesdames, estoit une damoiselle [...]. Elle disoit souvent que la personne qui n'avoit affaire que à Dieu estoit bien heureuse [...]. Mais vous verrez que sa prudence ne son ypocrisie ne l'a pas garantie que son secret n'ayt esté revellé.

[There are, said Geburon, some people who have no God, Or, if they believe in one, they regard him to be something so far from them that he can neither see nor hear the wicked deeds that they do, and even think that if he sees them, he is so indifferent that he will not punish them, as if he were not concerned with matters down here. And holding this opinion, my ladies, was a young lady [...]. She often said that whoever only had to deal with God was very lucky [...]. But you will see that neither her prudence nor her hypocrisy could assure that her secret would not be revealed.]⁶⁷

Geburon's introduction presents Jambicque as someone who imagines that distance creates conditions under which God is unable to see her actions. Yet Geburon's initial assertion that Jambicque believes God to be too far away to witness her affair seems undermined by one of the reasons that Jambicque uses to justify her actions to herself "il n'y eust que Dieu seul qui congneust son cuer" [only God knew her heart].⁶⁸

In fact, this justification comes not through direct speech from Jambicque's mouth, but via Geburon's third-person account of her inner monologue. Just as God can see into Jambicque's heart at all times, making her persona not dependent on the space in which she finds herself, the readers and *devisants* also have a privileged, omniscient and omnipresent relationship

66 From the Garnier Flammarion edition of the *Heptaméron*, 354.

67 *Heptaméron*, 359.

68 *Heptaméron*, 360.

to Jambicque. They do not need to be in the gallery with her to know what happens; they can hear it in the tale. Geburon invokes God's judgment of Jambicque, but the evaluation of her actions is actually carried out by both her peers and the circle of *devisants*. It is precisely the question of distance that allows *devisants* and readers alike to see all of Jambicque's actions in one continuous line, and therefore judge them to be inconsistent with each other and hypocritical. Observing the spaces of the gallery and the princess' bedroom from a distance, and considering the whole tale as a single narrative unit, discrepancies can be noted and critiqued.

The omnipresent eye of God, *devisants*, and ultimately the text's readers prefigures the panopticon structure described by Foucault. While the regulatory powers of the panopticon prison and the panoptic city are established and maintained by the state—they are essentially secular and underpinned by discourses of truth base on empirical science—God's vision and judgment in the *Heptaméron* are reinforced by a viewing public found in court settings. It is Geburon who originally proposes that Jambicque wishes to hide herself from God, but since he concedes that he can see her heart no matter how far away he might be, her attempts at self-concealment relate only to the people around her at court.

IIIc. Mapping the Space, Writing and Telling the Tale

What becomes clear in Jambicque's case is that just as the actions that take place in the gallery cannot be hidden from the outside world, neither can the movements of the heart. The *devisants* tend to conclude that the gap between private and public morality should be collapsed. Since the gallery is established as a space into which her secret persona is projected, then when the gallery gives up its secrets, so does her heart. If all space becomes narratable and continuous, then so must Jambicque herself, since knowledge of her inner self is revealed in one closed-off

space. In his article on the heart, Lyons explains that the revelation which reconciles Jambicque's heart with her reputation must occur because "the *Heptaméron* has a deep ideological commitment to the concept of the coherence of the self" since characters' intentions are made known throughout the tales.⁶⁹ For Lyons, the role of narration is to surmise as accurately as possible a protagonist's intentions, which are not actually knowable. This involves a certain tension between characters and narrators:

Another way to describe the discursive enterprise of the *Heptaméron* is to say that the narrator and the character are at odds, for the role of many major characters is to dissimulate, to withhold, while the role of the narrator is to reintroduce or recover what the character has withheld.⁷⁰

Jambicque is condemned both for her cover-up and for the affair itself, as Geburon makes clear in his conclusion to the tale:

Par cecy, Mesdames, pouvez veoir comme celle qui avoit preferé la gloire du monde à sa conscience a perdu l'un et l'autre. Car aujourd'huy est leu aux yeux d'un chacun ce qu'elle vouloit cacher à ceulx de son ami; et, fuyant la mocquerie d'un, est tombé en la mocquerie de tous.

From this, ladies, you can see how she who preferred earthly glory to her conscience lost both, because today everyone can read what she wanted to hide from her love; and, fleeing his mockery, was mocked by everyone.⁷¹

Geburon claims that everyone now mocks Jambicque because what she tried to hide in the gallery is visible in public. Not only that, it is also *read* by everyone. The narration makes Jambicque into a continuous text, whose inconsistencies may be examined side by side. The transformation from a communicating body to a readable text, and the battle over whose account will dominate and therefore determine public opinion of Jambicque begins in the darkness of the gallery. Jambicque's lover realizes that if he is to know the identity of the woman he is meeting every night, he must establish some kind of link between her body in the gallery and her body in

69 Lyons, "Coeur," 116.

70 Ibid., 116.

71 *Heptaméron*, 365.

public space. His solution is to write on her with chalk, and then have her transport his writing out of the gallery on her body:

et l'autre foiz qu'elle le manda, porta avecques luy de la craye. Et, en l'embrassant, luy en fist une merche sur l'espaulle, par derriere, sans qu'elle s'en apperceust. Et, incontinent qu'elle fut partie, s'en alla hastivement le gentilhomme en la chambre de sa maistresse, et se tint auprès de la porte pour regarder le derriere des espaulles de celles qui y entreroient.

[and the other time that she sent for him, he took with him some chalk. And, while embracing her, made a mark on her shoulder with it, on the back, without her noticing. And, as soon as she had left, the gentleman hurried to her mistress' bedroom, and waited by the door so that he could see the backs of the shoulders of all the women walking in.]⁷²

The gentleman insists on the continuity of Jambicque's identity between the gallery space and the outside, writing the sign of her identity on her own back. By making her carry the chalk mark out of the gallery and into public space where he can identify it and therefore her, he creates continuity between the two spaces and between Jambicque's two personas. The chalk mark's trajectory makes the space between the gallery and the princess' bedroom continuous, destroying the idea of compartmentalized space on which Jambicque relied so heavily.

The gentleman, using the chalk, manages to make Jambicque inadvertently draw the map that shows her route back to the public space of the court. By marking Jambicque and sending her back through different parts of the court, he manages to link together the gallery and the court, sending a message from one space into another, and creating a continuous, legible line between them. This written version of events is then converted by the gentleman into an oral tale which he tells to Jambicque. The original chalk mark had a single reader, and indeed only one person who could interpret it. The gentleman's spoken retelling again has an audience of one—Jambicque, who in the verbal exchange with the gentleman, insists on a different version, despite the truth.

72 Ibid., 362.

Just as Jambicque tried to use the gentleman's own knowledge of her reputation in public to try and quash his initial telling of the story, she attempts a second time to use her current reputation to gain the upper hand with the gentleman by complaining to the princess about his behavior. This time she succeeds, and convinces the princess that the actions described could not possibly be attributed to her. She effectively silences the gentleman's voice and replaces it with her own:

[E]n le laissant furieusement, s'en alla là où estoit sa maîtresse, laquelle laissa toute la compaignye pour venir entretenir Jambicque qu'elle aymoît comme elle-mesmes. Et, la trouvant en si grande collere, luy demanda ce qu'elle avoit; ce que Jambicque ne luy voulut celler, et luy compta tous les propoz que le gentilhomme luy avait tenuz, si mal à l'avantaige de luy que, dès le soir, sa maistresse luy manda qu'il eust à se retirer en sa maison tout incontinent, sans parler à personne, et qu'il y demeurast jusques à ce qu'il seroit mandé. Ce qu'il fist hastivement.

[Leaving him there furiously, she went off to where her mistress was, who left the whole company to come and listen to Jambicque whom she loved like herself. And, finding her so angry, asked her what was wrong; which Jambicque did not want to hide from her, and she told her all the things that the gentleman had said to her, so much to his disadvantage that that same evening, her mistress ordered him to leave for his house immediately, without talking to anyone, and to stay there until he was sent for. Which he did hastily.]⁷³

What the princess "knows" of Jambicque is precisely what everyone at court except the gentleman knows; there is so little doubt in the princess' mind about Jambicque's innocence that she banishes the gentleman without hesitation. Her public persona masks her secret one perfectly. Her successful retelling of the gentleman's story also reveals how slippery narrative can be, and how difficult it is to pin down a definitive version of events. Jambicque acts as if it is a race to get her version of the story to the princess before the gentleman can tell any different version of the events. She presumes that if he will not respect the secrecy of the gallery as instructed, then her reputation is not safe in his hands. His revelation to her alone that he knows her identity is treated in the same way as if he had declared his love openly in public. Once the

73 Ibid., 364.

secrecy of the gallery space is broken, Jambicque is aware that it will not be long before it is more widely known.

Her narrative makes sure that his story is not believed—and makes him disappear, too. The chalk mark is not permanent and can also be erased. Jambicque does succeed in writing her own story, as says Gates. While the story leaks out of the gallery and into the court, it is suppressed in that space. However, the story is retold—by Geburon in the context of the *Heptaméron*'s frame story. It is told at another step removed from the locus of the original events. This distance allows for the omnipresent, omniscient narrator's eye which can reconstruct all sides of the story. Gates also argues that Jambicque's moral exposure is not complete since her identity is actually hidden by Geburon who does not use her real name in telling her story.

By insisting on the continuity between the inward desires of the heart and outward actions, the characters and *devisants* themselves break down any division between interior and exterior, secret and public. In the battle over who gets to write the story of Jambicque, the key moment is when a readable sign leaves secret space and travels into the wider world, as was also seen in tale 8. Jambicque wishes to write her own story in public, and initially she is successful. She does not want the secret part of her life to be recounted as a tale, so she tries to make it impossible to write. The lack of light in the gallery, meaning a lack of vision, is her way of making her story untellable. As has often been discussed, notably by Lyons, the act of storytelling depends on witnessing.⁷⁴ Jambicque removes the possibility of witnessing visually, even by the gentleman involved in the story. But the gentleman finds another way to write the story: by shifting the act of witnessing to public space where he can read the mark on her back. However, it is only witnessed in a meaningful way by the gentleman—he is the only one who knows how to interpret the chalk mark. Since only he can read the sign, Jambicque manages to

⁷⁴ Lyons, *Exemplum*. See chapter four in particular for the importance of witnessing in the telling of tales.

rewrite the gentleman's story, using the narrative that she has already constructed in the public space of the court.

Yet Geburon tells the tale, demonstrating that its spread was wider than originally thought, since she was mocked by everyone and not only her lover. Geburon's assessment of the story does not correspond exactly with the logic of the tale. He claims that Jambicque could not prevent the story from being known despite her attempts to keep her affair secret at all costs. Yet the story does not initially appear to be retold by any one of the protagonists. The gentleman speaks with Jambicque on a garden path where she is alone; the queen leaves her group to talk with Jambicque alone; and the gentleman is then instructed to leave the household without talking to anyone, an instruction that the tale insists he follows: "ce qu'il fit hastivement."⁷⁵ However, the time between Jambicque's interview with her *maîtresse* and the evening is unaccounted for; if the tale is told in Jambicque's circle, it can only be at this point that it is revealed. Yet depictions of the gentleman's character and actions are inconsistent with the idea that he himself would break Jambicque's confidence; when he realizes he has angered her, he does his best to placate her, and seems so afraid of Jambicque and their *maîtresse* that a revelation on his part would be out of character. The tale therefore suggests that the story of the affair is not revealed to Jambicque's circle, and there are no references to her humiliation until Geburon addresses the other *devisants* directly after the story is over. We are left wondering who revealed the story, when, to whom, and for what purpose? The text reveals one secret as it creates another.

If the gentleman did not reveal the story, and we assume that neither Jambicque nor her mistress did, it is possible to surmise that the story is revealed to the world at large at the moment of its telling; namely by Geburon. He must have been told the tale at some point; but is he the

⁷⁵ *Heptaméron*, 358.

one making it public? Other critics of this tale either argue that Geburon must be a close friend of the gentleman in question, or it is Geburon's own story that is being told. The text suggests neither, remaining stubbornly quiet on the issue. As Gates has demonstrated, it is not possible to trace the movement of the story out the space of the narrative and into Geburon's possession. Geburon himself makes the distinction between the moment the tale is told and the time corresponding to its events: "Car *aujourd'huy* est leu aux yeux d'un chacun ce qu'elle vouloit cacher à ceulx de son ami" (emphasis mine). Her infamy is now known by everyone. But, as Gates cleverly surmises, Jambicque is not the woman's real name, and therefore her humiliation is not fully accomplished by the telling of the story:

The requisite witness is absent from *Heptaméron* 43: there is some gap in transmission, such that we have only Geburon's word that his story effectively punishes the young woman. [...] it seems certain that the failure within the 43rd tale of the young man's discourse to pin guilt on Jambicque is doubled by the failure of Geburon's narrative at the level of the frame tale. Jambicque's story comes to us across a narrative void that subtly undermines its intended message. For while Geburon's audience is successfully astonished by the audacity of such a woman, this does not mean that any particular woman is dishonored, as Geburon claims.⁷⁶

As Gates argues, Jambicque ultimately does retain control over the release of her identity, although not over the details of the story, which make their way to Geburon. While the identity of the woman is kept secret, the telling of her story does guarantee the continuity of her character. Yet while her name is not known, the inconsistency between her secret desires and her public persona can be examined and judged.

Jambicque is undone by the fact that she cannot withhold knowledge of her affair from the world outside the gallery. Contrary to the situation in tale 8, in which nobody knows the truth of the matter until after the wedding ring exits the closet, in tale 43, one character does know what is happening and is trying to make sure that the information does not spread beyond herself.

76 Gates, "Telling Stories," 36.

By only allowing partial knowledge of the affair to circulate within the gallery, Jambicque believes that she can keep all of the details to herself. We can see here one of the fundamental principles of knowledge circulation within the *Heptaméron*: once even partial information is shared between two people, wider dissemination of the full information is not long in following. Secrecy, as both Regosin and Lyons argue, enters into tension with the enterprise of narrative. It is therefore the narrator's job to find a way to tease the information out of secret space, in a way that makes the revelation of the story plausible to its listeners. Jambicque does not keep her passion to herself; therefore the distribution of the knowledge of her passion does not depend on her alone—she cannot control how it will spread, nor at what moment.

IV. Conclusion

Just as the husband and wife of tale 8 believe that they each could control both passage in and out of the closet and the distribution of information about the happenings inside the closet, so does Jambicque. All are mistaken. Knowledge is not limitable to a specific space, despite the delusions of the protagonists in these two tales. The gallery cannot contain Jambicque's alternate persona, no more than the *garde-robe* in tale 8 can contain the story of the errant husband's liaison. All space in the *Heptaméron* must be writeable and readable, including the heart as the locus of desire. Those who believe that they can maintain barriers between their secret actions and what is known publicly are deluded; by the same token, those who try to maintain a gap between their heart's desire and their public persona will similarly be undone.

While *Surveiller et punir*'s discussion concludes that a panopticon structure guarantees external behavior—which is supposed to train the body to obey—it leaves aside the question of self-determination and desire. While Foucault theorizes that the body can be habituated to set

patterns of behavior conform to a disciplined society, the mind—or the heart—cannot be made to conform to society’s prescribed set of aspirations. The *Heptaméron*, or at least tale 43, demonstrates that any training of the body to conform to society’s expectations only serves to increase troublesome and illicit desire. Jambicque’s attempts to resist her passion do not serve to reduce its magnitude—rather the opposite is true, and she is compelled to relieve herself by committing a worse sin than if she had allowed herself to talk with the gentleman. Slight deviation from the strict discipline to which Jambicque subjects herself is proposed as one of the best means of avoiding greater sins—other women who allow themselves to flirt with courtiers are saved her from ignominy.

That a room cannot contain one’s secret passions and desires should come as no surprise since, as Dagoucin explains, one’s own eyes cannot even do so. There is a certain incontinence associated with both physical space and the body. There are no clear boundaries between the inside and the outside, since what is inside the heart becomes visible through signs on the body, and what happens inside the *garde-robe* and gallery becomes known—if not visible, then at least imaginable—through written and spoken tales.

While the characters seem to want the type of inviolable space that we would today call private, there is a strong sense in tales 8 and 43 and throughout the *Heptaméron* that this concept is simply not allowed. To compartmentalize part of one’s life and part of one’s house is wholly unacceptable. The inevitable publication of the story and the debate surrounding the tales indicate that the narrators of the *Heptaméron* at least see a guarantor of morality and spiritual purity in the idea that no matter how “secret” the space—no matter how secluded or far away it might be—anything that occurs in it can be revealed. The closer one’s intentions and heart’s desires match one’s actions in both public and secret space, the less one has to fear. It is implied

that if all space cannot be controlled through the threat of secrets being told, the very structure of society is at risk. According to Rabelais (as quoted in the epigraph to this chapter): “Estant l’home en son privé, on ne sçait pour certain quel il est” [When man is at home, one cannot know for certain who he is].⁷⁷ Yet according to Marguerite, we must absolutely know what every person is like, at home, in someone else’s *garde-robe*, or in any other place they may choose to hide. Only in that way can they be judged, and if necessary, corrected in their erroneous choices. Each time a character attempts to create anonymity through creative use of public space, there will be found a way to reveal their secrets, creating a panopticon-like living space that can be nothing but public. Secret space must therefore always be part of public space.

⁷⁷ Huguet, *Dictionnaire*, vol. 6, 194. Cited as an example of the usage of the idiom “en son privé.”

Chapter Three

The Fractal Memory Palace:

Gilles Corrozet's *Blasons domestiques*

This chapter investigates the representation of domestic space in Gilles Corrozet's *Blasons domestiques* (1539), and the purposes the home serves as the author contemplates literary and artistic production in sixteenth-century France. The work is an illustrated volume of poems dedicated to the house, its rooms, and their contents. Corrozet's collection of *blasons* opens with an introductory dedication "Aux lecteurs" [To the readers] stating that the intention of the work is to "recréer voz gentilz esperitz [et] vous donner pasetemps"¹ [to amuse your noble spirits and fill your leisure time]. The seeming simplicity of the intent hardly reflects the text as a whole, however. A second motive for writing is evoked at the end of the collection. Corrozet follows his *blasons domestiques* with a harangue entitled "Contre les blasonneurs des membres [Against those who write *blasons* of body parts] and directed at those who would compose or read anatomical *blasons*, attacking his fellow poets for using of the female form as inspiration for their verse. It would appear then that Corrozet's principal argument is that poets should avoid talking about female bodies at all. Furthermore, by writing *blasons* dedicated to the home and its contents instead, Corrozet shows that there are subjects worthy of being represented that are not the female form.

Yet Corrozet's verses cannot be considered in isolation. The volume's woodcut images force a reconsideration of the seemingly simplistic, moralistic condemnation of bodily representation, especially since two depict naked women and one is a reproduction of a woodcut

¹ Corrozet, *Blasons domestiques*, Aii v. All translations are mine. All further references in the footnotes will be given as *Blasons domestiques*.

used in a tale about rape. The images thereby undermine any attempt to exclude women's bodies from representation. According to Stephen Rawles, it is almost certain that Corrozet was involved in the selection and creation of the woodcuts for his collection, which implies that the conflict between images and text is a deliberate aspect of the work. Although it may be tempting to conclude that Corrozet is simply a tease, showing images of the very nudity he scolds his readers for contemplating, or that he does not believe his forceful diatribe, it is equally possible that the author is fully conscious of the uphill battle he is facing, and includes images of the body in recognition of the impossibility of excluding bodies from cultural production completely. In opposing the depiction of the female form, his efforts to banish the body from poetry will be undermined by the vast majority of writers who will simply ignore his viewpoint.

An alternative solution therefore must be found. Adapting the meditative aspects of dual-media genres popular in sixteenth-century France, the author produces a tool with which his readers can mentally train themselves to avoid lascivious thoughts. The book incorporates two structuring devices which can direct readers' thoughts away from the contemplation of women's bodies and give them a set of visual memories that can be recalled in order to imagine something other than the female form. One is a visual framing device: paired images at the beginning and end of the work refer to each other, sending the reader at the end of the book back to the beginning. The second is an example of a fractal: a pattern reproducing inside itself in smaller and smaller versions. The book therefore encourages the readers to do a mental exercise in directing their thoughts. It functions as a memory palace would: once the reader has memorized the image of the house and its interior, he or she can choose to enter the house mentally at any time.²

2 The memory palace in the sixteenth century is part of a long tradition of the art of memory, alternatively known as mnemotechnics, described by Frances Yates as "a technique of impressing 'places' and 'images' on memory" (Yates, xi). The main source is an anonymous Latin text entitled *Ad Herennium*, a treatise on memory dating from the first century B.C.E. Related to Aristotle's notion of "topics" it is presumed to be based on Greek sources

In addition to protesting poets' exploitation of women's bodies as material for poetry, the work also demonstrates discomfort with the dual nature of domestic space: as well as lodging the family, the house is the site of business meetings and transactions. As shown in chapter one, Alberti, Serlio, and other architects consistently refer to the merchant's home as also being his place of work, and in both noble and merchant houses business is conducted in the bedroom. The home in the form of the *Blasons domestiques* could be said to become a safe mental retreat from the tumultuous world of textual production and business affairs, cluttered with images and descriptions of women's bodies. The book's function mirrors the home's function in real life, which is to provide a safe physical haven for the family.

Whereas Marguerite de Navarre aims to break down the boundaries between public and secret space in order to prevent immoral behavior, Corrozet sees the division as essential in order to give families a morally clean place to live, away from the influences of the outside world. The

which are now lost. The *Ad Herennium* describes the technique of structuring artificial memory as a series of architectural *loci*; objects or people are then placed in the imaginary rooms. When making a speech, an orator moves through his memory building and by remembering what or who was placed in each room, the speech can be reconstructed. The *Ad Herennium* is variously reinterpreted throughout the Middle Ages. Martianus Capella adopts its principles in the fifth century when he describes memory as an essential part of Rhetoric, one of the seven liberal arts. Through the promulgation of scholastic rules in the thirteenth century and what Yates refers to as Aquinas' mistranslation of the *Ad Herennium*, the text is reinterpreted to bring ethical, didactic, and religious uses to the classical art (Yates, 77), introducing a "devotional atmosphere" to the *loci* and encouraging orators to "cleave with affection to the things to be remembered" (Yates, 76). Memory rules become more detailed and the *ars memoriae* "degenerated into puzzles" by the late Middle Ages (Yates, 123). In the late fifteenth century, "a new lay demand for the art as a mnemonic technique arose," and the treatises produced during this period are generally based on Thomas Aquinas' notions (Yates 126). Moving into the Renaissance, artificial memory techniques were not universally adopted, nor did all classical sources promote them. Quintilian's remarks on memory favor more straightforward methods. Erasmus recommended "study, order, and care" to cultivate a good memory, and the advent of the printed page was harmful for memory habits (see Yates, 127). Yet there remained strong currents of adoption of artificial memory techniques, especially among Ficinian humanists, through authors such as Peter of Ravenna, Ramon Lull, and Giordano Bruno. In France in the first half of the sixteenth century, one of the biggest influences was Giulio Camillo and his memory theater, which he constructed in Paris in the 1530s and was financed by Francis I. Described as a hermetic memory system modeled on Vitruvius' Roman theater, it represents "a new Renaissance plan of the psyche" (Yates, 172). The spectator entered into Camillo's theater, whose wooden interior was "marked with many images and full of little boxes. He gives a place to each individual figure and ornament" (Yates, 131). Its philosophical import surpasses a simple memory technique: "Renaissance Hermetic man believes that he has divine powers; he can form a magic memory through which he grasps the world, reflecting the divine macrocosm in the microcosm of his divine *mens*. The magic of celestial proportion flows from his world memory into the magical worlds of oratory and poetry, into the perfect proportions of his art and architecture. Something has happened within the psyche, releasing new powers, and the new plan of artificial memory may help us to understand the inner nature of that event" (Yates, 172).

family home is the ideal subject matter for a book of *blasons* which protests references to the body, because the house is the site where interior and exterior worlds meet—it is both where the body is housed and where visitors may catch glimpses of it on display.

