

GENDER, ARCHITECTURE, AND SELF-CONSTRUCTION
IN THE WORKS OF MADEMOISELLE DE MONTPENSIER (1627-1693)

BY

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in French in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
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Abstract

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Self-construction—that process by which individuals deploy strategies to affirm subjectivities that both reproduce and/or reinforce constructs of gender, class, and ethnicity, and that, at times, can resist, challenge, and/or renegotiate them—is most often manifested in bodily and discursive expressions. However, little work has examined it through artistic constructions such as architectural artifacts. In architecture, self-construction can best be examined, first, by analyzing, in discourses of representational architecture and spatial distribution, the ways in which meanings ascribed to forms and spaces relate to constructs of gender and class in a specific period, and, then, by examining how the actual forms and spaces of a certain building have been built according to these constructs or not.

This dissertation works out such an approach by examining early modern treatises of architecture and actual architectural projects commissioned by early modern women in France. I focus on projects undertaken by Mlle de Montpensier (1627-1693), first-cousin to

Louis XIV and the wealthiest unmarried woman of Europe in that period. Although mostly remembered by historians for her participation in the civil war of the Fronde, Montpensier was the author of a memoir, several novels, and a series of letters in which she proposed an alternative form of life without marriage. She also commissioned the construction of three chateaux: Saint-Fargeau, in the center of France; Eu, in Normandy; and Choisy-le-roy, a town near Paris.

This dissertation lies at the intersection of two disciplines, architecture and literature. As I examine Montpensier's castles as though they were texts, and her texts as if they were architectural artifacts, I argue that Montpensier enlisted her chateaux and her writings as tools to assert a number of complementary and conflicting notions of female autonomy and power, an ambivalent but evolving position in relation to marriage, and, at the same time, constructs of rank that ultimately were more central to her self-construction than the period's discourses of gender.

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This dissertation would not have seen final fruition were it not for the support I found in many other faculty members. First, I want to thank Nancy K. Miller, whose brilliant suggestion that I examine the recurrent theme of “spaces” in Montpensier’s works led me to discover an entire new world—the chateaux—and reconnect with an old passion for architecture that I never thought could fulfill through my graduate studies. In this sense, Mary McLeod, professor of Architecture at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, was fundamental in guiding me through this discipline. I am grateful for her kindness, open-mindedness and understanding of my project.

I am also thankful to Antoinette Blum, whose personal warmth and infectious joy helped keep my spirit up through some moments of despair. I want to thank her and Professor Eve Sourian for their assistance in obtaining the Carole & Morton Olshan Dissertation Fellowship and the Bourse Marandon, respectively, both of which were much-needed funding to complete my research in France and the writing of this dissertation. In this sense, I also want to reiterate my thanks to Professor Sautman, for I know that, as the Program's Executive Officer, her recommendation letters were decisive in my obtaining all the funding she could possibly garnish for me since the beginning of my doctoral studies, funding that included a two-year Magnet Fellowship, two Graduate Teaching Fellowships, two Dean K. Harrison Fellowship, the CUNY Writing Fellowship, a Doctoral Student Research Grant, and teaching work at Hunter College throughout these years.

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Librarians at the Graduate Center also have their share of contribution to my research. Had it not been for them, I would never have had the amazing experience of putting my hands on the 1659 edition of *Relation de l'isle imaginaire* and *Histoire de la Princesse de Paplagonie*, and know what it feels to touch such an ancient object. It was on a summer

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I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Claudine and Juan, who first instilled in me the love for intellectual work, to my children, Tess and Dylan, for their endurance all this time while their mother remained buried under the books, and to Myles E., my friend and partner in crime for those long years, with whom I shared all the coffee in the world, talking theory and politics, and discovering together the fascinating life of Mlle de Montpensier.

Sophie Maríñez

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Gender, Architecture, and Self-Construction
in the Works of Mlle de Montpensier (1627-1693)

INTRODUCTION

*Je me trouve comme ces petits oiseaux qui ont
été longtemps en cage qui sont si aises de voler
où il leur plaît et de n'avoir plus que les champs
et les bois pour prison. Je respire l'air avec un
plaisir nonpareil quand je songe que c'est avec
une pleine et entière liberté et que je ne me vois
quasi pour jamais hors d'état de la perdre (Mlle
de Montpensier, *Against Marriage*, 68.)*

Birds soaring in the unfettered sky always constitute a strong image of freedom and power: the power to fly wherever they please and the freedom from any constraints to do so. Under the pen of Anne-Marie-Louise, Duchesse de Montpensier (1627-1693), grand-daughter of Marie de Médicis and Henri IV, and first cousin to Louis XIV, this image evokes the history of women to free themselves from the commonplaces of their oppression: confinement, dependence, and reduction to being mere objects of the gaze and pleasure of others.

Montpensier wrote several fictional texts, a correspondence, and a 2,000-page memoir that represent in various ways her multiple and (often) successful attempts at wresting herself from paternal, conjugal, and royal authority, especially in regards to marriage, which she either adamantly rejected or tried to reconfigure according to her own desires. That she did so is not surprising, for her efforts echo the concerns of women writers, from Christine de Pizan, back in the 15th century, to Simone de Beauvoir, in the 20th, who identified marriage as the locus of women's suffering, and denounced it as an enactment of

women's slavery.¹ Thus, at a time when most women had little choice between marriage and the convent—and therefore could only resign themselves to a life of subordination to men (fathers and husbands or other male relatives)—Montpensier's aspirations to freedom were not the exception. Still, given her uniquely high rank for a woman at court, second only to Queen Anne d'Autriche, at least until Louis XIV's marriage in 1660, hers was a position of great paradox: on the one hand, her status granted her all kinds of privileges, and on the other, she was not mistress of her life, but was subject to either her father's or the king's orders to marry to further their own interests. Yet, her entire life—as it transpires in her memoirs and other writings—stands as a continuous effort to assert herself as though she were indeed her own mistress.

Mlle de Montpensier, or Mademoiselle, as she was known at the time,² is mostly remembered by historians for her participation in the Fronde, the civil war begun in the late 1640s as a movement of resistance against the high taxation policies implemented by minister Mazarin to fund the war against Spain. Members of the Parliament joined the movement, and, in the early 1650s, so did her cousins, the princes Condé (1621-1686) and Conti (1629-1666), among others, and, finally, her father, Gaston d'Orléans (1608-1660). Unlike other women who also participated in the Fronde,³ Montpensier actively engaged in military actions, including taking the city of Orléans from the hands of their enemies,

¹ For more details on early modern women's stand against marriage, see Chapter III.

² She was alternately known as Mademoiselle, Mlle de Montpensier, and La Grande Mademoiselle once Philippe d'Orléans's first daughter was born and took the title of Mademoiselle (Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, I, 52-55).

³ Some of these women include Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon-Condé, duchesse de Longueville (1619-1679), Anne de Gonzague de Clèves, Princesse Palatine (1616-1684), Isabelle-Angélique de Montmorency, duchesse de Châtillon (1627-1695), and Marie de Rohan-Montbazon, duchesse de Chevreuse (1600-1679). (Hubert Carrier, "L'Action politique et militaire des femmes dans la Fronde," in *Encyclopédie politique et historique des femmes*. Ed. Christine Fauré. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997, 49-71.)

opening the gates of Paris to save Condé from the persecution of royal troops, and finally going on the roof of the Bastille and having its cannons shot towards the king's troops—an action that brought her the punishment of exile once the king defeated the *frondeurs*.⁴

In general terms, French historians tend to disparage Montpensier's role in the Fronde, a war that they also belittle as the “guerre des dentelles” due to the important participation of women. For instance, Hubert Méthivier (1984) makes the Bastille episode sound like an act of stupidity,⁵ and Micheline Cuénin (1995) reduces the taking of Orléans to a ludicrous spectacle.⁶ In fact, stupidity and ridicule are the common denominators in the words deployed by those who write about Montpensier even two centuries ago:

Chateaubriand depicts her as “ce grand hurluberlu qui se trouvait partout avec son imagination”;⁷ and, closer to our times, George Dethan (1992) sees her as having “une allure un peu hommasse” (245).⁸ Unabashed disparagement of the person and of her historical role often conflates with dismissal of her writings: for Jean Garapon (1989), she is a “jeune fille digne de tous les pardons,” whose writing is “discontinue, capricieuse,” “rédigée à la diable,” “improvisée,” and “pleine de charme,” but certainly not a credible source of history (64-5).

⁴ I develop the details of Montpensier's exile in Chapter II; on details of her participation in the Fronde, see Chapter III.

⁵ Méthivier reduces Montpensier's actions to an act in which « bravement et sottement, Mademoiselle a fait tourner [les canons de la Bastille] contre le roi » (*La Fronde*, Paris, P.U.F., 1984, 68).