I. Corrozet's Context: Mentioning the Unmentionable

Gilles Corrozet was born in Paris, and lived, worked and died there. A self-taught humanist from the middle class, writer, moralist, and occasional philosopher, according to Alison Adams he was a true Renaissance man.³ He earned his living as a bookseller but he also wrote books of his own, producing mixed media volumes of emblems, fables, and the first cartographic guides of Paris. Ficinian in his view of love, he prized conjugal union over any other possible interaction between men and women.⁴ Adams proposes that, as well as being puritanical in matters of the heart, he was conservative in his religious views, showing little interest in the Reform and even expressing his support for traditional Catholicism in his works.⁵ She explains that “la majorité des oeuvres de Corrozet, d’inspiration si différente, font preuve du même désir de communiquer ses connaissances en tous genres au grand public, et surtout le désir de leur faire partager ses convictions morales les plus personnelles.”⁶ [The majority of Corrozet’s works, of such varying subject matter, give proof of the same desire to communicate his knowledge in every genre to the general public, and above all the desire to make them share his most personal moral convictions.] The *Blasons domestiques* express Corrozet’s moralistic approach to poetry, the home, and the house as public space. Yet they also demonstrate his admission that his is a failed vision of domestic space. The presence of so many naked female bodies in the book’s

3 Corrozet, *Hecatographie*, ix. Adams’ introduction to the 1997 facsimile reproduction of Corrozet’s emblem book which was first printed in 1540 includes a brief biographical sketch of the author.

4 *Ibid.*, xvi.

5 *Ibid.*, xvii.

6 *Ibid.*, xvii. Translations mine.

images suggest the impossibility of imposing his own morals on others, who will continue to write poems about the female form, and trade the books in which the poems are published.

The *Blasons domestiques* follow the model of the better-known *blasons du corps* or *blasons anatomiques* quite closely. Each of the *Blasons domestiques* is devoted to a single room or piece of furniture found in a typical well-to-do house, and extols the virtues of the object or room in question. While the choice of subject matter may surprise some readers, Alison Saunders has carefully demonstrated that the *blasons anatomiques* are not an eccentric, fleeting phenomenon, but part of a long tradition with identifiable roots in both French and Italian literary history, carrying on even into the seventeenth century.⁷ Saunders identifies the *blason poétique*—of which the *blasons anatomiques* are one subset—as a genre which is both descriptive and analytical, and which finds its origins in both Petrarchan laudatory sonnets and heraldic medal *blasons*. She observes

the extension in the mid sixteenth-century of the term *blason* to embrace any overall descriptive poem in which the description is limited to one relatively restricted field. [...] Thus, even in this broader sense, the *blason* remains a poem concentrating on the exhaustive treatment of one single, particular object.⁸

Blasons cover a wide range of topics from the bawdy to the spiritual, and the dedication of an entire volume to the house is not entirely surprising in the light of Saunders' findings. She explains that *blasons* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are often moralistic or didactic in tone, making Corrozet's *Blasons domestiques* more typical of the genre as a whole than Scève's competition-winning *Blason du sourcil* [*blason* of the eyebrow]. Saunders proposes that the *blasons poétiques*, especially those illustrated with woodcuts, are closely related to other illustrated genres such as emblems and bestiaries, all designed to engage the eye with an image and the mind with text, in such a way that the "verse explains the lesson derived from the

⁷ See Saunders, *Blason Poétique* in which Alison Saunders gives a comprehensive view of the *blason* as a genre.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

illustration.”⁹ In addition, as she observes, it was Corrozet’s intention to divert the genre from its initial focus on female body parts. He saw the *blasons* of Scève and Marot as unacceptable depictions of the female form:

Pensez vous point qui faictes ces Blasons,
Combien de gentz par vos sotes raisons
Vous abusez? Certes la chose est seure,
Que ces sots motz leur engendre luxure.¹⁰

[Do you not consider, you who write these blasons,
How many people with your foolish arguments
You abuse? Certainly it is a surety
That lechery inspires in them these foolish words].

Corrozet’s starting point for his project is an objection to a genre that he suggests should be eradicated. Yet in order to discuss its dangers, he is obliged to mention it himself, leading him to highlight its existence to his readership. Indeed, the very use of the word *blasons* in the title of his collection immediately evokes the *blasons anatomiques* by collocation. But if he had produced a work that in no way referred back to the *blasons anatomiques* directly or indirectly, he may not have fulfilled his ambition of creating a work specifically to counter them.

Inherent in the criticism of the *blasons* is a concern with the gaze, which the *Blasons domestiques* cannot deactivate. Rather, Corrozet looks to provide a replacement for the visual obsession with the female body. The whole volume entices the gaze constantly, and the beauty and sumptuousness of the house and the objects in it become the works’ visual focus. Yet there is no neat separation between household objects and bodies—the objects themselves often suggest the body, or hark back to the illicit gaze, such as the padded stool upon which the poet’s sweetheart might sit:

Ie te supplie que m’amy
Vng iour sur toy trouue endormie

9 Ibid., 261.

10 *Blasons domestiques*, Eviii r.

Affin que la puisse baisser
Pour mon mal d'amour appaiser.¹¹

[I beseech you, let my sweetheart
One day find herself asleep upon you
So that I may kiss her
To appease the pain of my love.]

Again, the inclusion of the desirable female body in the volume, evoked simply by gazing at the empty seat, is a tacit acknowledgement that despite his wish, he and his readers will continue to be confronted with the temptation of the body.

Whereas Alison Saunders and Cynthia Skenazi take Corrozet at his word in his stated attempt to replace the subject matter of *blasons* with something other than the female form, Chantal Liaroutzos reads the volume as a cloaking and displacement of sensuality. According to Liaroutzos, the *Blasons domestiques* are no less about *amour* and *eros* than the *blasons anatomiques*. She reads the text as an extended metaphor in which the house represents a woman's body owned by her husband. The *cabinet*, which Liaroutzos sees as the most interior room in the house, contains the husband's most precious jewels, a metaphor for the woman's sexuality. She argues that desire is converted into *jouissance* through writing, since Corrozet does not and cannot possess the house nor the marriage that it represents:

moins que l'objet d'amour, c'est le discours amoureux qu'ils [les blasons] exaltent. Comme le corps de la femme aimée est une pure création verbale, la maison que rêve Corrozet n'est qu'un prétexte. Puisqu'il ne peut, non plus que son lecteur imaginaire, en être le propriétaire, la jouissance de la description remplacera celle de la possession. Le désir de l'objet absent devient désir de l'écriture.¹²

[less than the object of love, it is amorous discourse that the *blasons* praise. Since the beloved woman's body is a pure verbal creation, the house Corrozet dreams of is just a pretext. Because he cannot, no more than his imaginary reader, be its owner, the *jouissance* of description will replace that of possession. The desire for the absent object becomes the desire for writing.]

11 *Blasons domestiques*, Dii r.

12 Liaroutzos, "De pièces et de morceaux," 53.

Liaroutzos presents compelling evidence for the sensuality of Corrozet's text. Yet equating the house with possession of the body is an imperfect analogy; not every room or object in the house corresponds to a part of the body. Nevertheless, in the "Blason de l'estude" Corrozet does describe the study as the mind of the house, adding weight to a metaphorical reading of this type:

Le corps humain qui est d'esprit deliure
Ne va, ne vient, ne faict & ne peult viure
Et n'a vertu, force, ne sentement.
Vne maison qui est semblablement
Sans posseder l'estude fructueuse,
Est d'ung grand bien (pour vray) deffectueuse.

[The human body which is bereft of a mind
Cannot go, come, do, nor live,
Et has no virtue, strength, nor feeling.
A house which similarly
Exists without possessing a productive study,
Is truly lacking a great fortune.]

The study as its metaphorical mind guides the house in its activities and assures its productivity. Likewise women who are left unguided lose their way and seek too much freedom, as is made clear in Corrozet's emblem "Nature fœminine" from the *Hecatographie*:

Une femme quoy qu'elle face
En reigle ne veult estre mise,
...
Elle est aussy sotte & volaige
Querant liberté & franchise
Que le petit oyseau ramaige.¹³

[A woman, whatever she does
Does not want to be subject to any rule,
...
She is as foolish and flighty
Seeking liberty and independence
As a wild bird.]

The wayward house and the uncontrolled woman need man's reason and authority to steer them. The equivalence between the two is strengthened by the echo of "volaige" found in the suite of

13 Corrozet, *Hecatographie*, L8r.

actions “ne va, ne vient, ne faict.” Furthermore, woman’s desire for liberty is not limited to her behavior but also to her movement, since “Elle desire estre en espace / Sans estre a personne submise”¹⁴ [She wishes to be out in the world / Without being subject to anyone]. Spatial confinement is necessary for directing her behavior. The house is established as both the woman’s sole domain and an image of her. If the house is coded feminine, and the study masculine, the same can be said for the body and the mind, echoing the common understanding in the sixteenth century that reason is a masculine attribute, defining humanity, whereas the body and sexuality are feminine, animalistic traits.

The need to confine women to the house expressed by Corrozet is complemented by the wish to banish visitors from the bedroom. Both of these ideals are linked to the desire to remove women’s bodies from poetic and artistic representation, a connection which is expressed through the nuanced dialogic relationship between text and images of the *Blasons domestiques*.

II. Framing the Text: Zeuxis, Painting, Poetry, and Architecture

Corrozet’s aim to take women out of the cycle of poetic and visual representation is expressed through the pairing of two images which frame the collection of *blasons*—the author’s portrait which accompanies the dedication, “Aux lecteurs,” and the depiction of a painter with his models chosen for the final poem “Contre les blasonneurs des membres.” While the dedication is conventional, one might wonder why the harangue should appear at the end of the book rather than at the beginning, where Corrozet might state his purpose and announce the intention of his work. There are three possible reasons behind such a choice. Firstly, the *blasons anatomiques* were hugely popular for several decades in the sixteenth century. Corrozet is attacking a trend that has mass appeal, not only to the members of the court who write and read

¹⁴ Ibid.

the *blasons*, but also to those of the middle class who reproduce them in their print shops and give them a much wider distribution. In criticizing producers and consumers of *blasons*, Corrozet thus might have feared angering not only court society but also his fellow booksellers on the left bank. The poem's position at the end of the book makes it less likely to be found immediately. In addition, by studying the entire book before the harangue, the reader may find merit in Corrozet's work and be more inclined to listen to his final message about describing women's bodies.

Secondly, Corrozet aims to give his reader the mental skills necessary to divert thoughts from the female body when confronted with an image of it. The diatribe is accompanied by an image of four naked women. If his readers have paid close attention to the text and images leading up to his final exhortation, the placement of his diatribe would allow the reader to be equipped with the mental agility to combat an encounter with the represented female form. The narrator of the *blasons* is included in this readership which must learn the meditative techniques necessary to avoid lascivious thoughts.

The final reason is to create a symmetrical, embracing structure. Both images refer to the same figure: the Greek painter Zeuxis. Their positioning makes them a framing device, the second part of which sends the readers back mentally to the first part, creating a circular movement in which the readers, their memories primed, can take themselves back through Corrozet's house, and use or relearn the mental acrobatics that Corrozet prescribes. At the end of the text, Corrozet confronts his readers with a glut of representations of female bodies, then reminds them by sending them back to the beginning of the book that they have just acquired the skills to avoid lascivious thoughts in the face of temptation. In addition, placing these elements at either end of the text in a parenthetical position lends rhetorical weight to their importance. The

symmetry of the framing device reinforces the themes it evokes which are then taken up and reworked throughout the book.

IIa. “Aux lecteurs”: Art, Representation, and Referentiality

If art always refers to something, Corrozet attempts with his framing device to refer art to itself, cresting a closed loop regarding artistic representation from which the female form is excluded. The opening woodcut shows a single male figure seated at a table, facing right, with a book stand in front of him. A book is open on the stand, and the figure is writing in it. On the floor in front of him, on the right-hand side of the image, a dog is lying on the floor looking towards him. Behind him, making up part of his chair frame, is a carved Greek sphinx with a female human head, a lion’s body, and wings. The walls of the room are delineated by sets of parallel lines running in different directions for each different wall. On the back wall behind the sphinx chair, on the left of the image, are squares with horizontal lines on them. They appear to be sheets of paper with text on them hanging on the wall, their size and the lines strongly resembling the paper on which the figure is writing. Set in the far wall, opposite the reader, is an arched doorway. The seated figure looks to the right but also towards the door.

As the figure handwrites his pages like a medieval monk, he seems to hang them on the wall for the ink to dry such that they become visible for all to see. By covering the wall, they become all that the reader can see of the wall, and therefore from the reader’s perspective they *are* the wall. The text becomes part of the building, in a seeming reference to Horace’s *exegi monumentum* in which poets can write monuments longer lasting than bronze.¹⁵ Corrozet’s textual monument outlast, as this opening image seems to suggest, any architectural features that

¹⁵ Horace, “Exegi monumentum aere perennius.” [I have erected a monument more durable than bronze.] This poem heralds the durability of poetry, which will outlast buildings and monuments. Material objects are destined to perish, while poetry lives forever. See Horace, *Odes*, 216-27.

his poems represent; the textual building is superior to the physical building. While the poetry becomes the walls, the figure surrounds himself with his writing, so that the walls of his study also become a textual surface, in the same way that emblems can adorn walls and make them into readable surfaces. As well as the book becoming a building, the whole building, including the furniture, might become a book, foreshadowing the collection of *blasons* itself.

The chair on which the author sits is adorned with the carving of a mythological figure. Corrozet thereby seems to attempt a move similar to that found in Horace's famous *ut pictura poesis*.¹⁶ [What painting can accomplish, so can poetry.] Horace's dictum conveys the notion that poetry is as capable as painting of representing beauty. Corrozet's book of poems and images dedicated to the representation of rooms and furniture suggests that the home and its contents are worthy subjects for representation. His chair suggests that furniture too can be a representative art: what poetry can accomplish, so can rooms and furniture. As a poet, Corrozet situates himself in the *ut pictura poesis* tradition in the text of the dedication:

Je scay bien qu'aucuns diront que je n'ay si bien escript que la matiere requiert & merite, & que ces blasons ne sont si bien painctz de leurs couleurs qu'il est iustement requis. A ceulx la ie prie qu'ilz m'estiment comme le painctre qui sur le tableau avec le pinceau met la premiere couleur, & compasse les traictz et lineatures de son ourage, faisant le gect pour y asseoyr les aultres riches couleurs. Ainsi sont ces blasons en leurs premiers portraictz, attendantz que quelque scavante muse les enrichie.¹⁷

[I know that some will say that I have not written as well as the subject requires and merits, and that these blasons are not as well depicted in their colors as is justly required. To them I pray that they think of me as the painter who on a canvas puts the first dab of color with his brush, and traces the features and outlines of his work, drawing the sketch to which richer colors will be added. These blasons are in their first stage of portraiture, waiting for some savant muse to enrich them.]

The breadth of the semantic field linked to painting—"painctz," "couleurs," "painctre," "tableau," "pinceau," "traictz et lineatures," "portraictz"—reveals an analogy between poetry

16 The phrase "ut pictura poesis" comes from Horace's *Ars poetica* (c. 20 BCE). See Horace, *Epistles*, 70.

17 *Blasons domestiques*, Aiii r.

and painting that goes beyond a simple metaphor. Poetry is painting with words. And this analogy can be manipulated to create an equivalence between poetry and building, still life painting and furniture.

Corrozet not only sees an equivalence between art forms, but also suggests one between an object and its representation. He acknowledges that he does not possess any of the items he writes about, but counters that having a written version of the house is as good as having the material object: “Ostez doncques toute detraction, & recepez ce traicté ioyusement, affin que si vous n’estes bien emmesnagez par effect, vous le soyez par escript, non moins digne d’estre leu, que l’aulture digne d’estre possédé.”¹⁸ [Take away all distraction, and receive this treatise joyfully, so that if you are not well equipped with the objects, you will be by the writing, no less worthy of being read, than the other is of being possessed.] If one can be as well “emmesnagez par escript” as “par effect,” reading his volume of poems about the house and its contents would seem to be as good as possessing a real house. For Corrozet, then, access to a representation of a person or object is the same as access to the person or object themselves. For him, it would seem that the representations of women’s bodies are so contemptible because they are equivalent to seeing a naked woman in the flesh. And therefore to see part of a woman represented in a *blason* is the same as seeing part of a woman in real life, cut off from its body.

Nancy Vickers suggests that the figure in the woodcut represents Corrozet himself.¹⁹ Stephen Rawles corroborates this idea by tracing the image’s first use in an earlier book also penned by Corrozet.²⁰ Author portraits are not a consistent feature of printed books in the first half of the sixteenth century.²¹ Where they exist, they generally fall into two main categories: the

18 *Blasons domestiques*, Aiii v. “Aux lecteurs.”

19 Vickers, “Members Only,” 3-21.

20 Stephen Rawles has kindly shared with me his research on images used in Corrozet’s books printed by Denis Janot. This particular image first appeared in Corrozet’s *Triste elegie* of 1536.

21 This conclusion arises from my survey of the prefatory matter from around 50 different works printed in France between 1520 and 1550, including other works printed by Janot in Paris, other emblem authors’ works, books

bust of the author, either face-on or in profile, or the author seated at a desk in a study. Susan Groag Bell has traced the use of the term “étude”—denoting a small room for a scholar—and the tendency to portray figures in their studies, back to the thirteenth century, and Patricia M. Gathercole has identified numerous illuminations of figures seated while reading and writing.²² In the sixteenth century, Clément Marot’s 1526 and 1531 editions of the *Roman de la Rose* contain the depiction of a scholar seated at a desk and reading to an audience. In addition to these saints and scholars, Christine de Pizan is often depicted in her study, and in at least three of the images, she is accompanied by a dog.²³ Albrecht Dürer’s engraving of St. Jerome in his study also features a dog sleeping on the floor next to the saint’s desk. While dogs can symbolize many different ideas, including dirtiness, scavenging, and promiscuity, Edgar Peters Bowron explains that they also represent loyalty: “church fathers, scholars, poets, and humanists were symbolized and accompanied by dogs.”²⁴ The dog accompanying St. Jerome in his study is described by Bowron as “a vivid symbol of the contemplative life.”²⁵ The woodcut at the beginning of the *Blasons domestiques* thus inscribes Corrozet’s image in a long tradition of saints and classical writers depicted in their studies. The addition of the dog seems to allude to St. Jerome and Christine de Pizan, placing Corrozet in illustrious literary company and suggesting a tie between him and the early church.

The Corrozet woodcut and one of Christine’s images from the *Cent Balades* resemble each other strikingly in their composition. Both figures sit alone at a table writing in a book,

printed in other cities, texts by noted authors such as Clément Marot, François Rabelais, and Marguerite de Navarre, works by lesser-known authors, and works printed anonymously.

22 See Bell, “Christine in Her study,” paragraph 3, and Gathercole, *Depiction of Architecture*, 49-53. See also in *Depiction of Architecture* plates 13, 19, 20, 22, 26, 30, and 31 for medieval illuminations of St. Catherine, St. Matthew, Diocrès, Sapho, St. Mark, and St. Bernard seated while reading or writing.

23 Bell, “Christine in Her Study.” In particular see paragraphs 8-11 for descriptions of Christine and her dog in the study.

24 Bowron, “Artist’s Best Friend,” 6.

25 *Ibid.*, 6.

while a dog sits faithfully at their feet. One structural difference, however, is that Christine's dog faces in the same direction as its owner, while Corrozet's faces him. Or rather, the dog faces the sphinx carved into the chair frame so that the two non-human figures mirror each other. The dog and the sphinx are of approximately equal size, further suggesting that they are a pair. The dog is a depiction of a living being, while the sphinx is part of the chair and therefore fashioned, artifice. The image of the carved sphinx is a representation of a representation of an animal, while the dog is more simply the representation of a living animal. Yet the dog is also a representation, making one depiction interact with the other depiction, referring art back not to living things, but to itself.

The dog has its mouth at least partially open. It is growling at the sphinx, revealing that the dog is convinced that the sphinx is in fact a living being. This is an oblique reference to the contest between the Greek painters Zeuxis and Parrhasius who both try to paint the most convincing still-life painting. Zeuxis paints fruit so convincing that birds peck at it. When he asks Parrhasius to pull the curtain back from his painting, Parrhasius reveals that the curtain is in fact the painting, and that while his opponent's painting of fruit was so good as to fool the birds, his own painting was good enough to fool a fellow painter. The maker of the chair has carved a likeness good enough to fool the dog into barking at it, and therefore the carved chair itself must be a very good artistic imitation of life, not just a functional object.²⁶ If we extend this commentary to the rest of the book, then Corrozet seems to be implying again that furniture can be beautiful; it can be ranked alongside painting and poetry as belonging to the highly respected imitative arts. As an art form, furniture is a worthy medium. Corrozet suggests that its representations, as carvings, are as good as paintings and poems.

²⁶ Ibid., 6. Bowron recounts, in an amusing parallel, that "Francesco Bonsignori is said to have painted for Francesco Gonzaga, 4th Marquis of Mantua, a dog whose likeness was so convincing that one of his own dogs was said to have attacked the painting."

But the furniture as representative art does not create a single layer of representation. In the *Blasons domestiques*, the poems are representations of furniture; therefore if a piece of furniture is itself a representation, then an image of it is a representation of a representation. The furniture must be beautiful enough to merit being represented in poetry. This is a necessary step if Corrozet is to write an entire book dedicated to parts of the house, including furniture. For furniture to be worthy of praise, it must be as beautiful as other things that have been made the subject of painting and poetry. Furniture must be as beautiful as women's bodies but not designed to inspire lascivious thoughts. With a woman's head but a lion's body, the sphinx suggests femininity but stops short of representing the female form as it is carved up by the *blasonneurs du corps*. Furniture can, or indeed must, replace women's bodies as the focus of the arts. But why leave a suggestion of femininity at all? Marot and the other *blasonneurs* wrote many *blasons* praising facial features, and these are among the ones condemned by Corrozet in "Contre les blasonneurs des membres."²⁷ Again, Corrozet admits the impossibility of his demands—his ideals will always be undermined.

Iib. "Contre les blasonneurs des membres": Zeuxis, Female Bodies, and Composite Forms

Although Corrozet rails against the depiction of the female form, at the end of the book the pages in which Corrozet attacks his fellow poets are accompanied by an image in which five women are depicted. It shows a painter depicting a woman whose only covering is a tenuously held scarf covering her pudendum. Three other women stand on the other side of the easel, attempting but failing to cover their chests and pudenda. This image is a clear reference to Zeuxis, as it has been copied from an image used in Marot's edition of the *Roman de la Rose*.²⁸

27 He specifically mentions *blasons* of the breast, the stomach, the eyes, the hair, the nose, and the knees. See *Blasons domestiques*, E7r.

28 See Vickers, "Unauthored 1539 volume," 179-81.

The image in Marot's text illustrates a story about Zeuxis different from the one we have already encountered: when painting Helen of Troy, the Greek painter could not find one woman who could match Helen's incomparable beauty, and therefore used five models from whom he painted one feature each. The image was also reused in the anonymous 1531 edition of the *Hecatomphe*.²⁹ The image is evidently in circulation in Paris in the first half of the sixteenth century. The reference to Zeuxis fits particularly well with a criticism of anatomical *blasons*; for what is Zeuxis doing, if not dividing up the woman's body and painting it feature by feature? Several differences distinguish the woodcut in the *Blasons domestiques* from the one in Marot's *Roman de la Rose*. It is not simply a mirror image; the figure who is depicted as the painter's current model faces the public in Corrozet's image, whereas she has her back to us in Marot's. This alteration makes her reveal more of her body than in the original image. In the *blason* image, the other three models are bereft of the scarves which helps to preserve their modesty in the earlier image, meaning that they are left to cover themselves as best they can with their hands. The model being painted in Corrozet's woodcut makes no effort to cover her breast, while the corresponding model in Marot's image appears to be using her arm to cover herself, and the woman painted on the canvas has one hand over her chest. The Corrozet version of the image is much more revelatory. The breasts on display in Marot's are ill defined, and the rest of the image is cluttered with extraneous lines and shading such that the bodies of the women are almost hidden by the detail of the woodcut. Corrozet's, by contrast, highlights the women's bodies by contrasting the clean-lined, uncluttered images of each figure with a darkly shaded background. In Marot's image it is almost incidental that the women are naked, whereas the blank spaces of Corrozet's woodcut, occurring where the women's flesh is depicted, make their nudity the focus of the image.

29 Ibid.

Images of painters depicting nude women are not uncommon in emblematic literature of the sixteenth century. While the woodcut accompanying “Contre les blasonneurs des membres” is clearly copied from the Marot/*Hecatophile* woodcut, the pose of the model in Corrozet’s image more closely resembles one in Guillaume de La Perrière’s *Theatre des bons engins*.³⁰ Although La Perrière’s book of emblems was published four years after Corrozet’s *Blasons domestiques*, it was composed earlier, in 1536-7.³¹ Corrozet and La Perrière knew each other’s work, published in Paris with the same printer, Denis Janot. They had access to the same sets of woodcuts with which to make their books. The intertext is striking not only between the images, but also between the subject matters.

La Perrière warns that being too curious is dangerous. He incorporates the idea that to write a *blason* about something is not only to praise it but also to gain knowledge about it, a reminder that the *blasonneurs* were considered anatomists as much as anybody wielding a scalpel.³² But La Perrière turns the notion on its head, arguing that to gain so much knowledge is to lose oneself and, rather vaguely, to lose hope for the future:

Au cas pareil, l’esprit leger, volaige,
 Par trop cuyder blasonner, & scavoir:
 Souvent se pert, & n’en peult on avoir
 A l’advenir, que bien peu d’esperance.

[In such a case, the light and flighty mind,
 By thinking excessively, writing *blasons*, and knowing:
 Often loses itself, and one can hope
 Little of it in the future.]³³

30 La Perrière *Theatre des bons engins*, C4v, emblem XV. The image shows an artist absorbed in painting a naked woman holding a draping cloth.

31 For composition and publication details, see Alison Saunders’ introduction:
<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/books.php?id=FLPa>

32 See Vickers, “Members Only,” 3-21, for a discussion of the equivalence between anatomists cutting up real bodies and the *blasonneurs* cutting up bodies in texts. Both were considered scientists who could uncover truths about the body with their exhaustive descriptions.

33 La Perrière *Theatre des bons engins*, C4v. Translations mine.

The final couplet states clearly the moral and religious indictment of knowing too much: “Mieulx doncques vault saint Paul ramentevoir / Qui dit, Qu’on doit scavoir à suffisance.” [It would be better to remember St. Paul / Who says, that we should know what is sufficient.] By linking a nude female body, the verb *blasonner*, and the idea of dangerous, excessive knowledge in the same emblem, in 1537 La Perrière writes an attack similar to the one that Corrozet will publish in 1539: to write a *blason* about a woman’s body is to gain too much knowledge about it, to step over the boundaries of what is morally and religiously acceptable. Vickers claims that Corrozet’s concern is only with bodies divided into parts, and that the disjointed portrayal is what causes him distress;³⁴ on the contrary, Corrozet is targeting any representation of the female form. It is not only the fetishized body in parts that can cause lascivious thoughts, although the *blasonneurs du corps* are portrayed as particularly pernicious purveyors of libidinous texts. The painter in La Perrière’s emblem does not paint a body part but the body in its entirety. Zeuxis himself does not paint parts of bodies separately, he composes a whole body from individual parts.

Although Zeuxis is reported to have used five models from which to create his Helen on canvas, both woodcuts depict only four models. Corrozet’s frame of references may not be limited to the books produced in his immediate sphere. The group of three models is reminiscent of any representation of the three Graces, a common trope for a culture that makes innumerable references to Classical mythology. However the Graces are always associated with positive characteristics such as beauty and creativity. Corrozet’s aim is clearly not to see the female form as any kind of inspiration for creativity; the opposite is true. The grouping of four women is therefore more likely to refer to an additional work—Dürer’s *Vier nackte Frauen* (Four Naked Women) also known as *Die Vier Hexen* (Four Witches).

34 Ibid.

The engraving of four women has been interpreted as some version of Venus and the Three Graces, or Discord and the Three Fates, but some dispute either of these interpretations and identify the women as four witches.³⁵ There is no conclusive interpretation, and one element—the letters “OGH”—remains unidentified. There were multiple copies made of this engraving, which traveled across Europe. Discord and the Three Fates resonates with the theme of Zeuxis, because when Discord throws an apple in the midst of the Fates, the series of events commences that will result in the Trojan war. The beauty contest and the transfer of Helen to Paris that result from Discord’s action tie into the theme of the dangers inherent in the worship of women because the three Fates fight over who is the most beautiful. The Trojan war, fought over the possession of Helen of Troy, demonstrates the potentially disastrous consequences of such idolatry of the feminine, which is later repeated by Zeuxis when he paints her image from five different models.

Yet the idea of witches is also compelling. The skull and bones on the floor and the devil peeping out from the doorway imbue the engraving with satanic overtones.³⁶ One characteristic of witches is their excessive sexual appetite. The text of “Contre les blasonneurs des membres” describes the authors of the *blasons* as having their hearts corrupted by “volupté” and “sensualité”³⁷ indicating that the *blasons des membres* are written as a result of excessive sexual desire. The painter is fooled by the “inspiration” of women’s bodies into depicting an erotic subject.

If the woodcut artist for Corrozet’s volume made a mirror image of the engraving in creating his woodcut, as he did with the Marot woodcut, the figure on the right of the Dürer engraving would become the figure on the far left of the Corrozet woodcut. Both hold the

35 See Boston Museum of Fine Arts, *Dürer, Master Printmaker*, 14, for the various interpretations of this engraving that have been suggested over the years.

36 *Ibid.*, 14.

37 See *Blasons domestiques*, Evi v.

drapery in front of their pudenda, unlike the isolated figure in the Marot woodcut. In addition, the figures in Corrozet's image mimics the corporeally life-like figures of Dürer's engraving. The position of the fourth figure's arms are also more akin to Dürer's depiction of the woman holding the drapery.

The composition of both Dürer's engraving and Corrozet's woodcut is thus meant to make the reader think of the Graces, but in fact the figures are four witches. The composition of the group of three is typical of many depictions of the three Graces, but their presence in conjunction with the painter and a fourth female figure further complicates interpretation. The witches masquerading as "Graces" here have a beautiful front which masks the harmful nature of the female body. The Graces' association with creativity is undermined by Corrozet's attack on the type of creative act that gives us the *blasons anatomiques*. One might look upon a picture of a female body and presume that no harm can come of it; lurking, however, are the evils of lasciviousness, just as the devil lurks in the Dürer engraving of the four witches. The woodcut could be read as a combination of Marot's Zeuxis woodcut, Dürer's 1497 engraving, and La Perrière's statement about the verb "blasonner," generating dangerously excessive knowledge, and the study of the female form. Corrozet then fashions these elements into a critique of those who would know too much about women's bodies by writing *blasons*, and the sin of letting oneself be bewitched by this act.

Corrozet's work aims to be a handbook for how to avoid lascivious thoughts when confronted with the female form. Corrozet's closing image of Zeuxis and his models, by alluding to Dürer's witches, encourages the reader to recognize the evil lurking under the surface of the naked body. The *blasons anatomiques* circulate within the homes of booksellers, introducing dangerous material into family space. As we shall see, the *blasons* themselves will also train the

reader how to react mentally when the inevitable confrontation with the female form takes place. Since the house is the site where the exterior world of business and commerce meets the interior world of the family and permitted conjugal union, it is also the site where unacceptable encounters with the female form might occur.

In addition to encounters with the physical body, Corrozet condemns representations of the body. One might meet a woman in the house, but one might also be confronted with a representation of one. In the poem condemning the *blasonneurs*, Corrozet explains that the discussion of poetry depicting female bodies occurs in bedrooms and meeting rooms: “Mais du subject c’est le plus ord & salle / Dont fut parlé iamais en chambre ou Salle. [But it is the most filthy and dirty subject / Ever discussed in bedroom or meeting room]. In the “Blason de la sasle et chambre” we will see that the *chambre* and *sasle* are in fact the same room. Conversations about poetry will happen in the “sasle,” meaning they will happen in the bedroom, as this room has multiple functions. Domestic space, which Corrozet sets up here as the locus of morality, might be polluted since the business that Corrozet conducts in his house will be linked to book production. Although encountering a real woman in the home is almost inevitable, encounters with representations of them, be they written or pictorial, should be avoided. Corrozet demonstrates his discomfort with the public nature of domestic space by deliberately playing with the homonyms “salle” (adjective) and “Salle” (noun); the implication of dirt is present in the room’s second name. The “Salle,” the room in any house where guests are met and business interests concluded, must be kept free of what is “ord & salle.”

Corrozet’s position on whether women’s body parts can be mentioned at all varies throughout the poem. The first position he takes is that there is no problem with their names being spoken:

Les noms sont beaux qu'appropriâ Nature,
Aux membres bas de toute créature,
Mais blasonner ces membres veneriques,
Les exaltant ainsi que deiffiques,
C'est vne erreur et une ydolatrie,
Dequoy la terre à dieu vengeance crie. (ll. 35-40)

[The names are beautiful that Nature gave
To the lower body parts of all creatures,
But to write *blasons* about these venereous parts
Exalting them as godly
Is an error, and idolatry,
For which the Earth calls for vengeance from God.]

Naming female body parts is unproblematic as names themselves are innocent. Rather, the idolatrous praise of women's body parts is harmful. But Corrozet contradicts himself, as Liaroutzos has observed:³⁸

Et Cicero dict sans estre douteux
Que tout ainsi que Nature les cache,
De les nommer aussi elle se fache.

[And Cicero says without doubt
That just as Nature hides them,
Naming them makes her angry.]

Here he goes further than his original admonition, relying on Cicero's authority to say that women's body parts should not even be named. The task that falls to the reader of the *blasons* is the following:

Et vous, Seigneurs qui ces Blasons lisez,
Prenez la lettre & en laissez l'esprit,
Et plus ne soit tel cas mis par escript,
Car c'est l'esprit Cupido & Venus. (ll. 49-57)

[And you, Seigneurs, who read these *blasons*,
Take the letter and forget the meaning
And never let such things be written again
'Cause it's the intention of Cupid and Venus]

38 Liaroutzos, "De pièces et de morceaux," 47.

Corrozet does finally call for no more *blasons* to be written, but his instructions about what to do when one encounters such a poem call upon our attention. The reader can read the words (“la lettre”) but must ignore their meaning or intention (“laissez l’esprit”). He asks his readers to make the immense effort to divorce the semantic element of the word from its morphology, to decouple the signifier from the signified.

The link between the opening dedication and the final poem is made in both images and text. In “Contre les blasonneurs des membres,” however, Corrozet changes his mind about the naming of body parts: initially the names themselves are harmless, but later he deems it offensive even to mention them. In the dedication “Aux lecteurs,” reading a poem about a house or piece of furniture is as good as owning it. Therefore reading a poem about a woman’s body is as harmful as seeing her body in real life; the sins of looking and naming are as bad as touching.

IIc. Dialog Between Images: The Two Parts of the Framing Device

Zeuxis perhaps best represents in painting what Corrozet condemns in poetry: the examination of the female body for purposes of representation. By incorporating a chair carved with a life-like animal, the *Blasons domestiques* provide an alternative subject-matter for painting and poetry to combat the *blasons anatomiques* which contravene moral and spiritual principles by dissecting women’s bodies and knowing too much about them.

Zeuxis’ painting of Helen supersedes Nature’s capabilities. The Greek painter can create on canvas a perfect beauty that Nature cannot produce in real life. Similarly the woodcut in Corrozet’s volume depicts a creature that only exists outside of Nature, in myth. Just as Zeuxis’ Helen, composed from the features of five different models, is a composite being, so too is the sphinx carved into the author’s chair-frame: woman’s head, lion’s body, and wings. But reading a

poem or seeing an image of a body is equivalent to seeing the body in the flesh, an equivalence between reality and art that is comically mimicked by the dog which takes the sphinx for real. If furniture is to represent something, it must not depict the same imagery as painting and poetry. The sphinx does include a reference to womanhood, but not to the female body.

Furthermore, beautiful furniture becomes not only worthy of representation in poetry, but it also becomes the canvas on which the sphinx is represented. Furniture is both medium and subject-matter. In demonstrating that furniture as an imitative art can accomplish the same things as Zeuxis' painting of Helen, and in showing that furniture can be worthy of representation in poetry, which is painting in writing, a new chain of representation is created, which excludes women's bodies.

The framing device around the *blasons* creates a loop. The reader's memory is sent back to the beginning of the book, from one reference to Zeuxis back to the other. When the eye encounters the image of Zeuxis' studio, the reader can think back to the reference of Zeuxis and Parrhasius at the beginning of the collection, in order to go through the collection again—to saturate the mind with images of rooms and furniture and banish the memory of women's bodies. The imaginary house therefore becomes a kind of memory palace, a safe haven for the mind's eye to retreat to when it is confronted with images of women. Women's bodies can be encountered as in the depiction of Zeuxis painting Helen, but they can then be banished from the mind, and replaced by rooms and furniture.

But the final image somewhat undermines Corrozet's seemingly lofty purpose. If the reader's memory does not make the connection between the two images and head back to the beginning of the sequence, the reader's eye, reaching the end of the book, always ends up

peering into Zeuxis' studio, surrounded by the naked female form, and fixated on the painting of perfect beauty.

The framing device described above is reinforced by the second and penultimate images in the collection. Just as the depiction of the author in "Aux Lecteurs" pairs with the image accompanying the "Contre les blasonneurs des membres," in another symmetrical move the first and last *blasons* use the same image, that of the exterior of a house. As both Liaroutzos and Skenazi have argued, the *blasons domestiques* take the reader on a path through the house.³⁹ This idea is reinforced by the repetition of the image of the house—in the first instance, the house is being approached, and in the second, the visitor is leaving, his path complete. This resolves to some extent the difficulty of Corrozet's volume containing representations of Zeuxis' nude models while at the same time admonishing other *blasonneurs* for inciting lust among their readers by portraying women's bodies. Zeuxis and his models, although they appear in Corrozet's book, do not appear inside Corrozet's fictional house. To move beyond the walls of the house—in this case beyond the two images of the exterior of the house—is to go into dangerous territory. The epicenter of security, moral values, and good conduct is one's own home. Outside the home, the nefarious influences of lascivious poets are waiting for the unsuspecting reader. The honor of the house is limited to the interior of the house. "L'honneur de la maison" is immediately followed by "Contre les blasonneurs des membres" with its suggestive image of Zeuxis and his models. If the house can be rid of images of women, then as soon as one steps outside, Corrozet seems to suggest, one should beware what one might encounter.

39 See Liaroutzos, "De pièces et de morceaux," 46, and Skenazi, *Le Poète architecte*, 150-157.

III. The Fractal House

The framing device described above constitutes one of the two patterns that Corrozet builds into his work to capture his reader's mind into loops of references—the other is the fractal. “Fractal” is a mathematical term used to describe rough-edged geometrical shapes which repeat infinitely as smaller versions of themselves inside themselves. Coined by Benoît Mandelbrot in 1975, the concept has been adopted by practitioners of various disciplines.⁴⁰ As Mandelbrot himself explains, the mathematics to describe fractals dates back to Leibniz in the seventeenth century. Various natural phenomena take fractal form, such as snowflakes, patterns of animal coloration, lightning, and coastlines. Mandelbrot calls it the geometry of nature.⁴¹ I propose that the ordering of the house's elements depicted in the *Blasons domestiques* imitates the patterns described by fractal geometry. The arrangement of the *blasons* takes on a fractalesque form as the reader moves further into the house, confronting smaller and smaller rooms and furnishings.

Both Alison Saunders and Cynthia Skenazi see the volume as providing useful anthropological information about the way the middle classes lived in mid-sixteenth-century France. Skenazi in particular reads the *Blasons domestiques* as an indictment of courtly culture and a promotion of a bourgeois mentality and work ethic. She sees a focus on the accumulation of wealth in the listing of every object in the house and its minute description. Corrozet therefore “builds” his ideal house in text and images.⁴²

Although the woodcut of the house in the “Blason de la maison” [*Blason* of the house] depicts a relatively modest abode, the collection as a whole does not allow for such a uniform interpretation as ascribed by Saunders and Skenazi. In the “Blason de la maison” the house is described as being destined for “nobles seigneuries,”⁴³ [noble lordships] and the image

40 See, for example, Deleuze, *Le Pli*.

41 Mandelbrot, *Fractal Geometry*, 1-13.

42 See Skenazi, *Poète architecte*. 152-57 and 162-64.

43 Corrozet, *Blasons domestiques*, Av r.

accompanying the “Blason de la sasle et chambre” [Blason of the meeting room and bedroom] shows a different style of architecture, indicating either that the house is grander than originally thought, or that there is more than one house being depicted.⁴⁴ In fact, the manifold descriptions of objects do not allow the reader to imagine a single example of each object. Each room and object can be imagined in numerous ways, allowing the house to take on countless different configurations. This is not just one house; this is a multiplicity of possible houses. It is a semiotically saturated text but a fragmented one.

The contents of the house are presented in the following order: *maison; cour de maison; jardin; cave; cuysine; grenier; sasle et chambre; lict; chaire; banc; table; dressouer, coffre; scabelle; placet; verge a nectoier; estuy de chambre; miroir; cabinet; estable; estude; chambre secrete ou retraict; and honneur de la maison.* [house, courtyard, garden, cellar, kitchen, grain loft, bedroom and meeting room, bed, chair, bench, table, dresser, chest, stool, foot stool, broom, toilette case, mirror, cabinet, stable, study, secret room or retreat, and the honor of the house.] This is by no means an impoverished house—it has grain storage and stables, and a toilet. Corrozet’s imagined dwelling is aspirational, even if the representation of its exterior is somewhat modest. There are no antechambers, nor does the text indicate how many bedrooms the house has. The house can be described as fractalesque because it is divided into smaller sections—rooms. Described in minute detail, these are divided into yet smaller sections—pieces of furniture, again, described in minute detail, as if a camera were zooming in on them. Although the infinite repetition of the fractal is impossible to reproduce in text form, the book presents what feels like a never-ending multiplication of detail.

Anything that takes place in between the two views of the house’s exterior may not necessarily happen in the order in which the house is portrayed by the sequence of the pages in

44 Ibid., Bvi v.

the book; there is no language to suggest passage between the rooms, and no attention is given to adjoining spaces such as corridors or galleries. The reader can dip in and out at will, without being constrained by an itinerary imposed by the text. Corrozet does choose a trajectory for his reader to follow in ordering his pages in a certain way, but reading practices in the sixteenth century allow the reader to select a different path. This is particularly true of collections such as emblem books—there is nothing to dictate that the emblems must be read in a certain order, nor are there transitions between the parts. Collections of *blasons* fall into the same category; for example, it is only in later editions of the *blasons anatomiques* that a fixed order is established, presenting the poetic woman from head to toe.⁴⁵

Corrozet tells us in his introduction that he does not own a house or any of the objects he describes. He is free to create his ideal house from examples he has seen or from his imagination. He can create a composite house, just as Zeuxis creates his Helen of Troy from the features of five individual women. Yet while the Greek artist depicts one woman, Corrozet is not limited to producing one imaginary house, and neither is the reader in perusing the volume.

The *Blasons domestiques* thus evoke not simply Corrozet's ideal house, but every house. The possibilities for the configurations of the house multiply exponentially with each reading. The different room arrangements are almost endless, and the variations for the appearance of the rooms, furniture, and objects, are so many that the number of different houses that could be construed from Corrozet's descriptions seems almost infinite. Just as one segment of a fractal then divides and spirals into multiple different segments inside itself, each one of which divides and spirals into multiple different segments inside, so that the further one zooms into the fractal the more one sees division, multiplication, and endless segmentation, so too the house of Corrozet's *Blasons domestiques* opens up, fractal-like, to reveal its ever-multiplying facets.

45 Nancy Vickers. "Members Only," 3-10.

The cabinet, for instance, is a room for collecting, writing, and prayer. It is the room in the book which is described in most detail, proposing objects as both decorative and useful. It suggests fractal subdivision on a minute scale; the “petit lieu” breaks down into minuscule elements. It is easy to see from this *blason* why Skenazi concludes that Corrozet’s book might promote a bourgeois work ethic associated with the fantasy of endless wealth accumulation. The room is beyond sumptuous, and only the most wealthy of individuals could even begin to aspire to own such items. Yet the details of each object are not complete. Corrozet leaves the description open-ended: “Bref en ce beau & petit lieu, / Sont tant d’autres choses ensemble / Qu’impossible le dire il semble”⁴⁶ [In sum in this beautiful small place / Are so many other things together / That it seems impossible to say]. The closing lines of the poem suggest that the description of the cabinet never really ends, giving the reader the opportunity to linger in the room and see the numerous other objects that Corrozet is incapable of naming. The reader’s mind can be delayed, caught up in the spectacle of examining the innumerable beautiful objects. Corrozet distracts the eyes, providing the objects for the mind’s eye to contemplate in the rooms of the fractal memory palace. While Marguerite de Navarre’s *cabinets* are places where characters are most likely to experiment with their sexuality, Corrozet designates it as a space where the mind is to be distracted from the idea of naked bodies. Marguerite’s *cabinets* are often darkened so people cannot see who is in them or what is happening inside; Corrozet’s is the place where the eye is saturated with beauty.

The exterior of the house echoes the idea of multiple buildings. The first image of the house suggests a modest domain in a country setting, while Liaroutzos claims that Corrozet’s projection of a house is “manifestement urbain.”⁴⁷ Yet the text of the “Blason de la chambre

46 *Blasons domestiques*, Dvii v.

47 Liaroutzos, “De pièces et de morceaux,” 48.

secrete ou Retraict” [*Blason* of the secret room or retreat] indicates that both settings are possible. The house is “soit aux champs ou en la Cité”⁴⁸ [either in the countryside or the city]. This alternative confounds both ideas; neither is wrong, and both are possible. The text refuses to resolve the two possibilities for the location of the house into a single, coherent whole.

Further adding to the unstable representation of the house, the image accompanying the “Blason de la sasle et chambre” shows an exterior markedly different from that in the first and last *blasons*. The corner turret suggests a much more opulent dwelling than can be seen in the other woodcuts. This undermines any reading of the house as simply bourgeois, as proposed by Liaroutzos and Skenazi.⁴⁹ Corrozet himself indicates that the rooms of the house are “lieux gracieux pour nobles seigneuries”⁵⁰ [gracious places for noble lordships] suggesting that the class of the dwelling is indeterminable. In addition, the “Blason de la sasle et chambre” and the “Blason de la chambre secrete ou Retraict” both give two different names for single spaces. In the latter case, Corrozet simply gives two synonyms. In the former, the two names are not synonymous but indicate that one room has two separate functions.