⁶ Cuénin writes: “[l]a présence [de Montpensier] offre un grand divertissement aux bateliers (...). Sous les yeux des gardes de la porte Rose voisine, qui n'interviennent pas, Mademoiselle franchit le batardeau sur une pauvre échelle, passe par la petite échancrure, poussée par les uns, tirée par les autres. La rue qui aboutissait au guichet, rue du Cours aux ânes, était boueuse à l'excès : un valet qui doit prendre la princesse à bras le corps, puis on trouve une vieille chaise à bras pour la mettre hors de souillure. Le peuple arrive au spectacle, ovationne” (28-9).

⁷ *La Vie de Rancé*. Ed. M.F. Guyard. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969, 123.

⁸ Georges Dethan, *La vie de Gaston d'Orléans*, 1992. I have borrowed these references to Méthivier and Dethan from Marie-Joelle Louison-Lassablière's dissertation, entitled “Le merveilleux dans *Relation de l'isle imaginaire*.” Tours : Université de Saint-Etienne, 1993.

Contrary to the memoirs of other *frondeurs*, such as the Cardinal de Retz, Montpensier's offer no « tableau général du royaume, » no « considération sur les causes des troubles; » they are written by “condescendance aristocratique ou par paresse,” filled with the “émotions contradictoires d'un être jeune et sensible,” a princess who only cares about her own “divertissement et l'euphorie légère que le trouble de l'Etat suscite dans son esprit romanesque” (65-6). Focusing on what he deems her authorial intentions, Garapon declares that “Mademoiselle ne se préoccupe que d'elle-même, (...), oublie la brouille progressive de Condé avec la Cour, n'a en tête que son mariage manqué avec le futur Charles II⁹ (...) au total, cette narration des trois premières années de la Fronde pâlit de l'absence d'un regard d'ensemble, ou d'une réflexion approfondie, nourrie de culture, sur un passé” (66). In other words, seen as the self-centered work of a scattered-brained, ignorant, frivolous, and romanesque princess, these memoirs can, at best, be read for their entertaining content, since they lack the elements of serious work.¹⁰ Luckily for Montpensier, this overt bias has been compensated by the works of other critics, over the past twenty-five years, such as Gabrielle Verdier (1983), Patricia Cholakian (1986; 1999; 2000), Faith Beasley (1990), Joan Dejean

⁹ Charles II of England (1630-1685) was son of Charles I (1600-1649) and Montpensier's aunt, Henrietta Maria (1609-1669). Soon after the execution of his father in 1649 and the instauration of the Commonwealth led by Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), Charles went into exile in France. According to Montpensier's memoirs, he and his mother actively pursued her to marry him, a prospect she refused, rather than “missed,” as Garapon characterizes it. Apparently, Charles's grim exile and slim prospects of regaining the crown, back in 1651, deterred her from marrying him. Charles reassumed the throne of England in 1660. See Montpensier's *Mémoires* (I, 323-329) and my note 147 Chapter III.

¹⁰ Yet, as can be deduced by Garapon's numerous publications on Montpensier, paradoxically, her alleged shortcomings as an individual and a writer did not prevent him from recycling articles and books and build an entire career at her expense. Other critics who echo Garapon's bias include Roger Duchêne (“Vers *La Princesse de Clèves*: De *La Princesse de Paphlagonie* à *L'histoire amoureuse des Gaules*.” *Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature* 22:42 (1995): 65-77.), whose main goal is to identify the key to *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, and to demonstrate its author's “maladresse et inexpérience” (70); and James F. Gaines (“*La Relation de l'Isle Imaginaire*: Variations burlesques sur le mythe arcadien.” *Et in Arcadia Ego*. Ed. Antoine Soare. Biblio 17. 100.), who first claims (but fails to prove) that *Relation de l'isle imaginaire* was written by Montpensier's secretary, Jean-Renaud de Segrais (1624-1701), and then casts it as proof of her poor literary taste and lack of intellectual sophistication (285-92).