From rooms with multiple names to rooms with multiple functions, the apogee of the system of infinite possibilities is the “chambre secrete ou Retraict.” It is not represented visually, even though there is a *blason* dedicated to it, and it has an accompanying woodcut. Corrozet indicates his unwillingness to describe it, or even talk about it, even though he has chosen to include it in his book. He creates an infinite number of possibilities for the toilet’s representation, as his usual technique of multiple descriptions and depictions, which suggest numerous possibilities, gives way to an absence of description, allowing the reader’s mind to imagine it freely. The descriptions and depictions of the house and its contents leave the reader with an

48 *Blasons domestiques*, Eiiii r.

49 See Liaroutzos, “De pièces et de morceaux,” 46-48, and Skenazi, *Le Poète architecte*, 152-64.

50 *Blasons domestiques*, Av r.

infinite number of possibilities for configuring the appearance of the house. Just as zooming in on a fractal image allows for an infinite number of trajectories into fractal space, with endless choices of which path to take next, the fractal house allows an infinite number of houses to be imagined with each reading.

It would seem that every object in Corrozet's *blasons* listed between the *lict* and the *estuy* can be found in the bedroom. The *blasons* therefore divide into two distinct groups: the bedroom and its attendant furniture, and the rest of the house. The bedroom has its own *blason*, and is then subdivided into a series of *blasons*, just as the house has its own *blason*, then is subdivided into a series of *blasons*. The bedroom and its contents as a separate group suggest a second sequence that could be thought of as a fractal; this time not a two-dimensional geometrical shape, but a concept known as fractal architecture. Fractals have been consciously used in the construction of buildings since the late 1970's in an attempt to develop an alternative concept of usable space, as opposed to buildings constructed using Euclidean geometry. In contrast, the architectural principles seen in Alberti, Serlio, and De l'Orme's treatises are taken from Vitruvius, and based on the premise that the proportions of buildings should reflect human proportions. Corrozet evidently cannot have known about the twentieth-century development of fractal architecture, but his imagined house contains smaller repetitions of a house in a way that resembles early fractal houses in an astonishing manner: the woodcut for the *estuy* (a small case for carrying combs and other personal items), contains the image of a house far off in the background. With its pointed turret, the house in the background is shaped more like the house that is depicted in the *Blason de la sasle et chambre* which also has pointed turrets, than the house repeated at the beginning and end of the text. Within the text is therefore a different loop that can send readers' minds back from the *estuy* to the image of the house in the *Blason de la sasle et chambre*, with

one image recalling the other. The pattern of Corrozet's bedroom and contents will repeat itself when the reader arrives at the smallest element described, the *estuy*, which is itself shaped like the house depicted in the background of the same woodcut.

This new loop serves to direct the reader's mind back to the beginning of the series of *blasons* related to the bedroom, in the same way that the pair of images referring to Zeuxis refer to each other, implying again that Corrozet would like his readers' thoughts to be directed into an endless repetition of images of household rooms and objects. When faced with an image or description of a woman's body, the mind needs to be able to distract itself with another set of thoughts. Corrozet gives the reader sequences of objects set in the rooms of a house and evoking strings of thoughts to follow. The representation of the house does not follow human proportions as understood by Vitruvius and Alberti; the physical measurements are not even described. There is, however, a concordance between the building and the human. It is not in geometrical proportions but in the way the human brain can store information. Corrozet's house is a representation of human memory, in the form of the memory palace.

The image accompanying "Le blason de l'estuy de chambre" [*Blason* of the bedroom comb-case] catches the reader's attention because the *estuy* is not represented inside the house, but in a landscape with a *veduta* of a building. The *estuy*'s base comes down into a point, and seems to be self-supporting or even floating in space. It is outside of its contexts—both the house as a building and the room to which it belongs. Only by virtue of the *blason*'s title can the (modern) reader know where it belongs, or that it even belongs in the house.

It could be argued that showing the *estuy* outside the house indicates its portability, although this is not mentioned in the text, and neither is it seen to be carried by anyone. If it is portable, then it might easily be associated only with men, since according to Corrozet's rules of

morality, women are not supposed to leave the house. The text indicates that a man would indeed use these items, since they are intended “pour galonner / Les beaulx cheveulx, & testonner / Aussi la longue barbe blonde”⁵¹ [to fix / The beautiful hair, and touch up / The long, blond beard].

The image shows the *estuy* open, with its contents visible. The poem mentions its contents—combs and other items of a man’s toilette. In relation to the landscape around it, the *estuy* would appear to be enormous, although this is not to suggest that this be in any way a realistic representation of the object. It would appear, though, to be drawn in exaggerated proportions, highlighting its importance. If we return to the idea of the fractal, this is the smallest container to be represented in the house. It is also the most interior element of the bedroom. The *veduta* in the background is a lone house whose shape is very similar to the shape of the *estuy* itself. If the image of the *estuy* is inverted and that of the house enlarged, the similarity is even clearer.

The design on the *estuy* reproduces the form of the distant house in multiple, concentric repetitions, each one getting smaller and smaller. The *estuy* is therefore a representation of the house itself. The *estuy* and house resemble different-scale versions of each other, a concept known in fractal architecture as “self-similarity.” According to architect Peter Eisenman,

[f]or five centuries the human body’s proportions have been a datum for architecture. But due to developments and changes in modern technology, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, the grand abstraction of man as the measure of all things, as an originary presence, can no longer be sustained, even as it persists in the architecture of today. In order to affect a response in architecture to these cultural changes, this project employs another discourse, founded in a process called scaling.⁵²

Fractal architecture, unlike Vitruvian architecture, does not refer back to the human body, but only back to itself. Corrozet’s collection of blasons has already been shown to refer back to itself

51 *Blasons domestiques*, Diiii r.

52 Ostwald, “Fractal Architecture,” 75, citing Eisenman.

when the reader reaches the end. The *estuy* reproduces its own form in miniature version; its design refers back only to its own shape.

While the logic of depth of field makes us realize that the house is actually far away, and in reality would be much bigger than the *estuy*, if one considers the image as a 2-dimensional plane, the house rotated through 180 degrees can fit in the *estuy*. This image suggests the repetition of elements that occurs when one zooms in closer to the fractal: from the exterior, one enters the house, then the bedroom, then the *estuy*; but as one looks inside the *estuy*, one is transported back outside the house, from where one starts the cycle again. Just as when one looks into a fractal, one sees the original pattern of the fractal repeated, when one looks into the innermost element of the bedroom, one will be able to see the pattern of *blasons* from the bedroom to the *estuy* repeated.

Michael J. Ostwald's article on fractal architecture concentrates on late-twentieth-century buildings inspired directly by Benoît Mandelbrot's theories of fractal geometry, but his description of one project is particularly striking in relation to the woodcut above. He describes a model house designed by Peter Eisenman and displayed in Venice:

Eisenman placed a series of identical objects at various scales throughout the Cannaregio Town Square. Each of these objects is a scaling of *House 11a*, the smallest object being man-height but obviously not a house, the largest object plainly too large to be a house, and the house-sized object paradoxically filled with an infinite series of scaled versions of itself rendering it unusable for a house. The presence of the object within the object memorialises the original form and thus its place transcends the role of a model and becomes a component and moreover a self-similar and self-referential architectonic component [Jencks 1989]. *House 11a* is effectively scaled into itself an infinite number of times forming a kind of fractal architecture.⁵³

Corrozet's move of placing a scaled version of the *estuy* in the landscape background of the woodcut, and having several concentric scaled copies of the *estuy* inscribed in the *estuy* itself, makes the house's dimensions in this woodcut refer only to themselves; they are "self-similar

53 Ibid., 75.

and self-referential components.” Therefore the *estuy*, with its play between exterior and interior, containing and being contained within the house, leads the reader’s mind into a repeating pattern of images. Even when one is outside the house, the mind’s eye can look inside the house, as demonstrated with the *estuy*. As Ostwald explains, “the presence of the object within the object memorialises the original form.” The repeating, concentric, scaling representation of the shape of the *estuy* on its own surface, and the miniature house outside the exaggerated *estuy*, refers back to the house as the originary image; it only refers to itself. When the man, represented by the *estuy*, finds himself out in the world, where he risks seeing women’s bodies or their representation, he only has to look at his *estuy* to access a never-ending chain of house images that will activate his memory of home.

The notion that a man should keep his mind on his home is echoed in the *Emblemes* collected at the end of Corrozet’s 1543 *Tableaux de Cebes*. Men are encouraged to take little less freedom than the women they supervise. In the emblem entitled “Du gouvernement de maison,” [On the government of the house] the *paterfamilias* is warned that it is only his presence in the house that can guarantee the stability of his home life.⁵⁴ Corrozet therefore seeks to limit not only women’s movement, but also men’s. They are encouraged to have minimal absence from home, and therefore limit their contact with the world outside the home. A mental representation of domestic space, and a non-tempting trajectory through the house, are useful strategies to be called to mind in the midst of the outside world and its temptations.

IV. Public Realm and Family Space

The *estuy* takes the reader outside the house, then proposes a return to the house, into the bedroom. Corrozet’s *blasons* of the bedroom and its contents instruct the reader in the ethics of

⁵⁴ Corrozet, *Emblemes en Cebes*, G8r.

gaining access to the interior of the house. Furthermore, a place that is described as “secret”—“la Chambre secrete ou Retriacte”—nuances Corrozet’s attitude towards the division of domestic space into public and familial and show the possibilities for solitude in the house.

IVa. Bedroom, Bed, and Mirror: The Bedroom and its Contents

The title of the blason, “Le blason de la sasle et chambre,” suggests that two rooms will be the focus of the poem. A “chambre” is a bedroom, while “sasle,” although today a generic word for “room,” in the sixteenth century denoted some kind of meeting hall or reception room. It is often the room where business takes place between the owner of the property and his visitors. Grand houses would have a suite of rooms for each main occupant: reception room, one or more antechambers, bedroom, and off the bedroom dressing room and cabinet (which are both small rooms). More modest abodes will not boast the whole suite of rooms, with the result that some spaces may have to serve more than one purpose. But even in the largest houses, the most important business will be concluded in the ceremonial bedroom or in the cabinet. The bedroom can therefore also be a room for meetings, in both grand and modest houses. As will be shown, the bedroom is precisely the place where the public intersects with the intimate, or to use the vocabulary that we developed while reading the *Heptaméron*, the secret. Corrozet’s discomfort with the bedroom corresponds to Jambicque’s desire for a space that today we might understand as private: one that is not available for outsiders to scrutinize.

In Corrozet’s *blason*, the doubly-named room seems to indicate a single room with a dual purpose. This is first apparent in the image accompanying the text, which clearly only shows one room. The room is both *sasle* and *chambre*. However, the poem suggests that this is in fact only one room with one purpose, making reference only to the *chambre* and focusing on the function

and appearance of the bedroom. The *sasle* is never mentioned, not even in passing. The possibility of using the room as a reception room has been erased from consideration; visitors have effectively been banished from the room.

The reader's point of view is now placed outside the house, with a view into the bedroom. This *blason* is one of only two *blasons* to take the reader outside, the other being the "estuy de la chambre," discussed above. The room occupies a corner of the building, and the image shows two outer walls joining at a corner, both with windows. If we think of a reader as a visitor to the house then just as in the poem, visitors are again banished from the bedroom.

If readers are not allowed inside, the positioning of them outside and having them look in through the window makes them interlopers. This status is confirmed by the figure on the left of the image: the female figure who can be seen through the window. She is framed by the window but this framing is also reminiscent of a painter's canvas on which she might be represented. If we look closer at her, we can see that she is similarly nude and holding the same draping cloth as the models in the image at the end of the volume. This visual echo to the painter's models, coupled with the framing, casts her as a painting, a representation of her own nudity. She risks the same objectification as Zeuxis' models and all subjects of paintings and poetry that glorify the female form. A woman inside the home may therefore be blasonned by visitors.

The other main element to consider is the figure on the right. Also outside of the house, hovering next to the other window, is a winged, bearded figure wearing a crown and carrying a scepter or lamp and another object which could be a key or a set of scales. The only mythological characters mentioned in the poem are Cupid and Psyche, but the depiction is certainly not either of them. The figure has attributes associated with a number of different mythological characters such as Venus, goddess of sexual desire, Hymenaeus, the Roman god of marriage, Thanatos, the

Greek daemon of death, and Hades, the Greek ruler of the underworld. He appears to have one foot and one hoof. Yet he also resembles the god of love, Amor, in various versions of the *Roman de la Rose*, having all the same features: wings, crown, sceptre. The 1526, 1531, and 1537 versions of the *Rose* produced by Marot all contain images of the god of love resembling this character, as do many of the extant manuscripts. But in none of the images is the god of love naked, nor is he depicted flying, although he has wings. I propose that the figure, like Zeuxis' Helen or the book of *blasons*, is a composite one—part Venus, part Thanatos, part Hymenaeus, part Hades. Venus and Hymenaeus represent female sexuality and its regulation. The hoof/foot pairing suggests a human/animal hybrid, often used to depict the reasonable and unreasonable sides of human nature, while Thanatos and Hades suggests damnation. The composite figure would therefore personify the principal functions of the bedroom: site of conjugal union, but also site of animalistic lust and sin. In emblematic fashion, allusions to the god of love can be taken into consideration, especially if we bear in mind the book's other borrowings from the *Rose*. The god of love threatens the chastity of the rose, resulting in a final assault on the tower where she is guarded, and a breach of the walls that hold her. The intertext provides a commentary on the ability of walls to provide the kind of protection needed by female members of the household. The woodcut places both the reader and the winged figure in the same space. The creature's presence threatens the stability of the home and the purity of the female figure, just as much as the reader's does.

Visitors to the home are interlopers who should not have access to the site of conjugal harmony and sanctioned sexual mores. In order to turn the gaze away from the female body, the poem of the *blason* focuses, as so many do, on the physical attributes of the room itself: the walls, the floor, the decoration. Much is made of the sumptuousness of the room, and the beauty

of all its fixtures and fittings. When the windows are mentioned, their function is ignored, while their beauty is praised: “Chambre dont les vitres sont telles / Qu’on n’en vidt jamais de plus belles”⁵⁵ [bedroom whose windows are such that no-one has ever seen more beautiful ones]. One is not expected to look through these windows, one is expected to look at them. If the reader is looking through the window, and not looking at the window, as the poem helpfully instructs, the reader may see something forbidden. It is the ultimate exercise in turning one’s attention away from the body behind the glass, while it can be clearly seen through the glass. The text demands an immense act of self-control on the part of the readers, asking them not to look at a body placed directly in front of their eyes. Readers must be aware that there are representations of women’s bodies everywhere, and they must be ready to avert eyes and mind at all times.

Corrozet is by trade a bookseller who handles plenty of volumes such as the anatomical *blasons*. The *Blasons domestiques* show a particular concern with how to maintain a strict division between different activities that nonetheless must take place in the same space. There are two problems to be resolved here: allowing other people into the home might turn women in the home into fetishized objects. But if one’s business partners are also booksellers, then they are likely to bring into the home books of *blasons* which represent women’s bodies and may corrupt home dwellers’ morals. Is it possible to keep the circulation of books depicting women’s bodies and the men who peddle them out of his home space? On the one hand this would be Corrozet’s ideal situation, yet the text demonstrates the difficulty of such an undertaking.

The problem of housing a real body is acknowledged early in the *blason*’s text. In the opening sequence praising the physical attributes of the room, the second line indicates that the “chambre” is “au corps humain préparée”⁵⁶ [destined for the human body]. This may seem

55 *Blasons domestiques*, Bvii r.

56 *Ibid.*, Bvi v.

strange since family members will inhabit every other space in the house, but this is the room where bodies meet; bodies confront bodies, eyes contemplate bodies. Corrozet must find a way to present the bedroom in a text whose aim is not to inspire lechery. The inhabitants of the room are compared with Adam and Eve and the bedroom with Eden:

Chambre belle tant que peult estre
Ressemblant Paradis terrestre
Pourveu que l'homme & femme aussi
Y soient sans guerre, & sans soucy.⁵⁷

[Bedroom as beautiful as can be
Resembling Paradise on Earth
As long as the husband and wife too
Are there without quarrel or worry]

Husband and wife are given the status of the first humans, putting them outside the context of original sin and the indignity of copulation for painful procreation. It is a state without carnal desire, and without knowledge of sin; indeed without excessive knowledge of any kind, since Adam and Eve are yet to eat from the tree. This is reminiscent of La Perrière's emblem, and the figure of the painter portraying a nude woman being used to represent excessive knowledge. As France moves into a period where knowledge is gained increasingly through direct observation, Corrozet and La Perrière, bourgeois, self-educated Renaissance men who become the producers and distributors of knowledge and culture, sound a cautionary note against this practice.

The composite mythological figure outside reminds the reader of all the associations with the bedroom, and suggests that the more lascivious associations will lead to damnation. But Corrozet shows a different way to imagine the bedroom: by breaking it down into its constituent parts and saturating the mind's eye with details. The *blason* does not only list the bedroom's decorative features, it also lists its contents. After presenting the "sasle et chambre" from outside the building, Corrozet takes us back into the bedroom to inspect its contents.

57 Ibid., Bvii v.

Skenazi remarks that it is surprising not to find any kind of large meeting room in the house as described by Corrozet and posits that this is because Corrozet's house is a relatively modest bourgeois dwelling.⁵⁸ In fact it is not at all surprising to find no large meeting room, given the architectural developments that occur in the early sixteenth century. While medieval castles would have a grandiose gathering room, Renaissance homes, even noble ones, would not, and the bedroom takes over the function of a meeting room. And is expected to be the site of gathering. Corrozet's text reflects that change of the *chambre* taking over the function of the *salle*.

The first object that one encounters back inside the bedroom is the bed. The female figure that was visible through the window from outside the house has disappeared. If the reader or any other visitor is to be allowed into the bedroom, then the space must be void of any hint of sexuality. Having suggested the potential dangers of allowing visitors into the bedroom, the next *blason* removes those suggestions, showing a sanitized space that the eye can safely contemplate. The family home will not become a place where women's bodies will be available or on display. The exchange of representations of women's bodies or their body parts will not be allowed in this most intimate of spaces.

The bed is the object that makes it impossible to turn the bedroom into a *salle* with no hint of sexuality. Addressing this symbol of conjugal union, Corrozet spends most of the poem describing the beauty of the bed and how comfortable it is for sleeping. In the end, the idea of sexual relations is evoked under the sign of sanctity. The bed is first "beneist de la main du prebtre" [blessed by a priest's hand], then described as being "séparé de tout delict" [free from all sin]. Blessed and free from sin, the bed is then qualified with the adjectives "pudique" and "chaste." The moment of union combines Christian marriage with Platonic hermaphroditic unity.

58 Skenazi, *Le Poète architecte*, 163.

The bed is the site “Ou la femme & le mary cher / Sont jointz de Dieu en une chair” [where wife and dear husband / Are joined by God in one flesh]. Sex is glossed over with terms of religion and asexual partnership, and the narrator returns to insisting on the bed’s spiritual properties: “Lict d’amour saint, lict honorable, / Lict somnolent, lict venerable” [Bed of holy love, honorable bed, / Solemn bed, venerable bed]. In the end, the *blason* expresses the hope that the bed will not be tainted with the same crime as the *blasonneurs des membres*:

Gardez votre pudicité
Et evitez lascivité,
Affin que vostre honneur pulule
Sans recepvoir nulle macule.⁵⁹

[Keep your pudicity
And avoid lasciviousness,
So that your honor springs forth
Without receiving any stain.]

Corrozet’s very careful couching of the bed and its sexual connotations in terms of religion, honor, and Platonism, demonstrates his anxiety about his own project. The choice of suggestive language—“macule” hints at the sexual act—confirm the bedroom as the locus of desire.

Reality forces him to adopt a pragmatic stance towards his literary and professional circle, from which women’s bodies and their representations will not disappear any time soon. His readers must be armed with reading and looking strategies to avoid lascivious thoughts. The bedroom, where both business and sex occur, is a propitious site to experiment with developing these strategies. Therefore the window can be proposed as an object to admire rather than look through; and if one succeeds at that exercise, when one reaches the bed inside the bedroom, the naked figure who was in front of the bed behind the window will be gone. Of the two images of the bed shown in these two woodcuts, the reader is only supposed to see (and therefore later visualize) the second.

⁵⁹ *Blasons domestiques*, Ci v.

As well as the bedroom and bed, two other *blasons* enrich the discussion of the relationship between what is public and what is intimate or secret. The *estuy de chambre*, discussed above, and the mirror, both negotiate the contact between the inside and the outside. The *estuy* is placed clearly outside the house, while the mirror stands in a liminal space between the interior and exterior of the house. The mirror is also drawn in relation to a landscape which is very similar to the one in the “Blason de l’estuy de chambre.” However, on either side of the mirror is what resembles a window frame. Yet the mirror also partially blocks the view of the outside. Another game of vision and viewing is set up, using two objects made of glass. The mirror seems placed to play again with the subject’s consciousness of depth of field, as was seen with the bedroom window. Rather than look through the glass in the window frame, the reader is asked to look at the glass in the mirror. The possibility to look through window glass is once again challenged by the woodcut bringing into focus the surface of this glass. By placing another glass object immediately in front of it—this time a reflective one—the reader is obliged not to direct his or her gaze through the window but to focus the gaze on the plane on which the window sits. As in the “Blason de la sasle et chambre” the window is not for looking through, either from outside the house or from inside. Inside and outside must be kept separate, and when one is considering windows, the gaze must stop at the window and not violate the dividing line between the public and the familial.

The mirror does not only stop the gaze at the surface of the window. It also throws the gaze back into the room, deflecting it away from the window and back at the gazing subject:

[A] chascun tu monstre sa forme
S’elle est belle, laide ou difforme,
Et ne refuse en ta clarté
D’aulcun la laidure ou beaulté.⁶⁰

60 Ibid., Dv r.

[To everyone you show his or her form
Whether it be beautiful, ugly or deformed,
And you do not refuse in your clarity
The ugliness or beauty of anyone.]

The verse suggests that both men and women might look in the mirror. Later in the poem, however, the gazing subject is clearly female. The mirror is:

Ou la belle, plaisante, & clere
Se void, se mire, & considere
En regardant sa contenance
Et de son gent corps l'ordonnance.⁶¹

[Where the beautiful, pleasant and pure woman
Sees herself, admires and considers herself,
By looking at her countenance
And the arrangement of her graceful body.]

If the gaze is female, it would seem that the woman's gaze is not even allowed outside the house. As will be explained in the *Hecatongraphie*, Corrozet's emblem book published a year after the *Blasons domestiques*, women should remain inside, even though—and especially because—they desire nothing but to be as free as the birds. Everything feminine should be confined to the house; the body and not even the gaze should be allowed to wander.

The *blason's* poem ends, surprisingly, with an embedded *blason* of the female body:

Ses yeulx scintillans & sa face
Son fronc poly, sa bonne grace,
Sa douce bouche vermeillette.
Son menton qui faict la fossette
Son dur tetin, ses bras gentilz
Ses blanches mains, ses doigts traitifs
Et tout le reste de son corps,
Dont les membres sont bien concordz.⁶²

[Her shining eyes and her face
Her clear forehead, her good grace,
Her sweet vermilion mouth.

61 Ibid., Dv r.

62 Ibid., Dv r – Dv v.

Her chin with its dimple
Her firm breast, her gracious arms
Her white hands, her fine fingers
And all the rest of her body
Whose parts are all harmonious.]

Corrozet does not simply list the body parts, he also describes them, contradicting one of his statements in “Contre les blasonneurs des membres” that the naming of body parts is acceptable but not their description. Corrozet’s mirror not only reflects the woman’s body back at her, but also projects her reflection so that the reader can see it by reading the poem. Is the female body acceptable in this location because it cannot escape outside, nor even look outside? Since the mirror is framed in the window, the reflection of the woman’s body will be doubly framed—in the mirror and then in the window, which is reminiscent of the “Blason de la sasle et chambre” in which the woman’s body is also framed in a window. It seems that Corrozet is once again declaring that while women’s nudity will undoubtedly exist somewhere, its proper place is in the bedroom. However, the reappearance of a framed body in the bedroom places the debate about representation and reality, invoked elsewhere by the references to Zeuxis, at the heart of the family home.

As mentioned above, the confinement of women to the home is echoed in Corrozet’s *Hecatographie*, published in 1540, just a year after the *Blasons domestiques*. This emblem book contains a cautionary note to women, which fits in with the general message of the *Blasons*. Entitled “La statue de Caia Cecilia,” it warns that women should not leave the house.⁶³ If a woman is “pudique” she will be “domestique,” literally of the home. The danger of leaving the house is that the woman might “mielx montrer son corps” [better show off her body]. The home is proposed as the only acceptable location for the feminine body.

63 Corrozet, *Hecatographie*, O1r.

The sin of lasciviousness that Corrozet associates with gazing upon the female form, either through the poetic *blasons anatomiques* or through the windows of a family home, takes on a personal note following the lengthy description of the female body in the “blason du miroir.” The poem ends with a direct address to the mirror by the poet, in which he enlists its help in becoming a model of virtue:

O Miroir je te prie cache
De mon corps la laidure ou tache,
Et de l’ornement de vertu
Me feray beau & bien vestu.⁶⁴

[O Mirror, I pray you hide
The ugliness or stain of my body,
And with the ornament of virtue
I will render myself beautiful and well-dressed.]

It is almost as if the body he has just described is a source of temptation for himself. In contrast to her nudity, he must be clothed with virtue. Corrozet implores the mirror not to show him his own reflection, as his physical appearance will surely show his character. The mirror is therefore refused as an object that should be used by a man for danger of what it might reveal about him.

The mirror and the *estuy* establish a complex relation between body and spectacle, outside and inside, as well as housing and being housed. The objects seem to be gendered, with the *estuy* indicating that a man may leave the house, and the mirror demonstrating that a woman—both her body and gaze—must remain inside. While the *estuy* contains the whole house from outside to the most interior part, the mirror should only contain the woman’s body. The mirror is therefore an interior object which must only reflect interiority, while the *estuy* is an interior object which can pass between the interior and exterior worlds.

64 *Blasons domestiques*, Dv v.

IVb. Secret Space: The Toilet

The *cabinet* and an *estude* make up part of the circulatory tour of space proposed by the *blasons*. Their function is conventional as defined by architectural historians such as Jean Guillaume, Françoise Boudon, and Monique Chatenet. The cabinet is for storing family riches and for prayer; the *estude* is for study in order to develop a closer relationship to God. There seems no anxiety about their size or the possibility—as demonstrated in the *Heptaméron*—that their purpose might be corrupted. Indeed, as well as giving a cross section view of the study, the woodcut shows its door to be open, allowing anyone passing by to see in or even walk in.

By contrast, the “chambre secrete,” here also called the “retraict,” and known also during the sixteenth century as the *chambre privé*,⁶⁵ is mysterious and compromising. The toilet makes its way into various texts, taking its place comfortably in sixteenth-century literature.⁶⁶ Corrozet includes the “blason de la chambre secrete, ou retraict” but the woodcut does not show the interior of the room. Instead it shows a wooden door, from behind which a woman is peeking out. A woman and a man can be seen outside the door. Corrozet seems reticent in showing the inside of the room in the image, an attitude which is mirrored at the end of the accompanying poem:

Il vault bien mieulx que je me taise,
Qu’empuentir de tes senteurs
Les Lecteurs & les auditeurs.⁶⁷

[It is better for me to be silent
Than to stink out with your odors
The readers and listeners.]⁶⁸

65 See Huguet, *Dictionnaire*, vol. 6, 193-4.

66 See Persels and Ganim, *Fecal Matters*, for a collection of essays on matters scatological in Early Modern European literature.

67 *Blasons domestiques*, Eiiii v.

68 Persels and Ganim identify defecation as “the last taboo” in literary studies. They and other contributors to *Fecal Matters* are careful to note that while scatological references were more abundant and better accepted in literature of the sixteenth century, they could still shock the reader. See *Fecal Matters*, xiii-xvii. Corrozet’s claim of being scandalized corresponds to this public sense of propriety.

This concern for saving his readers' nostrils is somewhat disingenuous, however, since he has already invoked "le fort perfun" [the strong perfume] that can waft out if one lifts up the seat. He advises that this is to be avoided, but in order to say that he will not talk about it, he must mention it, as he had to mention the *blasons anatomiques* in order to counter them. As he indicates in "Aux lecteurs," reading the description of an object is the same as possessing the object itself, so that a description of an odor is enough to bring the real odor to the reader's nostrils.

The descriptions of the room verge on exaggeration, even satire. The satirical element is augmented by the fact that the *blason* addresses the toilet directly, as if in praise (following the model of the *blasons du corps*). It is "de grand commodité" [highly convenient], a trait which indicates its convenience and its ability to serve its function. Later it is even "de grande dignité" [highly dignified], surely a satirical description, since the following line is "Ou le Cul sied en majesté" [Where the ass sits in majesty], the capitalization of "Cul" personifying the body part. This personification mocks the status of royalty; the toilet is the great leveller since even royalty must sit on it. It then becomes the "retraict ou l'on se met à laise," [the retreat where one puts oneself at ease] at which point the author stops himself from describing any more. As the place of absolute relaxation, it is well worthy of its title "chambre secrete" if we understand "secret" to be the adjective that gives the closest equivalent of our modern notion of private space—a space with limited access and where one can expect not to be disturbed. Corrozet's unwillingness to state what happens in the room indicates his intention to respect the individual's expectation for privacy. The adjective "secret" indicates that the room is both set apart and related to an individual person. It is a place where one can truly expect to be on one's own.

The separation of the toilet from public space is indicated also in its second title, “retraict” [retreat], although it clearly adjoins public space as indicated by the number of figures in the woodcut. This woodcut is one of only two that were not cut originally for this particular book.⁶⁹ The image originally accompanied an edition of *Pamphilus and Galatea*.⁷⁰ The image appears to correspond to the moment when Galatea is left alone with Pamphilus by the old woman, and Pamphilus rapes her. In refusing to depict the inside of the room in the woodcut, in giving no description of the inside and only euphemistically alluding to what happens there, Corrozet for the first and only time presents a space which is unknowable. The borrowing from a tale of rape suggests that the inability to discover what occurs in this most private of spaces is laden with anxiety—anything is possible in this space, and goes unregulated. Behind the suggestions of odors and dirt lie resonances of a much more sinister nature. Even the *Heptaméron*’s toilet scene in tale 11 places the reader inside the *chambre secreete* and describes its filth. Marguerite’s text refuses to close off spaces and make them unobservable. Corrozet’s text demonstrates a similar concern with the toilet, indicating that unobservable solitude is problematic. Yet his position is more nuanced, since observation of all spaces by everyone, as outlined in the *Heptaméron*, is not proposed here. Family members’ behavior must be observed in order to be guided, but only by the head of the family. Marguerite’s spaces are open to public scrutiny in order to promote morality; Corrozet’s are generally closed in order to protect it.

69 The other is the image accompanying the author’s address to the readers. I am again grateful to Stephen Rawles for his painstaking work on Parisian printer Denis Janot, tracing as far as can be known the provenance of woodcuts used in his workshop, and for sharing with me his data on the *Blasons domestiques*.

70 A thirteenth-century play, Pamphilus asks an old woman for help in seducing a young woman, Galatea, whom he would like to marry, but who is above him in social rank. If he can coerce her into having sex with him, then the chances of gaining her hand improve. The old woman invites Galatea to her house when she knows Pamphilus will be there, then leaves them alone. Although Galatea is also in love with Pamphilus, he cannot persuade her to sleep with him, so he rapes her. They marry, and she predicts that she can never be happy with him.

V. Conclusion

Corrozet sets up the home as the central locus of morality. In the *Blasons domestiques* he uses the negotiation between inside and outside to establish the strict gender roles that he later describes in his emblem books. The mirror becomes a focusing device for a woman's gaze and aspirations. The *estuy* can wander outside the house, along with the man who possesses it. The woman's body must remain inside the house, and the mirror keeps the female gaze within its confines. She is to focus on her own appearance and her surroundings inside the house.

Corrozet's carefully constructed notions of inside and outside, dividing corporeality from home life, is undermined by the lack of division between public space and family space. The bedroom, and the bed itself, cannot help but suggest the subject he is trying to avoid. The need for some kind of space where other people will not intrude upon the family is suggested by the difficulty of negotiating the dual function of the bedroom.

But Corrozet also thwarts his own project by the very act of including images of the female form in the *blasons*. Although the framing devices manage to keep Zeuxis' models outside the walls of the house represented in the book, the naked woman in the bedroom is clearly within the walls of the house, despite the text's suggestion that seeing her involves a transgression on the part of the reader. The exhortation to look at the windows instead of her feels like a taunt—a trap set by the text. A freely circulating volume, Corrozet's book containing these images will enter into people's houses; he perpetuates the cycle of representation and circulation that he claims to abhor. This discrepancy suggests that the slippage between the intimacy of the bedroom and the business world hosted in the bedroom is unavoidable, and Corrozet admits the impossibility of the task he has set himself. In order to combat poetry which induces lust he is obliged to mention it, caught between a desire to eliminate references to the

body and the inability to escape fully from them. As long as domestic space remains both public and familial, Corrozet's goal will remain impossible to realize. His approach must therefore be pragmatic: admit that the unmentionable is unavoidable, and develop diversionary tactics.

Chapter Four

The *maison-abîme*:

Montaigne at Home in the *Essais*

In 1571, at the age of 38, Michel de Montaigne withdrew to his family's country estate near Bordeaux, ostensibly to take his retreat from public life. This chapter examines the shifting attitudes of the essayist towards his family residence as described in the *Essais*. Montaigne's home, the Château de Montaigne, was located in the Périgord region, near places where some of the worst partisan fighting took place during the French religious wars that plagued the second half of the sixteenth century. At a time when domesticity was increasingly linked to individuality, and the personalization of living space was developing in both noble and merchant homes, Montaigne provides a unique perspective on the connections between the concepts of home and selfhood.

Montaigne is often associated with the library in his country estate, since it is posited as the place of the essayist's writing and therefore the locus associated with the birth of the textual Montaigne.¹ Montaigne does indeed identify with his house, but it is an unsatisfactory and a paradoxical identification; the immutability of a fixed place cannot be imposed on Montaigne. He who is permanently *en mouvement*—to borrow Jean Starobinski's term—cannot be pinned to this type of stable entity.² The house reveals itself to be solid yet unreliable and porous; its walls guarantee neither safety nor solitude. Home is not a single place, but is to be found in a scattered series of places and times, wherever physical, affective, and intellectual belonging can be

1 See Legros, *Essais sur poutres*, Hoffmann, *Montaigne's Career*, and West, "Reading Rooms," for some of the many discussions of Montaigne's relationship to and identification with the library.

2 See Starobinski, *Montaigne en mouvement*. Starobinski defines the overarching structure of the *Essais* as one that proposes two extremes between which Montaigne continually negotiates. The movement constitutes a third position, albeit a dynamic one. It is in the movement that Montaigne's consistency is found.

located. Home becomes a series of physical, spiritual, and mental retreats, but it also functions as a lens through which one might project an identity into the world. The essayist effects a partial disavowal of his house as a projection of himself. If a building can be conceived as a mode of representation of the self, as proposed by architects such as Alberti, then it must compete with writing as a way to construct a public version of the self. Montaigne examines the two modes of representation, and demonstrates a distinct preference for painting himself with words, as outlined in his *avant-propos*.

I. Solitude: The Impossible Retreat

AN. CHR [...] AET. 38. PRIDIE CAL. MART. DIE SVO NATALI
MICH. MONTANUS. SERVITII AVLICI ET MVNERVM PVBLICORVM
IAMDVDVM PERTAESVS DVM SE INTEGER IN DOCTARVM VIRGINV
[...] RECESSIT SINUS VBI QUIETVS ET OMNIVM SECVRVS
TANTILLUM ID TANDEM SVPERABIT DECVRSI MVLTA JAM PLVS PARTE
SPATII SI MODO FATA DVINT EXIGAT ISTAS SEDES ET DVLCE LATEBRAS
AVITASQ. LIBERTATI SUAE, TRANQVILLITATIQ. ET OTIO CONSECRAVIT.³

In the year of our Lord 1571, at age 38, the day before the Calends of March, day of his birthday, Michel de Montaigne, long since tired of serving the royal court and managing public works, safely withdrew into the company of learned virgins, where at rest and free of all cares he will at last lead what little remains of his life (more than half of it being over); if the fates allow he may see out the rest his life, and he has consecrated those settlements and the sweet ancestral retreats to his freedom, peace, and leisure.⁴

When Montaigne retires to his country estate, he chooses to have the reasons for his retreat inscribed in Latin on the wall of the *cabinet* attached to his library. The company of the learned virgins will replace the crowds in which he mingled at the royal court; he will ostensibly be alone with his books. The freedom, peace, and leisure he seeks seem inseparable from the location of his retreat—his ancestral home. By affixing the words to his library wall on a stone tablet, the

3 Cited in Legros, *Essais sur poutres*, 120. Legros outlines the positioning of the inscription—over the door of the *cabinet*—and proposes that it may have been repainted, although no date could possibly be recovered for its restoration.

4 My thanks to Amy Oh, Daniel Abosso, and Nathan Owens for their lively discussions surrounding the interpretation and translation of Montaigne's inscription.

decision also becomes part of the fabric of the building. Unchangeable in its form, this recording of the pivotal moment in the essayist's life is henceforth inseparable from the fate of the library, announcing Montaigne's intentions to anyone in the future who might enter the room. This material manifestation of the author's wishes therefore immortalizes his intentions, giving the words themselves a lifespan that long outlasts the actual mindset of the essayist. Becoming stone, and being identified with the building lends a misleading permanence to a set of thoughts that—when in their natural setting of Montaigne's mind—are constantly in flux.

In “De la solitude,” Montaigne returns to his decision to remove himself from public life, again highlighting the desire for rest:

Or la fin, ce crois-je, de toute solitude, en est tout'une, d'en vivre plus à loisir et à son aise. Mais on n'en cherche pas toujours bien le chemin. Souvent on pense avoir quitté les affaires, on ne les a que changez. Il n'y a guiere moins de tourment au gouvernement d'une famille que d'un estat entier.⁵ (I.39.238)

[Now the aim of all solitude, I take it, is the same: to live more at leisure and at one's ease. But people do not always look for the right way. Often they think they have left business, and they have only changed it. There is scarcely less trouble in governing a family than in governing an entire state. (175)]

Ease of life and leisure are the stated goals. But Montaigne's achievement of those goals is immediately put into question. The right way to reach them is posited as difficult to find. This qualifying sentence shifts the focus from the final goal to the process, and introduces motion into the static idea of retiring to the library. Montaigne seems as interested in the movement towards his goal as in the goal itself. Solitude is not the goal in and of itself; it is the means by which to achieve rest and repose. The next two sentences seem to suggest that as soon as he has stated his goal, he has failed in his quest. When warning of the possibility of taking the wrong path, the “tourment” of governing the home is not only a general example, but also personal. Further

5 Montaigne, *Essais*. All original quotations are from the Villey-Saulnier edition, all translations from Frame, *Complete Essays*. The original text will be denoted by book, essay number and page number. Translations will be referenced by page number.

reflection on his home throughout the three volumes reveals a clear distaste for estate management. The term “tourment” suggests an individual battered on all sides, creating the image of one who needs, and deserves, rest. Immediately it becomes clear that whatever “solitude” might constitute for the author of the *Essais*, equating it with life at home is a profound misconception. The project of solitude—tied so closely to the home in the library inscription—contains its own impossibility, since life at home is hardly less active and demanding than life at court. Solitude and its benefits, although originally imagined to be tied to the family estate, cannot be found either at home or at court. As George Hoffmann explains, when at home, and even in the library, Montaigne was rarely if ever alone.⁶ Solitude—in the sense of isolating the body spatially—is virtually impossible.

Jean Starobinski is one of the first critics to see Montaigne’s retreat into his library as a literal renunciation of the world and attempt at withdrawing completely from public life.⁷ The retreat is viewed by Starobinski, and later by Brown, as the first in three periods of Montaigne’s life and thinking, tracing, as he does, the movement of Montaigne’s text through three distinct phases, moving from one extreme position to the other, and then finding a happy medium.

While Starobinski perpetuates the myth of the lone writer, George Hoffmann points out that the notion of Montaigne writing as a solitary figure does not correspond to the material reality of his life on the family country estate, nor the fact that he would be accompanied by at least one *valet* or *secrétaire* at almost all times. According to Hoffmann, Montaigne in the ivory tower, slaving over his manuscripts, corresponds to a nineteenth-century view of literary production, one that will not surface for centuries after Montaigne’s time. In reality, Montaigne dictated the vast majority of his essays and letters to a scribe, and the library, far from being a

6 Hoffmann, *Montaigne’s Career*, 39-42.

7 Starobinski, *Montaigne en mouvement*, in particular chapters 1 and 3.

retreat from company, would have regularly had other people in it. The idea of a direct correspondence between his mind and his manuscripts, mediated by his writing hand, is simply not supported by the evidence.

Hoffmann is wary of readers such as Jean Starobinski who use the solitary figure in the ivory tower as a premise for their critical perspective on Montaigne, accusing them of taking Montaigne too literally when he talks about the removal to the tower as a complete rupture in his life. But Starobinski also sees the rupture as symbolic. The retreat to the tower is described as the adoption of a different mindset. It is both a real rupture because the library is indeed the place of writing, and a symbolic one because Montaigne's contact with the outside world is barely broken at all.

The retreat to the estate also takes on a moral dimension. The *Essais* demonstrate a real desire on Montaigne's part to quit society, even though that desire is never realizable. Along with the personal goals of leisure and ease, Montaigne gives his retreat a wider purpose. He advocates retirement partly because there comes a time when one can no longer be useful to society: "Il est temps de nous desnouer de la societ , puis que nous n'y pouvons rien apporter. Et, qui ne peut prester, qu'il se defende d'emprunter." (I.39.242) [It is time to untie ourselves from society, since we can contribute nothing to it. And he who cannot lend, let him keep from borrowing. (178)] Montaigne's ties are not easily broken; the verb "desnouer" suggests a firm, and even tangled, knot from which he must extricate himself. Society's grip on its members is tight; it will take considerable effort to escape it. Engagement with society implies not only interaction with others, but a productive exchange in which all parties must contribute to each others' benefit. Montaigne seems to have concluded that his involvement in society was no longer beneficial to others, only to himself.

Both Frieda S. Brown and John D. Barbour examine Montaigne's vision of solitude in relation to social responsibility. Barbour traces the concept of solitude from the early Christian communities and Augustine to the humanist tradition of Petrarch and Montaigne, and beyond.⁸ In discussing Montaigne, he demonstrates how much the essayist's approach to solitude has in common with Augustine, as it is bounded solitude, that is, limited in space and time, having a definite beginning and end, and standing as a counterpoint to life in society. Yet it also takes its roots in the classical tradition, and the common questions traceable from the Epicureans and Stoics to Plato and Aristotle of how to balance a life of solitude with duty to the state:

As does Augustine, Montaigne understands that solitude should have a definite but delineated place in a human life, limited in duration and sustained by social bonds. In contrast with Augustine, he sees solitude not simply as a momentary escape from the prying eyes of others, or as an occasion for communion with God, but as enjoyable for its own sake. He is less concerned than Petrarch about using solitude for positive social ends.⁹

While there is a degree of concern for self-contentment in Montaigne's retreat, it is however also informed by a duty to society. Montaigne may think of himself as unable to contribute anything to achieve "positive social ends," but he will make sure that he has no negative effect on society either. Barbour sees Montaigne's relationship with solitude not as a simple progression, but as a continual need to withdraw from and return to the world:

Unlike the view that Montaigne moved from Stoic to Skeptic to Epicurean in a linear process over the years, this interpretation sees Montaigne as repeatedly going through the motion of withdrawal and return. The need for disengagement is not an intellectual stage that one leaves behind once a final balanced position is achieved. Rather, Montaigne discerned a continual dialectical movement in life as an individual seeks to define a personal identity and establish a satisfactory relationship to the social world.¹⁰

Brown sees more of a single movement into solitude, and then a single movement out of it.¹¹ She explores the question of whether Montaigne's retreat can be considered sincere, and concludes

8 Barbour, *Value of Solitude*. See in particular the introduction and chapters one, two, and three, 1-80.

9 Ibid., 68.

10 Ibid., 63-4

11 Brown, "De la solitude."

that it can, arguing that the initial withdrawal into solitude is a necessary step for Montaigne to recognize the full weight of his social responsibilities:

‘De la solitude’ testifies to the fact that, having fled the court, the essayist attempted at first to define his debt to himself and to attain his freedom without the concomitant and necessary assumption of social responsibility. Only later was he to understand that the free individual cannot stand apart from society, and then, his participation was defined by his knowledge of what he, Michel de Montaigne, was capable of doing.¹²

The Dean of St.-Hilaire, after twenty-two years of chosen isolation and with no physical malady to prevent him from engaging with the world, is cited as an example of a wasteful life, one that reneges on duty towards family and society.¹³ Montaigne’s ethics of solitude here does not relate to his family’s exposure to the outside world, as does Corrozet’s in the *Blasons domestiques*, or to a regulation of others’ behavior through the control of space, as Marguerite de Navarre seems to suggest in the *Heptaméron*, but to his own level of engagement with the wider world.

The moral imperative is doubled when he considers his responsibility for self-improvement. Identifying vanity as one of his own vices, he seeks a way to cure himself of it, and to live without considering what other people think of him:

La plus contraire humeur à la retraicte, c’est l’ambition. La gloire et le repos sont choses qui ne peuvent loger en mesme giste. A ce que je voy, ceux-cy n’ont que les bras et les jambes hors de la presse; leur ame, leur intention y demeure engagée plus que jamais. (I.39.246-7)

[The humor most directly opposite to retirement is ambition. Glory and repose are things that cannot lodge in the same dwelling. As far as I can see, these men have only their arms and their legs outside the crowd; their souls, their intentions, are more than ever in the thick of it. (182)]

A body taken out of the “presse” does not necessarily bring the soul with it; if the soul seeks glory, it will reside wherever the quest for glory can be made. Removing oneself bodily from society is only half the battle; ambition will take the soul out of its state of retirement. Retreat

12 Ibid., 146

13 See II.8.392, “De l’Affection des Pères aux Enfants” [Of the Affection of Fathers for their Children]

and solitude are proposed as ways in which to live better, both with regards to the self and to society. The ethics of solitude are both personal and societal, and not necessarily tied to the body.

The soul's repose depends more to attitude than on location. Seemingly conscious of the difficulty of reconciling body and soul to the same purpose of rest, Montaigne nonetheless aims to quiet his mind by training his body to be still. In "De l'Oisiveté" (I.8), Montaigne describes how his mind reacts to the body's retreat into "repos":

Dernierement que je me retiray chez moy, deliberé autant que je pourroy, ne me mesler d'autre chose que de passer en repos, et à part, ce peu qui me reste de vie: il me sembloit ne pouvoir faire plus grande faveur à mon esprit, que de le laisser en pleine oysiveté, s'entretenir soy mesmes, et s'arrester et rasseoir en soy: ce que j'esperois qu'il peut meshuy faire plus aisément, devenu avec le temps plus poissant, et plus meur. Mais je trouve, que [...] au rebours, faisant le cheval eschappé, il se donne cent fois plus d'affaire à soy mesmes, qu'il n'en prenoit pour autrui; et m'enfante tant de chimeres et monstres fantasques les uns sur les autres, sans ordre, et sans propos, que pour en contempler à mon aise l'ineptie et l'estrangeté, j'ay commancé de les mettre en rolle, esperant avec le temps luy en faire honte à luy mesmes. (I.8.33)

[Lately when I retired to my home, determined so far as possible to bother about nothing except spending the little life I have left in rest and seclusion, it seemed to me I could do my mind no greater favor than to let it entertain itself in full idleness and stay and settle in itself, which I hoped it might do more easily now, having become weightier and riper with time. But I find, on the contrary, like a runaway horse, it gives itself a hundred times more trouble than it took for others, and gives birth to so many chimeras and fantastic monsters, one after another, without order or purpose, that in order to contemplate their ineptitude and strangeness at my pleasure, I have begun to put them in writing, hoping in time to make my mind ashamed of itself. (21)]

The retreat "chez moy" does not bring rest to the mind, just as it could not remove distractions from the essayist's life. Even when isolation is achieved, his mind has other ideas. The "chimeres et monstres fantasques" that it produces are a direct result of having no contact with others and being allowed to roam as it pleases. In order to rein in his untamed mind, his solution is to make the monsters act on stage. Montaigne therefore wants to act as the audience for his mind's phantasms, conceiving a dialog between himself and his mind and breaking the solitude it has created for itself. The only way to deal with the effects of solitude, as Marcel Tetel has observed,

is a splitting of the self into actor and audience; Montaigne creates company for himself in order to comment on his own failings.¹⁴ Company is redefined to include not only others but also the self, augmenting the “bookish” companions to whom Glyn P. Norton refers when defining Montaigne’s “populous solitude.”¹⁵ As a result, in the failure of achieving mental quiet in solitude, the writing project is born.

Although local solitude does not lead to inward rest, Montaigne nonetheless in places does equate geographical solitude with the ability to turn one’s mind inwards. He recognizes that for himself at least, separation from the crowd is important: “Ainsi il la faut ramener et retirer en soy [l’ame]: c’est la vraie solitude, et qui se peut jouïr au milieu des villes et des cours des Roys; mais elle se jouyt plus commodément à part.” (I.39.240) [Therefore we must bring (the soul) back and withdraw it into itself: that is the real solitude, which may be enjoyed in the midst of cities and the courts of kings, but it is enjoyed more handily alone. (176)] Local solitude becomes a condition under which he personally is able to achieve real solitude and he marvels at the wise man who can turn his mind inwards even when surrounded by tumult. Real solitude is in fact something which will reveal itself if possible.

While the distinction is made between the body’s solitude and the soul’s, and while the latter is not strictly tied to the former, the renunciation of glory by the soul is repeatedly expressed in spatial tropes. The relocation of the body in a specific, physical home and the failure to find solitude or repose in that building does not exclude the soul’s searching for a home and structuring interior space as a residence. Glory and rest cannot “loger en mesme giste” (I.39.246-7). The use of “loger,” indicating housing, and “giste,” equating the soul’s space with a residence creating a strong parallel between the physical home and the location of the soul. The

14 See Tetel, “Montaigne et Pétrarque,” 213.

15 Norton, “Populous Solitude,” 106.

imagery is reinforced by “demeure”—where the soul resides (I.39.247). The interior self is equated with the physical self that needs housing—but not necessarily where the body can be found.

In “De la solitude,” the semantic field linked to human dwelling is augmented and nuanced by the figuration of the place of retreat as an animal’s lair:

Il est dangier que la lueur de vos actions passées ne vous esclaire que trop, et vous suive jusques dans vostre taniere. [...] [V]ous et un compaignon estes assez suffisant theatre l’un à l’autre, ou vous à vous-mesmes. Que le peuple vous soit un, et un vous soit tout le peuple. C’est une lasche ambition de vouloir tirer gloire de son oysiveté et de sa cachette. Il faut faire comme les animaux qui effacent la trace, à la porte de leur taniere. (I.39.247)

[There is danger that the gleam of your past actions may give you only too much light and follow you right into your lair. [...] [Y]ou and one companion are an adequate theater for each other, or you for yourself. Let the people be one to you, and let one be a whole people to you. It is a base ambition to want to derive glory from our idleness and our concealment. We must do like the animals that rub out their tracks to the entrance to their lairs. (182)]

The exhortation to imitate animals reinforces the ideal of paying no heed to the opinion of others, since animals do not concern themselves with their reputation. The home is configured as a place to shelter the body, as animals do. A “taniere” is a hidden lair, one which cannot be found by others, since animals remove their “traces” from in front of the entrance. Montaigne’s desire to clean his “traces” suggests effacing any record of his engagement in the public sphere. Again the impossibility of the task is revealed, since the past cannot be changed and public knowledge of his work is known.

In a further passage from “De la solitude” Montaigne also configures himself as a place in order to reserve a space inaccessible to others in which he can examine himself. The complete separation of the space of retreat from the space of the world corresponds to a spatialization of the self:

Il se faut reserver une arriere boutique toute nostre, toute franche, en laquelle nous établissons 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 acointance ou communication estrangiere y trouve place; discourir et y rire comme sans femme, sans enfans et sans biens, sans train et sans valetz. (I.39.241)

[We must reserve a back shop all our own, entirely free, in which to establish our real liberty and our principal retreat and solitude. Here our ordinary conversation must be between us and ourselves, and so private that no outside association or communication can find a place; here we must talk and laugh as if without wife, children, without possessions, without retinue and servants. (177)]

The “arriere boutique” implies a space beyond another space, indicating that the true self needs a double barrier in which to explore itself freely. Interior space is divided into two layers, one of which is more secluded than the other, hence implying that the first layer mediates between the world and the second layer. The retreat is configured as a home—the word “retraicte” indicating a dwelling place throughout the *Essais*. There is a hint of frustration with his physical home in this passage. While the aim of retreat of the body to the estate is solitude, the solitude mentioned in this passage will successfully rid the self of wife, children, possessions, retinue and servants—all the people and objects that make up his household, and that thwart his plans for retirement.

Access to a person is as much a concern for Montaigne as for Corrozet, although Corrozet is preoccupied with access to the physical body while Montaigne’s isolation can only be to an interior self—the only manifestation of the self that can be kept from public examination. For Marguerite de Navarre, it is through the body that access to the interior self is achieved; the mind, the heart, are made manifest physically, allowing others to “read” an individual and access their secret thoughts.

Montaigne is firmly enmeshed within society’s bounds, and the need to release himself implies that his idea of self has become so entrenched in the movements and activities of public life that it is no longer discernible on its own. To define himself in terms of himself will require a

disengagement from others. The quest for self-analysis is tied to the physical space of his home. Yet the home is as busy as any court, which leads Montaigne to an idea of self that is decoupled from the home and reconstituted as a metaphorical home with no physical location. Montaigne alternately needs spatial solitude in order to attain mental solitude, but also finds that spatial solitude leads to anything but mental quiet. In searching for his interior solitude, he discovers that the space of the interior itself needs to be divided. Two spaces are needed for mental solitude to function, but they are not physical and mental; they are two sections of mental space.

Mental solitude is not productive, healthy, or restful without company. Left as one space, the mind drives itself mad with phantasms. But divided into two spaces, the mind can observe itself from a distanced point of view. Thus, Montaigne realizes mental solitude can be uncoupled from spatial solitude, and therefore from the space of the home. The mind can always have its company with and in itself, and as Montaigne begins to write, in its own manifestation within the *Essais*. Writing therefore is paradoxically an act of breaking solitude, of giving the mind an audience, albeit another version of itself. “La vraie solitude” can only be successful if the mind can divide itself into both actor and audience, and keep itself company.

II. Attachment and Detachment

Although retreat to the country estate is useful for neither *la solitude locale* nor *la vraie solitude*, there nonetheless remains a strong connection between Montaigne and his house. Following the definition of “home” as presented in the introduction to this study—the physical and mental identifications which make the home a reproduction of and repository for the self—it is possible to trace Montaigne’s construction of the concept of home across numerous different locations—the family estate, Paris, Rome, his inner space which houses the soul, and eventually

his book. Montaigne's relationship to his home(s) is not limited to his vision of solitude and social responsibility. His various dwellings manifest themselves through a number of different aspects: family name and legacy; the identification of the bodily self with a building; the safe housing of the family; affective and intellectual belonging; and the exercise of his own will. It becomes clear that the notion of attachment, like that of solitude, contains its own undoing in the *Essais*. Montaigne's identification with one place in particular is never perfect, such that every attachment is coupled with a concurrent detachment allowing for multiple bonds to form and be unformed and reformed.

IIa. Unavoidable Connections: Father, Name, Unconscious Body

While the location for the inner self is not dependent on physical space or place, but located in an inner mental recess within the soul, the body of the essayist identifies itself with its physical surroundings. In addition to this bodily identification, Montaigne's connections to the estate are established by his family legacy, and his inherited name.

The name by which we know the essayist best—Montaigne—is of course shared by the estate. One name for two beings unavoidably creates an equivalence between the two, such that one might think them interchangeable. Although it was his father who gained the noble title “de Montaigne,” Michel was born with it, making it part of his moniker from before he could remember. However, the essayist turns the game of identification on its head, claiming in “De la vanité” that the estate is named after the family: “C’est le lieu de ma naissance, et de la plus part de mes ancestres: ils y ont mis leur affection et leur nom” (III.9.970). [It is my birthplace and that of most of my ancestors; they set on it their affection and their name (741)]. This twist almost makes of the estate another member of the family—one that is granted the family's name to

indicate its belonging to them, rather than the opposite notion of the family gaining its identity from the place. In this way Montaigne claims the name as his own, justly inherited from his family, and uncouples his identification from its slavish relationship to place. It is his identity, or so he would have us believe—not the estate’s. The name can thus be liberated from its original attachment, and placed at will elsewhere. “Michael Montanus” can become citizen of Rome, changing his place of belonging.

Detaching himself from the house is not a simple matter, however, and depends on more people’s opinions than Montaigne’s. In the *Essais*, great importance is attached to the fact that Pierre Eyquem spent some time and effort to build up the family home, and considered this enterprise a highly worthy one, as can be seen in “De la vanité”:

Mon pere aymoît à bastir Montaigne, où il estoit nay; et en toute cette police d’affaires domestiques, j’ayme à me servir de son exemple et de ses reigles, et y attacheray mes successeurs autant que je pourray. Si je pouvois mieux pour luy, je le feroys. Je me glorifie que sa volonté s’exerce encores et agisse par moy. Jà, à ne plaise que je laisse faillir entre mes mains aucune image de vie que je puisse rendre à un si bon pere. (III.9.951)

[My father loved to build up Montaigne, where he was born; and in all this administration of domestic affairs, I love to follow his example and his rules, and I shall bind my successors to them as much as I can. If I could do better for him I would. I glory in the fact that his will still operates and acts through me. God forbid that I should allow to fail in my hands any semblance of life that I could restore to so good a father. (726)]

While it is tempting to see an image of Michel de Montaigne in the estate that gave him his name, it would appear that a closer correspondence between building and person comes in the form of his father who has the real affection for the building, including the art of building. Montaigne’s attachment is due less to the building itself than to the honor he bestows on his father by imitating what he would have done. Montaigne’s father is linked to the estate through his birth, and in the same sentence, to the creative process that changes the fabric of the building. His life is therefore intertwined with the growing of the family estate.

Montaigne also describes the castle as an “image de vie” that he can “rendre à un si bon pere.” The passage suggests that the castle is therefore the living image of Montaigne’s father, and that any work that Montaigne can do on it will help preserve the image of his father and give him new life. In an essay about vanity, in which the material objects associated with the material world are cast aside, the maintenance of a building for the sake of a dead father seems to attach too much weight to a possession. In another revealing use of language, Montaigne claims to “glory” in his continuation of his father’s building work.

In the following paragraphs of the chapter, Montaigne’s lofty “glory” turns quickly to “faineance” and the simple fact that he does not like building or maintaining the family estate:

Ce que je me suis meslé d’achever quelque vieux pan de mur et de renger quelque piece de bastiment mal dolé, ç’a esté certes plus regardant à son intention qu’à mon contentement. Et accuse ma faineance de n’avoir passé outre à parfaire les beaux commencements qu’il a laissez en sa maison; d’autant plus que je suis en grans termes d’en estre le dernier possesseur de ma race et d’y porter la derniere main. (III.9.951)

[Whenever I have taken a hand in completing some old bit of wall and repairing some badly constructed building, it has certainly been out of regard more to his intentions than to my own satisfaction. And I blame my indolence that I have not gone further toward completing the things he began so handsomely in this house; all the more because I have a good chance of being the last of my race to possess it, and the last to put a hand to it. (726)]

The description of the estate swiftly degrades into that of badly constructed buildings and of old bits of wall, as if we were watching the building crumbling before our eyes. It becomes even more clear how much the person of Montaigne’s father is identified with the building passed down to his son. Michel does not build or repair out of his own free will but because that is what his father would do. Yet Montaigne does seem to feel some regret for the state of the house, since his father was in the process of building something genuinely beautiful. To include building in the chapter on vanity implies that the action itself is itself vanitous, despite what appear to be

honorable intentions in wishing to preserve his father's name. The building, for all it is made of stone, is ephemeral, and will eventually crumble.

Montaigne's own attempt to identify with the house by seeking solitude there ended with the notion that a physical structure was not necessary to construct his inner self; he had to develop mental structures in which to house his soul. The house, once seen as the guarantor of continuity between generations of the family, now falls apart as the person who does not identify with the building does not take the time to repair it. Yet the situation is unchangeable and his indifference insurmountable. In declaring, "Si je pouvois mieux pour luy, je le feroys" [if I could do better for him, I would,] Montaigne states that he is incapable of following any other path than the one he is on. The maintenance of the estate is a source of tension: filial duty is mixed with the promise of (worthless) glory at honoring his father's legacy, but at the same time, there is a lack of personal satisfaction associated with the activity.

The essayist claims that the inability to change his taste or his habits is at least partly due to nature's workings; he was born too late to be trained properly, and because of that accident of nature, his life took a different course. Not only did his taste for domestic affairs not develop as it should, it seems he did not inherit it at all: "Je voudrois qu'au lieu de quelque autre piece de sa succession, mon pere m'eust resigné cette passionnée amour qu'en ses vieux ans il portoit à son mesnage. Il estoit bien heureux de ramener ses desirs à sa fortune, et de se sçavoir plaire de ce qu'il avoit." (III.9.952) [I wish that instead of some other part of his estate, my father had handed down to me that passionate love that he had in his old age for his household. He was very happy in being able to keep his desires down to his means, and to be pleased with what he had. (727)] While he does not share his father's love of building and home management, Montaigne nonetheless exhibits a desire to have the same feelings as him. His regret is poignant, mixed up

with filial love, and duty, and a sense that he is missing something very pleasing but that he cannot comprehend. Yet duty to the house contradicts his own free will. As in the *Heptaméron* personal use of domestic space indicates a desire to act on one's will in the face of social convention. Montaigne cannot bring himself to maintain the estate as he should because he has no desire to do so.

The ties of name and of personal will can be loosened from the house. In addition to these ambiguous attachments, the question of different aspects of the self is bound up with the estate. Above, it was established that the interior self does not identify with the space of the house and that a second, mental space must be established to lodge the soul. Yet the body, even when unconscious, maintains a strong connection with its physical location. In "De l'exercitation" (II.6) [Of Practice], Montaigne recounts an incident in which he falls off his horse and comes as close to death as ever in his life. In the description of his fall and subsequent recovery, it will be seen how Montaigne's body identifies with the house, how knowledge of the house stays with him even when he is in a death-like state, but how the house's solidity is not transferred to his own body.

Bruno Peyron investigates the narration of the loss of consciousness in the works of Michel de Montaigne, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Hervé Guibert. He probes the problem of first-person narration for an incident in which the narrator has no consciousness of the event. Peyron treats the problem as an absence of "moi" during a narration which is all supposed to be related first-hand. The impossibility of such a narration for the incident in question leads him to investigate the different strategies employed by each author to still tell their story while including details that they only know second-hand. Peyron correctly identifies these moments as problematic because of the absence of the narrating self from the events in question, and defines

the ongoing narration as an alteration of the pact between autobiographical writer and audience.¹⁶

In the case of Montaigne, he considers the modification of the pact as particularly egregious, since the essayist does little to indicate to his reader the switch from first- to third-person narrative. He identifies the narration of his unconscious state and his awakening from it as Montaigne's means to trivialize death: "La mort est banalisée et elle perd de son tragique. Montaigne se sert de son apoplexie pour ravalier la mort au rang de simple événement."¹⁷

While the overt claim made in the essay is that of an experience closely resembling death, the text reveals a second observation following the loss of consciousness:

Comme j'approchai de chez moy, où l'alarme de ma cheute avoit des-jà couru, et que ceux de ma famille m'eurent rencontré avec les cris accoustumez en telles choses, non seulement je respondois quelque mot à ce qu'on me demandoit, mais encore ils disent que je m'avisay de commander qu'on donnast un cheval à ma femme, que je voyoy s'empestrer et se tracasser dans le chemin, qui est montueux et mal-aisé. Il semble que cette consideration deut partir d'une ame esveillée, si est-ce que je n'y estois aucunement; c'estoyent des pensemens vains, en nuë, qui estoyent esmeuz par les sens des yeux et des oreilles; ils ne venoyent pas de chez moy. (II.6.376)

[As I approached my house, where the alarm of my fall had already come, and the members of my family had met me with the outcries customary in such cases, not only did I make some sort of answer to what was asked me, but also (they say) I thought of ordering them to give a horse to my wife, whom I saw stumbling and having trouble on the road, which is steep and rugged. It would seem that this consideration must have proceeded from a wide-awake soul; yet the fact is that I was not there at all. These were idle thoughts, in the clouds, set in motion by the sensations of my eyes and ears; they did not come from within me. (271)]

The person who loses consciousness does not lose all his ability to function. He is divided into two parts: the physical body, and the thinking self. The body is attributed an awareness through the senses that is not connected to the thinking individual. The locus of self-identity is shown to be found only in the part of the person that has lost consciousness; therefore it is removed from the body and senses, despite their ability to interact with their surroundings. By tying the body's

16 Peyron, "Problématique de la chute," 214.

17 Ibid., 218.

awareness to the house and the roads leading to it, Montaigne disassociates his mind, and therefore his identity, from the house.

The identification with the house takes place on a bodily level, but not on a deeper level that can be equated with the self. Richard Regosin proposes that it is the banality of the event that allows Montaigne to discuss the presumption of both talking about himself in the first person, and essaying death. According to Regosin, the incident demonstrates the impossibility of knowing the void that constitutes the passage from one moment to the next, from one state to the next.¹⁸ Yet in an essay that treats the impossibility of knowledge in the face of death, it is remarkable that Montaigne is still conscious of one thing: the house remains knowable to him, even when he is between life and death. Montaigne's "trivial" story, as Regosin calls it, is couched in the language of uncertainty:

Pendant nos troisiemes troubles ou deuxiesmes (il ne me souvient pas bien de cela), m'estant allé un jour promener à une lieue de chez moy, qui suis assis dans le moiau de tout le trouble des guerres civiles de France, estimant estre en toute seureté et si voisin de ma retraicte que je n'avoy point besoin de meilleur equipage, j'avoy pris un cheval bien aisé, mais non guiere ferme. (II.6.373)

[During our third civil war, or the second (I do not quite remember which), I went riding one day about a league from my house, which is situated at the very hub of all the turmoil of the civil wars of France. Thinking myself perfectly safe, and so near my home that I needed no better equipage, I took a very easy but not very strong horse. (268-9)]

The very moment is imprecise, unknowable: France is either going through its third or second period of unrest. His memory is said to fail him for this basic detail, as he claims throughout the episode. But the temporal uncertainty is countered by geographical fixity. His spatial bearings are more stable than his temporal ones, and they are identified by the house. Distance, "une lieue de chez moy," is measured in relation to the house. In addition, the wars are also said to be centered around it. It is "dans le moiau de tout le trouble des guerres civiles de France." Paris

¹⁸ Regosin, *Unruly Brood*, 144-151.

may be the center of France administratively, culturally, aesthetically, and politically, but the center of France's civil wars is the regions around the Château de Montaigne.

There is an additional confounding of Montaigne the place and Montaigne the person in the phrase "chez moy, qui suis assis dans le moiau..." A first reading of "chez moy" identifies Montaigne's home as the referent, but the first-person singular verb "suis" following the relative "qui" indicates that the subject of the verb is not the house, but Montaigne himself. This switch from "chez moy" to "moy" denotes a strong identification with the house on Montaigne's part. It is therefore not only his house that is located in the midst of civil strife, but also Montaigne himself. He is fixed to this spot. When all other references are uncertain, the one certain element is the house.

Although Montaigne is here equated with the house, the solidity of the building does not transfer to him. The estimation that he was "en toute seureté et si voisin de ma retraicte que je n'avoy point besoin de meilleur equipage" betrays a false sense of security he feels in his proximity to home. In order to demonstrate the house's ultimate inability to protect his life, he must set up the home to fail to protect him.

The triviality of his leaving home that day is contrasted with the seriousness of the situation regarding the civil wars. The nonchalance of having simply gone out one day a league away from home, and the confidence with which he steps out, alternates with references to the wars and the fact that Montaigne's house is located in the midst of the troubles. This back-and-forth between over-confidence and overt danger leads the reader to the erroneous assumption that Montaigne will be injured in fighting related to the war. The danger to Montaigne's life comes not from the soldiers in the midst of fighting a civil war battle, nor from being too far from home. His accidental assailant is one of his own staff, "un de mes gens" who had pressed on

ahead of his companions. In the same essay, Montaigne discusses philosophers who go out looking for occasions to be tested by Fortune, since Fortune will always come and test them wherever they might be, and a lifetime of staying at home will not prepare them for the trials that will eventually find them. Montaigne's experience has proved his observation that Fortune will find one wherever one may be. But instead of meeting Fortune far from home, it appears that Montaigne is most at danger from those connected with his household, in a parallel to the fear that valets and family members might turn against one during a civil war. The home is at the center of the civil wars; the home—and by extension the household staff—is also the place from which most danger arises.

The details of the incident are related later to Montaigne, and even after regaining consciousness he cannot remember, although people tell him the story numerous times. His inability to experience death is therefore accentuated through his lack of memory. But when he was close to death, in his unconscious state he was still aware of his surroundings: “non seulement je respondois quelque mot à ce qu'on me demandoit, mais encore ils disent que je m'advisay de commander qu'on donnast un cheval à ma femme, que je voyoy s'empestrer et se tracasser dans le chemin, qui est montueux et mal-aisé.” (II.6.376) [not only did I make some sort of answer to what was asked me, but also (they say) I thought of ordering them to give a horse to my wife, whom I saw stumbling and having trouble on the road, which is steep and rugged. (271)] Proximity to his home seems to alert his senses, and he is aware on some level of where he is. But he—or what he considers to be himself—is absent: “je n'y estois pas.” His responses come as if from his his soul, the “ame esveillée,” but he insists this is not the case. His attachment to the house is therefore only bodily, it is not dependent on his soul. The passage opens with “chez moy” referring clearly to his home. It closes with “chez moy” referring to his

interior self. “Chez moy” has transferred from the house to the person. Here they cannot be confounded as in the example given above. The house is presented as a stable point of reference, but Montaigne’s identification with it is only on a superficial, sensory level. While the sensory, automatic relationship to the place remains intact, the conscious, reflective relationship is broken, and Montaigne’s self cannot relate to his surroundings. The essayist can know the house in his death-like state, but not from the part of himself that would be able to remember death if that were possible.

Moreover, the reconciliation with death, or losing his fear of it, unties him from the house. He sees the fear of death as having a potentially paralyzing effect which could make him wary of leaving his home and go out into the world:

Si je craignois de mourir en autre lieu que celuy de ma naissance, si je pensois mourir moins à mon aise esloigné des miens, à peine sortiroy-je hors de France; je ne sortirois pas sans effroy hors de ma parroisse. Je sens la mort qui me pince continuellement la gorge ou les reins. Mais je suis autrement faict: elle m’est une par tout. Si toutesfois j’avois à choisir, ce seroit, ce croy-je, plustost à cheval que dans un lict, hors de ma maison et esloigné des miens. (III.9.978)

[If I were afraid to die in any other place than that of my birth, if I thought I would die less comfortably away from my family, I should scarcely go out of France; I should not go out of my parish without terror. I feel death continually clutching me by the throat or the loins. But I am made differently: death is the same to me anywhere. However, if I had the choice, it would be, I think, rather on horseback than in a bed, and out of my house, away from my people. (747)]

But he is “autrement faict” and death is the same to him at home or out in the world. In fact, he would rather not die at home, but on horseback. As seen in “De l’exercitation,” proximity to home does not guarantee safety from brushes with death. Therefore death must be confronted within the home as well as far from it. It can assail him at any time and in any place. Home no longer guarantees the safety of his existence. He is therefore free to transfer his existence into a

form that is transportable: his book. After his death, he will lodge wherever his book is to be found.

IIb. Detachments and New Attachments: War, Paris, and Rome

The house his father built up was subject to real threats from warring factions during France's religious civil wars. During wartime, danger comes from zealous neighbors, from soldiers who might be stationed inside a house, or from members of one's own household. In "Que nostre desir s'accroit par la malaisance" [That our desire is increased by difficulty], Montaigne describes the level of fear that has struck at the heart of every family and household: "Car en matiere de guerres intestines, vostre valet peut estre du party que vous craignez. Et où la religion sert de pretexte, les parentez mesmes deviennent infiables, avec couverture de justice." (II.15.616-7) [For in the matter of intestine wars, your valet may be the party that you fear. And where religion serves as a pretext, even kinship becomes untrustworthy, under the cloak of justice. (467)] Family members, from whom loyalty is expected, have been seen to turn against other family members because of religious dissent, and the same can be said for valets. It is obvious from "De la solitude," and from other details discussed by writers such as George Hoffmann among others, that valets are an essential part of Montaigne's household.¹⁹ They are often closer to Montaigne than the family itself; they accompany him in the library, they write the essays that he dictates, and in "De la solitude," it would seem that they are the only people who stand between him and complete spatial solitude.

The metaphorical choice of "guerres intestines" suggests that the civil wars are fought on an innermost personal level for everyone involved. While "intestines" implies that the guts of the nation are being torn apart, the use of corporeal imagery relates the national struggle to a human

¹⁹ Hoffmann, *Montaigne's Career*, 39-62.

body, implicating each person's body and survival in the process. Not only on a personal and national level, but also familial: in the *Essais* the wars also tear at the very fabric of the family home. Montaigne's house, usually thought of as solid and protective, is no longer able to guarantee the survival of his family. The once solid walls become porous, incapable of keeping out dangerous elements.

Montaigne chooses not to defend his house, since he can only defend it imperfectly, and as he notes, "Toute garde porte visage de guerre" (II.15.617) [Any defense bears the aspect of war. (467)] The wars seem to give him more concern for the durability of the building than any other threat. Defense is the cause of the loss of houses as it provokes attacks from assailants. Anyone can turn up at his house without being resisted or turned away, but Montaigne will not provoke intruders with defensive measures: "Qui se jettera, si Dieu veut, chez moy; mais tant y a que je ne l'y appelleray pas" (II.15.617) [Let anyone thrust himself into my house, if God wills it; but at all events I shall not invite him. (467)] The door is open, but Montaigne will not be seeking company. The house is set up as neutral territory during the civil wars; it is a nonpartisan space. Since the defenses of his house cannot stop attackers from entering, his solid house is again seen to be porous. Montaigne accepts and embraces this porosity, making of it his defense.

The paradoxical presumption which allows him to adopt this position is that by making his house more open to warring parties, the wars will not in fact enter the space: "C'est la retraite à me reposer des guerres. J'essaye de soustraire ce coing à la tempeste publique, comme je fay un autre coing en mon ame" (II.15.617) [It is my retreat to rest myself from the wars. I try to withdraw this corner from the public tempest, as I do another corner in my soul (467)] Once again the words "retraite" and "repos" are tied to the concept of home. But they are also tied to the concept of self. In one of the strongest identifications between Montaigne the person and

Montaigne the place, the text establishes parallel retreats in the castle and in his soul. In a single sentence the two are united, linked by the simile (“comme”). He exerts the same action on his house as he exerts on the part of his soul that he reserves for himself and his own well-being. The house here may safeguard his body, and the soul must retreat within itself. It would be too much to present the parallel as an identification with the house; his soul and house are of different orders, although acting in a similar manner.

His bodily existence, however, does depend on the safety of the house. Death might come to him in his bed by his neighbors, family members, or valets, whose zeal for their religious affiliation may lead them to slaughter others in the middle of the night. In “De la vanité,” the danger of his situation is made clear: “Je me suis couché mille foys chez moy, imaginant qu’on me trahiroit et assommeroit cette nuict là [...]. Quel remede? c’est le lieu de ma naissance, et de la plus part de mes ancestres: ils y ont mis leur affection et leur nom” (III.9.970) [I have gone to bed a thousand times in my own home, imagining that someone would betray me and slaughter me that very night [...]. What remedy is there? It is my birthplace and that of most of my ancestors; they set on it their affection and their name. (741)] Montaigne is resigned to this possible fate, accustoming himself again to the porosity of the building. In this moment, though, he exaggerates the link between himself and the house. His father is his only ancestor to be born in the house; by claiming that so many more were, Montaigne claims a stronger tie to the place than anywhere else in the *Essais*. The ties are made fictionally stronger still by claiming that the estate is named after the family, as discussed above. Rhetorically Montaigne builds the case for his family’s attachment to this land at the time when it is most possible that they will either be driven out from it or killed on it. Ironically it is in the moments when forced removal from the estate seems most likely that Montaigne seems to identify with it most strongly.

The mournful, nostalgic, and bodily ties to house and home are complemented by more positive affective and intellectual links to other places. In “De la vanité” (III.9), Montaigne explains his attachment to Paris, only relatively recently adopted as the capital of France by Francis I:

[...] je ne me mutine jamais tant contre la France que je ne regarde Paris de bon oeil: elle a mon cuer des mon enfance. [...] Je ne suis françois que par cette grande cité: grande en peuples, grande en felicité de son assiette, mais sur tout grande et incomparable en variété et diversité de commoditez, la gloire de la France, et l'un des plus nobles ornemens du monde. Dieu en chasse loing nos divisions! [...] Tant qu'elle durera, je n'auray faute de retraicte où rendre mes abboys, suffisante à me faire perdre le regret de tout'autre retraicte. (III.9, 972-3)

[...I never rebel so much against France as not to regard Paris with a friendly eye; she has my heart since my childhood. [...] I am a Frenchman only by this great city: great in population, great in the felicity of her situation, but above all great and incomparable in variety and diversity of the good things of life; the glory of France, and one of the noblest ornaments of the world. May God drive our discords far from her! [...] As long as she endures, I shall not lack a retreat in which to give up the ghost, sufficient to make me lose my regret for any other retreat. (743)]

It is curious that Montaigne's plea to God here is to drive France's wars out of Paris, rather than out of France as a whole. Marcus Keller identifies Paris as the city through which Montaigne gains an aesthetic and existential experience of national identity.²⁰ Montaigne gains his French identity from Paris, not from Gascony or from France as a whole, and here it would seem that the French wars are not Parisian. As Keller and Hodges have discussed, Montaigne's affective sense of belonging is localized in Paris.²¹ Nostalgia and regret govern his relationship with his house, whereas Paris, as Keller notes, seizes his heart before he can choose where to bestow it.²² As established above, during times of civil war, the center of France-at-war becomes the Château de Montaigne. Using this tactic of re-centering wartime France around his home,

20 Keller, *Figurations*, 79-86.

21 See also Hodges, *Urban Poetics*, 126-130

22 Keller, 81.

any rebellion on Montaigne's part against France can be centered and localized on his home region, and away from his beloved Paris.

The French capital is not only a source of his affection, she is also a place of "retraicte." Underlining the home that he finds here, the reference to Paris as a retreat equates the city with his family house, which is often described with the same term. As Keller argues, his sense of belonging stems partly from his ability to imagine the end of his life in the city.²³ Furthermore, if Paris is his most important or permanent place of retreat, to which he can return time and time again, then the estate at Montaigne loses its significance, and is relegated to the status of "tout'autre retraicte" that he might lose.

Now a retreat, more important than his actual home, Paris is also doted with architectural vocabulary that equates her with a building such as Philibert de l'Orme might design. The "félicité de son assiette" evokes the choice an architect must make about the location of a house to guarantee the health and well-being of its residents. The term "commoditez" is used by architects to indicate the features of a house designed to bring pleasure and comfort, and is employed by Montaigne later in the same chapter to refer to the comfort of his home. Finally, Paris as "un des plus nobles ornemens" echoes the vocabulary used to describe the decorative features of any edifice. Paris is one of his homes: comfortable, beautiful, well-positioned, where he identifies affectively, and most importantly, where he can retire from the rest of the world.

Montaigne does not limit himself to one new abode. Besides Paris, Rome becomes another alternative:

Or j'ay esté nourry dés mon enfance avec ceux icy [les morts]; j'ay eu connoissance des affaires de Romme, long temps avant que je l'aye eue de ceux de ma maison: je sçavois le Capitole et son plant avant que je sceusse le Louvre, et le Tibre avant la Seine. (III.9.996)

²³ Ibid., 81.

[Now, I have been brought up from childhood with these dead. I was familiar with the affairs of Rome long before I was with those of my own house. I knew the Capitol and its location before I knew the Louvre, and the Tiber before the Seine. (762)]

Montaigne claims that he got to know Rome's affairs before he was acquainted with those of his own home. The parallel construction establishes "Romme" as the equivalent to "ma maison," structuring Rome as another home. In addition, the possessive "ma" contrasts his own home with somebody else's, again proposing the eternal city as another's home that he can compare with his own. In the parallel syntax cited above, three pairs of locations are contrasted: Romme—ma maison; le Capitole—le Louvre; le Tibre—la Seine. Home is collocated with the Louvre and the Seine, further reinforcing Paris' status as the location of home. Tom Conley identifies Paris and Rome as the place of Montaigne's weaning, proposing them as two maternal figures who nourish him and provide the setting for the individual's psychogenesis.²⁴ As observed, Paris provides his early affective ties, while Rome imbues his childhood mind with knowledge.

Montaigne's first few years, spent at a tutor's house learning Latin, seem to have displaced the ties of early memory that would usually be associated with one's childhood home, and located them in Ancient Rome. His early concept of home resides in what he learned as a child; not where he was, but what he memorized.

Rome provides both his linguistic home through Latin, and the imaginary construct of home which is not linked to a real place that he has known, but to what he learned of Rome through texts read in a language produced in a different place and time. Home for Montaigne has its roots in Ancient Rome; it is a linguistic construct and a place only in his imagination.

The connection he feels to a home in Ancient Rome is only imaginary, and not tied to real experience. The inverse can also be true for Montaigne: real experience of the home can be tied to the imaginary. As well as visiting Ancient Rome in his memory, he visits sixteenth-century

24 Conley, "Suckling of Cities," 185.

Rome in his travels. While visiting the site of his early childhood memories, he must still manage the affairs at the *Château de Montaigne* back in France. From one home, then, he must still look after the other:

De Romme en hors, je tiens et regente ma maison et les commoditez que j’y ay laissé: je voy croistre mes murailles, mes arbres, et mes rentes, et descroistre à deux doigts pres, comme quand j’y suis. [...] Si nous ne jouyssons que ce que nous touchons, adieu nos escuz quant ils sont en nos coffres, et nos enfans s’ils sont à la chasse. Nous les voulons plus pres. (III.9.976)

[From the distance of Rome I keep and control my house and the goods I have left behind there; I see my walls, my trees, and my revenue grow and decrease, within two inches, just as when I am there. [...] If we enjoy only what we touch, farewell to our crowns when they are in our coffers, and our children if they are off hunting. We want them nearer. (745-6)]

Montaigne’s capacity to carry out his domestic duties depends in part on his ability to imagine his real home in front of his eyes. The power of imagination is so strong that he can see the changes in his house “à deux doigts pres,” as if he were there. The imagined house gives as much satisfaction as the physical house; the imagined is as real to him as the real. As he explains, the ability to figure something absent as real is an essential faculty—without it, we would be unable to remember that we had money, or children, when they were not within sight or within reach. His house is as present to him in its absence as it is in its presence. It becomes apparent how Montaigne’s memories of his childhood home can come to be located in Rome, when as a child he had never traveled there. Reading books about Rome, Montaigne’s imagination was so powerful that Rome was real to him; he could see it in front of his eyes. Although Rome and Paris compete with his family estate for the location of Montaigne’s home, this passage demonstrates that Montaigne the place resides within Montaigne as strongly as Paris or Ancient Rome. In addition, sixteenth-century Rome complements his Gascon home, Ancient Rome, and Paris as a place of belonging, made official by the granting of citizenship to the essayist and his

family through a Roman Bull: “Illustrissimum Michaellem Montanum, [...] ipsum posterisque in Romanam Civitatem adscribi” (III.9.999-1000) [the most illustrious Michel de Montaigne ... should be inscribed as a Roman citizen, himself and his posterity (765)]. The inclusion of the essayist’s posterity provides an additional family legacy to the physical home at Montaigne, the survival of which is not guaranteed either by its owner’s inattention or the possible ravages of war.

Hodges divides Montaigne’s belonging into an affective one to Paris, and a rhetorical one to Rome:

Although Montaigne expresses his longstanding affective relationship to Paris, the same place from which he derives his sense of what it means to be French, he nonetheless ends the same essay with a memory of being made an honorary citizen of Rome. This paradoxical desire expressed in “De la vanité” underscores the essayist’s ambivalent relationship to place. Thus emerge two concomitant modes of belonging, rhetorical and affective, in the essay, both of which point to different relations between place and identity.²⁵

And yet Paris is not the only city to claim his affective belonging. Everyone can claim Rome as their own, and everyone can feel at home there: “c’est la ville metropolitaine de toutes les nations Chrestiennes; l’Espagnol et le François, chacun y est chez soy” (III.9.997) [It is the metropolitan city of all Christian nations; the Spaniard and the Frenchman, every man is at home there (763)]. To feel at home involves a deep sense of identification with a place. “Chez soy” has a double meaning for Montaigne, as discussed above: it means home in the physical sense of one’s house; but it also refers to his interior home, where he lodges his inner self.

Where is home for Montaigne? What is home? The ties to the building in which he grew up are strong, but often minimized as existing only on a sensory, bodily level. He can conjure up an image of the house in his mind, but his mental, interior “chez moy,” the real seat of himself, his childhood attachment, his place of first memories, is Rome. Home for Montaigne is an idea, a

²⁵ Hodges, *Urban Poetics*, 127.

set of mental images forged from his childhood readings and internalized as his most cherished memories. Sixteenth-century Rome provides a home which is both rhetorical as Hodges shows, and affective, giving it similar status to Paris. While the family home is depicted as an image of his father, it is not one that Montaigne can fit to himself, and his identification with the estate that gave him his name is unstable. The *Essais* are the image of Montaigne,²⁶ a home that houses all his other homes. The real self is lodged in the imaginary spaces of his soul, which he then pours as best he can into his book. Montaigne's sense of self develops through writing, which is posited as superior to building as a means of representing the self.

III. Writing vs. Building

Montaigne's Latin inscription on his library wall, cited above, is more ambiguous than my original translation might suggest. While it is possible to say that the rest of Montaigne's life ("quantillum") is the direct object of "exigat," it is also possible to take "istas sedes et dulces latebras avitasque" as the verb's direct object. In that case, an omitted reference to himself could be implied as the direct object of "consecravit," with the result that he would be retiring in order to complete his ancestral home, and to dedicate himself to his freedom, tranquility, and leisure. In another reading, an example of hendiadys would posit "istas sedes et dulces latebras avitasque" as the direct object of both "exigat" and "consecravit," implying that he retired in order to complete his home and that he has dedicated it to his freedom, tranquility, and leisure. A synonym for home, "domum," is a common collocation with "consecrare." The verb "exigere," moreover, has several meanings. One of the most common is to spend time, specifically the time of one's life, but another of the most well-known is in the context of Horace's ode, "Exegi

26 See Regosin, "Unruly Brood," Glidden, "Face in the Text," and Rider, *Dialectic* for a discussion of the *Essais* as an image of their author.

monumentum.” This allusion would set up the house as a monument in the manner of Horace, who erected his textual monument to outlast bronze. This new translation would read as follows:

In the year of our Lord 1571, at age 38, the day before the Calends of March, day of his birthday, Michel de Montaigne, long since tired of serving the royal court and managing public works, safely withdrew into the company of learned virgins, where at rest and free of all cares he will at last lead what little remains of his life (more than half of it being over); if the fates allow he may complete those settlements and sweet ancestral retreats, and he has consecrated them to his own freedom, peace, and leisure.

The lack of punctuation in the original inscription, and the ambiguous use of direct objects, allows us to conclude that Montaigne sought not only to find peace, but also to build. The use of a verb so closely associated with Horace’s ode recasts the house as a monument to the self. However, the use of the present subjunctives “exigat” and “duint” (future less vivid) add a degree of uncertainty to the text, implying that Montaigne believes he will not be able to complete the task he has set for himself. Considering this uncertainty in the light of the essayist’s own distaste for building and his disdain for new architectural vocabulary, the Latin inscription suggests that the building project that he undertakes upon his retreat to the estate is one that he cannot envisage completing from the outset, just as the project for solitude, based as it is on his presence in his tumultuous home, is immediately doomed to failure. Maybe it is the enormity of the project that causes him to pause; maybe the knowledge that even a completed building will fall into disrepair over time; maybe the fact that a building can be completed makes it an unedifying prospect for a writer who favors change and fluidity.

The retreat to the family estate stated in the library inscription and throughout the *Essais* contains an apparent dual purpose—to write and to build—establishing an equivalence between two media which can be employed to represent the self. As such, a comparison can be made between their material substance in relation to the conditions of the self, and the ability of each to serve as host to the depiction of the self. Written language, although it is an abstract entity that

only takes on a tangible presence when committed to the page, and is therefore dependent on the ink and paper that allow it to manifest itself in the world, is nonetheless described in terms related to solid matter:

Moulant sur moy cette figure, il m'a fallu si souvent dresser et composer pour m'extraire, que le patron s'en est fermé et aucunement formé soy-mesmes. Me peignant pour autrui, je me suis peint en moy de couleurs plus nettes que n'estoyent les miennes premières. Je n'ay pas plus fait mon livre que mon livre m'a fait, livre consubstantiel à son auteur... (II.18.665)

[In modeling this figure upon myself, I have had to fashion and compose myself so often to bring myself out, that the model itself has to some extent grown firm and taken shape. Painting myself for others, I have painted my inward self with colors clearer than my original ones. I have no more made my book than my book has made me—a book consubstantial with its author... (504)].

The pattern on which his book, and therefore the public version of him, is modeled, leaves the rhetorical realm and takes on physical characteristics. This pattern is *fermé* and *formé*, terms which imbue it with a solid structure, then painted with *couleurs* as would be an object for display. To describe himself he must not only *composer* but also *dresser*—make the description stand up, an indication of its 3-dimensionality. It is the repetition of writing that supplies this tangible characteristic to the text. Each rewriting makes the textual Montaigne more solid, giving it a shape that then encloses him as would a building which rises and eventually provides shelter. The solid shell that encases the essayist is less changeable than the being it depicts. This is also true of the estate that bears his name, yet the written version can be altered much more easily than any building. Writing shares with building a solidity that is alien to what the essayist perceives as his own form, yet it also shares with Montaigne the condition of constant mutation.

At least, written French shares that quality:

J'écris mon livre à peu d'hommes et à peu d'années. Si ç'eust été une matière de durée, il l'eust fallu commettre à un langage plus ferme. Selon la variation continuelle qui a suivy le nostre jusques à cette heure, qui peut esperer que sa forme presente soit en usage, d'icy à cinquante ans? Il escoule tous les jours de nos mains et depuis que je vis s'est

alteré de moitié. Nous disons qu'il est à cette heure parfait. Autant en dict du sien chaque siecle. Je n'ay garde de l'en tenir là tant qu'il fuira et se difformera comme il fait. C'est aux bons et utiles escrits de le clouer à eux, et ira son credit selon la fortune de nostre estat. (III.9.982)

[I write my book for few men and for few years. If it had been durable matter, it would have had to be committed to a more stable language. In view of the continual variation that has prevailed in ours up to now, who can hope that its present form will be in use fifty years from now? It slips out of our hands very day, and has halfway changed since I have been alive. We say that at this moment it is perfected. Every century says as much of its own. I have no mind to think that of it as long as it flees and changes form as it does. It is for the good and useful writings to nail it to themselves, and its credit will go as go the fortunes of our state. (751)]

French is seen as a volatile and unstable language, as opposed to the the solidity of what must be presumed to be Latin. While Frame translates “ferme” as “stable,” the French term also contains the notion of solidity, a physical attribute. As the idea of Rome the city is contained in the ruined buildings, so the ideas from Roman culture are contained in the most solid of languages—Latin. Late-sixteenth-century French, however, is constantly shifting and changing shape. Its fluidity is contrasted with the firmness of Latin, in what Tom Conley calls an “appeal [...] to a ‘soft’ economy of being” in which “the essayist embraces what flows or liquefies the hard facts of reality.”²⁷ Written French is containable in a solid shell, but its liquid nature makes its disintegration inevitable as it “escoule tous les jours de nos mains.” Because Montaigne is writing in what he perceives as a volatile tongue—French—he presumes that the understanding of his text will alter over time.

The French language in constant alteration is documented in “Des coches,” as Hodges has admirably demonstrated.²⁸ Yet while she sees in the changeability of language a questioning of its ability to contain the self, I would argue that Montaigne has found the medium which most

27 Conley, “Suckling of Cities,” 184.

28 Hodges, *Urban Poetics*, 117.

closely matches the self in its fluidity. Similar reflections on shifting vocabulary occur in “De la vanité des paroles,” in which the essayist considers the aggrandizing possibilities of language:

je ne me puis garder, quand j’oy nos architectes s’enfler de ces gros mots de pilastres, architraves, corniches, d’ouvrage Corinthien et Dorique, et semblables de leur jargon, que mon imagination ne se saisisse incontinent du palais d’Apollidon et, par effect, je trouve que ce sont les chetives pieces de la porte de ma cuisine. (I.51.307)

[when I hear our architects puffing themselves out with those big words like pilasters, architraves, corniches, Corinthian and Doric work, and such-like jargon, I cannot keep my imagination from immediately seizing on the palace of Apollidon; and in reality I find that these are the paltry parts of my kitchen door. (223)]

As the French vernacular becomes peppered with the neologisms of a new discipline, the essayist witnesses what he perceives to be a widening gap between signifier and signified, such that the descriptions of “les chetives pieces de la porte de ma cuisine” no longer satisfactorily match the objects to which they refer. The language of architecture evolves beyond the reality of the buildings it purports to depict. The representation of the new science’s features no longer correspond to the stones themselves but paint flights of fancy that have little bearing on the real world. The language to describe the building alters, but the building itself does not, highlighting both the fluidity of the French language and the stasis of buildings.

Conley also examines the contrast between the fluid and the solid in Montaigne’s attitude towards death. “Death by ruin is preferable to a fall onto a hard surface because the old stone that strikes the body, despite the passivity (in contrast to the ‘active’ mode of being the body stricken by a surface), links him (*l’accable*) to the image of a city and a house in a derelict condition.”²⁹ Conley argues that a “soft” death is preferable to a “hard” one in the essayist’s eyes. The softness of death that he seeks may imply a slow death, as opposed to a hard, violent, quick one. Ironically Montaigne and his father suffer a combination of both—a slow, drawn-out,

29 Conley, “Suckling of Cities,” 184.

progressive march towards death caused by the stony substance that implants itself inside their bodies. Petrification within the gall bladder is a stony blow from the inside.

Although the part-solid, part-fluid written form that he chooses is the one best suited to represent his human existence, it still is more solid than his real state of being. It goes too far in its solidification and colorization, surpassing the man as he perceives himself. In addition, the text is more continuous than the man—it can claim a unity that its human equivalent cannot.

According to “De la vanité,” the additions and corrections to the *Essais* do not alter its fundamental unity:

Mon livre est tousjours un. Sauf qu’à mesure qu’on se met à le renouveler, afin que l’acheteur ne s’en aille les mains du tout vuides, je me donne loy d’y attacher (comme ce n’est qu’une marqueterie mal jointe), quelque embleme supernumeraire. Ce ne sont que surpoids, qui ne condamnent point la premiere forme, mais donnent quelque pris particulier à chacune des suivantes par une petite subtilité ambitieuse. (“De la vanité” III.9.964)

[My book is always one. Except that at each new edition, so that the buyer may not come off completely empty-handed, I allow myself to add, since it is only an ill-fitted patchwork, some extra ornaments. These are only overweights, which do not condemn the original form, but give some special value to each of the subsequent ones, by a bit of ambitious subtlety. (736)]

The book is augmented with each change, but that is not sufficient to turn it into a different book.

Writing is seen as a series of joinery projects, using a technique of inlaying common in furniture construction, drawing another equivalence between the development of the book and the home.³⁰

In contrast with the single book, its aging author identifies more than one version of himself which correspond with different moments of his life: “Mes premieres publications furent l’an mille cinq cens quatre vingts. Depuis d’un long traict de temps je suis envieilli, mais assagi je ne le suis certes pas d’un pouce. Moy à cette heure et moy tantost sommes bien deux; mais quand meilleur, je n’en puis rien dire.” (III.9.964) [My first edition was in the year 1580. Since then I

30 See Bowen, “Marqueterie,” Conley, “Montage,” and Hodges, *Urban Poetics*, 124.

have grown older by a long stretch of time; but certainly I have not grown an inch wiser. Myself now and myself a while ago are indeed two; but when better, I simply cannot say. (736)]

As Hodges has argued, what the book can do is show the progression of being through time, as opposed to the author, who manifests only one state, his present one, although he retains the memory of previous versions of himself.³¹

Since the self is not permanent, the impermanence of written French suits his writing project well. The descriptions of himself may be more solid than his idea of himself, but that solidity will not last, simply because the flow of time will alter French beyond recognition. What is clear to one generation will become opaque to the next. The language that will last—Latin—is employed by Montaigne within the *Essais*, but only as quotations from other writers. While he has assimilated those thoughts, the words are not his own. His own Latin text—the inscription describing his decision to retreat from the world to write and possibly build—is not part of the book, but is affixed to the wall of his library, making it part of the building which he cannot bring himself to maintain.

Conley sees a parallel relationship between the two cities of Rome and Paris, and between Rome's past and Montaigne's father: "The topography of Rome is to Paris as the past in Montaigne's imagination of early Latinity stands to the memory of his own father, the late Pierre Eyquem. Time and space collapse in the explosion of an image of the dead who flash before our eyes."³² Rome's past, however, is manifested through the buildings that represent it, and the "imagination of early Latinity" is often perceived through the city's ruined buildings, as Montaigne himself came to do. Just as Rome's ruins stand for the idea of Rome, what stands to

31 Hodges, *Urban Poetics*, 122.

32 Conley, "Suckling of Cities," 173.

represent the memory of his father is the building after which Montaigne names himself—the culmination of the life work of Pierre Eyquem.

Buildings, unlike Montaigne's text, are generally intended for long duration. They stand as memorials to those who build, are constructed to seek the admiration of others, and therefore tend to glorify of their originators. Is it through the realization that Rome's ruined buildings do not impede the knowledge of its culture, that the essayist can conclude that he can disregard his own architectural heritage with no prejudice to his own place in history? It is not only the memory of his father which is contrasted with Rome's past, but also the estate which the latter built up, adding a third built environment to the spatial identifications identified by Conley and Hodges as constituting his concept of self. As shown above, however, his relationship with his father's estate is more tenuous than his identifications with Paris and Rome. Despite his nostalgia sense of duty to his father, Montaigne cannot idealize his home as he does the two great cities of European civilization.

The "affaires" of Rome are still knowable through text, without the buildings that housed them, just as "ceux de ma maison"—his household—will continue on apace despite the declining condition of his physical surroundings. The household affairs, however, include maintenance of the buildings themselves, meaning that in order to abandon the conceit of building, he must configure his "affaires" not to include them, which he does through his explanation for why he does not undertake repairs, and the failure of the building project contained in the very description of the project on the library wall. His own life's project can then turn to his soul, locating selfhood in the mobile, fluid shell of language. Any identification of the inner self with the house casts the self in too solid a mold. His father's legacy can be architectural; his will be textual.

IV. Conclusion

One of the questions that Montaigne poses throughout the *Essais* is how to live in the best way he can. In searching for answers to that question, the estate becomes the lens through which he negotiates his position towards his past and future: What is the right behavior to adopt towards the buildings themselves? To his name? To his ancestors? To his descendants? The house allows him to experiment with different stances: Should he use the hereditary name or not? Should he do what his father wanted at the expense of his own happiness? Should he build monuments to his own glory? Or should he shut himself away?

The ethics of Montaigne's home move beyond questions of personal space and privacy once the parameters for "la vraie solitude" have been realized, and any concordance between the body, the self, and the home has been compromised. Solitude varies from being a positive choice for both the individual and society to being a wasteful one that induces chimeras and melancholy. Montaigne's association with a physical building, as a monument to either himself or his family, would be a vainglorious display, in spite of its attractions. The essayist does not claim to be free from his quest for glory, however, and freely publishes his own personal triumph with the inclusion of the Bull granted his family by Rome. Tetel argues that

il serait trop facile de conclure que Montaigne s'oppose à la gloire; cette notion contredirait d'ailleurs un credo humaniste. Montaigne opte pour une gloire de substance plutôt que de vent [...]. Il s'oppose donc à la création d'un mythe de soi par simple vanité puisque nous ne sommes responsables qu'envers nous-mêmes. Et la véritable gloire se créera non pas au moyen de vaines paroles mais d'actes significatifs.³³

[it would be too easy to conclude that Montaigne is opposed to glory; this notion would moreover contradict a humanist credo. Montaigne opts for a substantive glory rather than something lightweight [...]. He is therefore opposed to the creation of a personal myth through simple vanity since we are only responsible for ourselves. And true glory will be created not through vain words but significant actions.]

33 Tetel, "Montaigne et Pétrarque," 215.

Tetel argues that humanist figures such as Petrarch and Montaigne, since their glory depends on their actions, must live in the present moment. A past moment cannot bring present glory, and one cannot rest on one's laurels: "Ce qu'il fait et pense dans le présent résume le passé et téléscope le futur; l'humaniste est et ne sera qu'une succession de *est*"³⁴ [What he does and thinks in the present resumes the past and telescopes the future; the humanist is and will only be a succession of *is*]. Glory must be continuously achieved. If Montaigne's house is the link to his past and future, then Tetel's claim about achieving glory only in the present contributes to our understanding of why Montaigne can detach any idea of the self from the house. The name derived from the estate is an unstable identifier, while the building is not a present action but a symbol of past and future existence. Home—*chez moy*—is as mutable as Montaigne's mind, and is to be found wherever Montaigne succeeds in finding himself. The different homes he identifies—the estate, his *arriere boutique*, Paris, Rome—all find their place, housed within the new home of the *Essais*.

34 Ibid., 216.

Conclusion

The chapters of this study demonstrate how various sixteenth-century texts construct an ethics with regards to the home. The moral questions that arise can be divided—albeit not cleanly—into the ethics of building and those of the use of domestic space. These domains overlap, since many commissioners of buildings will also be their occupants. Architects must also be housed. This overlap can be seen in virtually all the texts included in this study, from Philibert de l’Orme’s awareness of his intrusive presence in a house that is not his home but where he must dwell while he works on it, to Marguerite de Navarre’s inclusion of her brother in her tales at a time when he was remodeling his residences, Corrozet’s imaginary house design for a livable space, and Montaigne’s improvements to the estate that will never live up to his father’s standards. Tied up in the ethical debates are questions of how the architectural represents various aspects of human existence: the body, psychology, desire, free will. Finally, although a building can represent the self, writing competes with architecture as a means of constructing a virtual presence in the world, one that forms an individual’s reputation and mediates between the person and his or her public persona.

I. The Ethics of Building the Home

The act of building implies a projection forward of how space will or should be used, and a reevaluation of the past through its architecture. Designing residential space for Corrozet and the architects involves codifying rooms and spaces by their appointed function. For Corrozet, that means limiting the scope of activity in the home to only that which is designated as permissible. Montaigne’s relationship to designing space is that of a builder who has no say in

how the building should be built, but is only responsible for its upkeep. His appraisal of the architectural past conforms to his general vision of the material world—which is ephemeral—and is closely tied to the notion of self-glorification—which he considers the biggest vice. While the architects attempt a kind of writing in stone, Montaigne shows a disdain for classical architectural symbolism—contrary to his appreciation for classical authors and their accomplishments. Montaigne’s ethics of building is one which abandons building as a practice at all, even to commemorate his father. The architects, on the other hand, see their craft as a means of inspiring divine thoughts through the representation of the human body.

In an architectural treatise, an individual architect can express his beliefs and principles with regards to concept, design, and function of a building. Secrecy is an essential feature of any family home, at least for its main residents. To that end, it is an inherent part of the architect’s task to construct or incorporate rooms in which individuals can have time and space to themselves. Yet the right to separate space is not universal. It is decided generally by social hierarchy, and its implementation or lack thereof demonstrate another concern prevalent in the treatises, the *Heptaméron*, and the *Blasons domestiques*: the control of movement in and around the home, including knowing who is entering and leaving. The spaces of the “small city” that constitute a large house are therefore designed to be observable, in a move that reflects Foucault’s idea of public space. The *Heptaméron* and Alberti’s treatise treat the house as a space where movement should be observed. But it is clear that for Alberti there are good and bad ways to effect such observation, seen in the way that tyrants as opposed to good princes set up their means of surveillance. The way in which a house is built therefore reflects the morals and character of its owner. While an architect can project his own principles on to the building project, he must negotiate his beliefs with the requests of his client.

Architects of the sixteenth century look back to the past in order to construct the present. They incorporate classical motifs and modern building techniques to forge a new architecture that looks simultaneously backward and forward. Since classical theories of perfect proportions are supposed to yield buildings which inspire thoughts of the divine, and these same proportions are also used in house construction, building the home involves an ethical drive to surround residents with rooms which reflect human proportions. These in turn represent a microcosm of the universe. Yet the use of human ratios is not so fixed a rule that the practical necessities of the home take a back seat. The architect must consider his client's needs and requests for comfort, sacrificing architectural and mathematical purity for rooms which function practically for the family. In addition, blind imitation of the past is not acceptable, but adaptation, assimilation, and reformulation of classical traits, in conjunction with a creativity that is identified as French (specifically by De l'Orme), are a productive practice that move France to the forefront of architectural innovation.

Montaigne, in his textual production, effects a similar type of *bricolage* of past and present, albeit a metaphorical one in which he appropriates excerpts from Latin and Greek authors. Yet such borrowings do also stand out from their French surroundings. While the architectural treatises approach building and home design with an eye to function, Montaigne is not starting from scratch or looking to undertake a vast remodeling project. Rather his aim is the preservation of his father's legacy. When he retires, the inscription in the library commemorating the event indicates his intention to rest, but it also implies that he intends to build—to finish what his father had started and complete the house. It would seem that Montaigne's dual aims of resting and building during his retirement contain a contradiction that immediately threatens to thwart his goals. Building is not only incompatible with rest, but also with writing.

Montaigne takes on building as a filial duty to his father's ambitions. Yet his father's project is not his own conceit, and his willingness to see the building through to its conclusion, or even to ensure the upkeep of what is already in place, is tested by his own distaste for domestic affairs and disdain for architectural orders, calling into question the individual's moral obligation to ancestors and other people's desires. Montaigne engages in the construction and repair of his family home as he considers the best way to preserve the memory of his father. The act of memorialization involves an element of glorification, especially when it consists of the construction of an opulent building. But despite their appearance of solidity, buildings are as transient as any other physical object in the world. Building seems therefore twofoldly vain: it betrays too great a concern for the opinion of others by presenting them with an aspirational object, and it attempts to challenge the vicissitudes of Fortune by leaving a permanent presence in the world, one that is closely tied to an individual or family. Instead of building to his father's memory, he memorializes the man in a different way—by recalling his building tendencies—such that the act of writing becomes a way of representing his father's love of building. Therefore even building as a process is converted to text.

Any engagement with the past through building is lacking in the tales of the *Heptaméron* which seems not to discuss with any building practices, unless obliquely. Although Francis I, Marguerite's brother, had been undertaking mammoth building and renovation projects during their lifetimes, the effect of any building work is not felt in her collection of stories, except via the subsequent use of space as commented throughout the tales. How space should be conceived is wholly ignored in favor of how space should or should not be used. The text therefore gives the impression of a neutral attitude towards the design of space. Only once a structure is built can the symbolism of its rooms be explored. Perhaps it is in the very nature of the genre—narrating a

specific, short moment—that leads it to ignore what was, or what could be, and to focus uniquely on what is. Building projects imply a reconsideration of the past and a projection into the future, whereas the novella’s narrative mode creates the fiction of a constant present, no matter when in history it is set. The status quo of the buildings cannot be changed. What remains is to evaluate the use domestic of domestic space by its residents.

II. The Ethics of the Use of Domestic Space

The sixteenth century sees profound shifts in both building design and use of space. Rooms which had been multi-purpose take on specific functions as communal living becomes less the norm and apartments or suites of rooms gain popularity. These changes do not occur without their moral propriety being questioned. These texts contain ethical considerations of domestic space, treating the issue of free will and responsibility for one’s actions. They question who should have control of others’ behavior and whether individuals can be trusted to take responsibility for their own actions. Isolation, solitude, imposed separation, and therefore secrecy, involve relinquishing control over others’ behavior. Increased insistence by individuals on the need for a private inner life seems to correspond to the need for personal space and an increased availability of it. The consensus between the *Heptaméron* and the *Blasons domestiques* would be that behavior and therefore circulation in domestic space need to be regulated. However, the means to regulate behavior proposed by the two works are almost diametrically opposed.

Characters in the *Heptaméron* are not necessarily thwarted in their plans to subvert the uses of domestic space, but they are judged afterwards on their (im)moral conduct. If behavior can no longer be observed as it occurs in public space, then the recounting of events in secret

space will serve as example. The narrative version of events gains importance in the way that court members interact with each other. What becomes unobservable behind closed doors gains a different type of visibility through the events' retelling. It is as if the changes to the use of space are unavoidable, or cannot be questioned (except by those who have buildings constructed), so that the new spaces become the status quo, and the issue becomes how to judge people's behavior in them. Any notion of personal space or privacy is undone by the tales told, following the logic of secrecy proposed by Regosin and others. When in secret space, characters seem free to act on their impulses, although the heavy moral judgment that follows from those who discover their activities suggests that anyone tempted to do the same would be wise to reconsider. The idea of an individual's free will would seem to be nominally intact, with a clear imperative to direct one's actions towards what is godly. Yet ironically it is Jambicque's *volonté* that is compromised by her uncontrollable passion. Far from it being her free choice to meet with the gentleman, she is described as lacking the will to do anything but act on her desires. She arranges the rendez-vous "malgré sa volonté." The *Heptaméron* shows domestic space to be a blank canvas on which individuals can project versions of themselves. The heart in particular, locus of hidden identity and intentions, is equated with secret spaces in the home. While no space is in itself inherently bad, there are rooms whose isolation provide the occasion for characters to act on their desires, contrary to accepted codes of conduct.

In the *Blasons domestiques*, because the home as a point of reference in the real world houses the female body, it becomes equated with access to the body, as Liaroutzos has proposed. In contrast, the imaginary home becomes a representation of human memory, structured in the same way as a memory palace. In Corrozet's text it is impossible to gauge the willpower of any residents of the house since their views are in no way represented. As in Corrozet's emblems, the

tone is paternalistic and didactic, with top-down instructions for the arrangement of home space and rules about who can have access to which spaces. The strict separation between the family and outside visitors suggests that neither one group nor the other can be relied upon to interact in an acceptable manner. The author refers elsewhere to women's weakness of character and volatility, comparing them in one emblem to birds likely to fly away if given any kind of freedom. Their circulation either within the home or elsewhere should be curtailed for their own good and that of the family, limiting their ability for self-determination.

While the *Blasons domestiques* are concerned with regulating others' behavior, and in the *Heptaméron* the *devisants* examine other characters' use of domestic space in order that they and their readers might scrutinize their own, in the *Essais* home is set up as the only place where an individual's will can reign supreme, in contrast to the failed analogies between home and the body and between home and the mind. Even the habits and customs expected by society with regards to royal visitors are subject to revision and abandonment. The house is therefore the locus where individuals can fully exercise their free will with complete disregard for the opinions of society at large, unlike the protagonists of the *Heptaméron* whose choices are presented in order to be evaluated, or the residents of Corrozet's house whose options are limited further still. In the *Heptaméron* and the *Blasons domestiques*, room configuration and use allow a degree of freedom to choose one's behavior or for an owner to restrict residents' options; in the *Essais*, use of the home depends entirely on its owner's desires. The same kind of authority is built into homes by Alberti, despite the recognition that space for personal use—whatever that use may be—is essential. Personal freedom is strongly linked to the use of domestic space.

III. Building the Home, Writing the Self

Although the characters featured throughout the *Essais*, *Blasons domestiques*, and the *Heptaméron* have varying degrees of success in determining the course of their own actions, they all exhibit an awareness of crafting and maintaining their reputation in public. Both architecture and writing offer ways of representing individuals that do not depend on physical presence in order to transmit information about them. As seen in the *Essais*, a building is an unsatisfactory replacement for a person. Montaigne prefers a textual version of himself as his legacy.

For the essayist, the concrete nature of architecture means that a building is too fixed an entity to represent himself. As he compares the human traits as expressed through architecture with the person as text, the static nature of the building does not take into account the ebb and flow of a human life. Individuals alter relatively quickly; there is a fluidity to their senses of self that a building cannot reproduce. But text can, and Montaigne recognizes that text is a more fitting way for him to be represented because it can change as the person does. Yet his language of choice is in constant flux, and therefore any reading of his text is liable to change over time as future readers' understanding of the French language alters. While language does define Montaigne in a way that is more stable than his own nature, this textual instability, and the slippage of meaning that will follow, mean that texts pin people down in a less restrictive way than buildings. To represent a person, or an aspect of a personality, through a building, attaches an evolving individual to a relatively unchanging structure; to represent someone in text has the result that an evolving content is depicted in an evolving medium. The only type of architectural structure which can morph in human ways is the textual representation of a building. Alongside Montaigne's depictions of the action of building within his text, Corrozet's adoption of the memory palace trope provides a textual and visual version of a building which represents the

human mind and has the potential for evolution, because a memory palace can grow and adapt as its creator fills it in different ways for different purposes.

Furthermore, buildings are incapable of reflecting the mobility of people and text. The characters in the *Heptaméron* seem determined to trap the events in which they take part in the spaces in which they occur—in other words, to participate in events without there being a narrative engendered by them. Buildings stay fixed in space, whereas people move in and out of rooms, and text, be it spoken or written, can travel—an idea reflected in the idiom “le bruit qui court.” The identification of individuals and their actions with a place—as attempted by Jambicque—is therefore the antithesis of textual production. A textual rendering of events not only makes them public but also extends their temporal existence. Far from being momentary and easily forgotten, the record of them lasts as long as a version of the text (written or oral) persists, which, as Horace insists, will be longer than monuments made of bronze. In their retelling, events take on a life much longer than the duration of the events themselves.

The spatialization of a text—how it travels, where, and how quickly—depends on its medium. In an age when the printed word becomes a product for mass markets, the spoken word still carries weight. In the *Heptaméron*, tale 8 demonstrates how quickly a text can spread when disseminated orally. If the ring can be taken as a type of writing—a symbol to be interpreted—then it cannot transmit its story beyond the husband, his wife, and their maid. The husband then puts that story into words, and the oral text spreads more quickly, and becomes more accessible. It is easier for the story to reach a wider audience. In tale 43, the initial writing of the tale—on Jambicque’s back—only has a small scope for spreading a message, since the capacity to understand it is limited to the gentleman, and once the chalk mark is erased, there is no evidence that the text even existed. Once a narrative is produced, however, control of how it is reshaped

and how it spreads is imperative for individuals who wish to manage their public reputation. The slippery nature of languages means that it may not be possible to determine *one* textual version of an event. The battle in tale 43 then turns to the question of whose oral version of the tale will prevail. The text is not fixed, and remains unfixable until Geburon's telling of it, which is of course a printed rendering of a purportedly oral text. Oral narrative can therefore spread more quickly than written or printed text, but it is less permanent, less fixing, and less easy to control.

Any move from direct experience or observation to narrative of that experience is a move away from the personal towards an experience which is shared. Yet the closing off of space, inherent in the transition from communal living to private homes, involves a move in the opposite direction: from shared to personal experience. The drive to establish private space in the home is clearly detectable throughout the texts examined in this study. By generating a narrative version of events which take place in supposedly personal space, the spread of text highlights a constant tension between the move to publish and the desire to conceal. The wide dissemination of oral texts, as demonstrated in the *Heptaméron*, and the possibility for distribution of printed works which influences cultural production from the end of the fifteenth century onward, challenges the move towards the division of domestic space into public and private.

From the sixteenth century until the advent of electronic communication in the twentieth, the spatialization of text—or more simply put, how texts travel and are disseminated—seems strongly tied to the circulation of people. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, however, texts can be distributed across the globe electronically, widening the scope for publication of the self on a scale previously unimaginable, at speeds beyond comprehension. But while social media allow a much greater degree of mediation between the physical and the virtual, the same basic principle has always applied: if you do not control the narrative, you leave

your public reputation in the hands of everyone else. The move to publish and the move to conceal are now played out less frequently in the realm of domestic space, and more predominantly on the internet.

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