(1991; 2002), Éva Pósfay (1992), Marie-Joelle Louison-Lassablière (1993), Emmanuèle Lesne (1996), Juliette Cherbuliez (2000; 2005; 2005), and biographer Vincent Pitts (2000), all of whom have contributed, in varying degrees, to providing a more balanced account of Montpensier's life and works.¹¹

To be sure, these critics' efforts are influenced by feminist scholarship, which in the past forty years has excelled at unearthing the works of early modern women writers. Thanks to this scholarship, we now know that, contrary to what a male *dix-septiémiste* once told me in conversation, Mme de Lafayette was neither the only female writer nor the only "intelligent woman" of the seventeenth-century. In fact, numerous writing women belonging to various social backgrounds, including princesses, noblewomen, and bourgeois, populated a landscape of female intellectual figures who contributed to the formation and evolution of genres as diverse as life writings, correspondence, drama, novels (including the

¹¹ Gabrielle Verdier, for instance, is the first to break the fixed script of these critics by validating Montpensier's memoir-writing as an act of pleasure—the pleasure of reliving her life. See "Mademoiselle de Montpensier et le plaisir du texte." *Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature* 10:18 (1983): 11-33. Besides providing sympathetic overviews of Montpensier's life, Patricia Cholakian reedits a manuscript of Montpensier's *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolle* (Delmar: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1999.) Reacting against prior dismissals of the historical value of Montpensier's memoirs, Faith Beasley reads them as Montpensier's own counter-history, an "histoire particulière" ("From Military to Literary Frondeuse: Montpensier's Feminization of History." *Revising Memory: Women's Fiction and Memoirs in Seventeenth-Century France*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990.) In addition to including Montpensier in her study, *Tender Geographies* (1991), Joan Dejean offers a new edition of the letters exchanged between Montpensier and Mme de Motteville, under the title of *Against Marriage: The Correspondence of La Grande Mademoiselle* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002.) Eva Pósfay's essay, "Écrire l'utopie féminine en 1660" (*Cahiers du Dix-septième: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6:1 (1992): 221-34) explores the utopian aspect of Montpensier's writings. Marie-Joelle Louison-Lassablière's dissertation (1993) is the *only* existing attempt to analyze seriously Montpensier's *Relation de l'isle imaginaire* and makes interesting connections with fairy tales, travel writings, and utopias of the period. However, Louison-Lassablière's uncritical adoption of the term *préciosité* allows earlier disparagements to remain intact. Emmanuèle Lesne provides a template for analyzing Montpensier's memoirs in the context of memoirs written in the second half of the seventeenth-century. Vincent Pitts's biography, *La Grande Mademoiselle at the Court of France 1627-1693* (Baltimore, Maryland; and London: Hopkins University, 2000), is a thoroughly documented work that constitutes an important point of departure for interested scholars. Finally, Juliette Cherbuliez is the first to identify Montpensier's development of what she terms a « counter-court » at Saint-Fargeau ("Before and Beyond Versailles: The Counter-court of the Duchesse de Montpensier, 1652-1660." *Nottingham French Studies* 39:2 (2000): 129-39; and *The Place of Exile: Leisure Literature and the Limits of Absolutism*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005.) See in Chapter II my analysis of this counter-court.

“roman héroïque” and the “nouvelle historique,”) fairy tales, poetry, and philosophical and religious treatises, and who, in the process, voiced the concerns and desires of women of the time, many of which still strike us as urgent to this day.¹² Memoir writers such as Marguerite de Valois, Madame de la Guette, and the duchesse de Nemours focused on their role in the political events taking place during their lifetime, while others, such as the Mancini sisters, emphasized the tribulations of their marriage, their escape from marital oppression, and the consequences carried by their escape. Novel writers, such as Mlle de Scudéry, Mme de Lafayette, and Mme de Villedieu, developed different forms from romance to psychological novels to explore issues of social norms and behaviors, friendship, love and marriage. Fairy tale writers, such as d’Aulnoy, Bernard, La Force, de Murat, and Villandon, on the other hand, used this apparently innocuous genre to challenge gender scripts of their time and to imagine female power in the guise of fairies. Among them all, it was perhaps philosophers, Marie de Gournay and Gabrielle Suchon, who were the most outspoken female voices against the oppression of women.¹³

¹² These women included, among others, Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615), Marie Le Jars de Gournay (1565-1645), Madeleine de Souvré, marquise de Sablé (1599-1678), Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701), Mme de la Guette (1613-1676), Françoise Bertaut de Motteville (1621-1689), Marie d’Orléans-Longueville, duchesse de Nemours (1625-1707), Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, marquise de Sévigné (1626-1696), Gabrielle Suchon (1632-1703), Antoinette du Ligier Deshoulrières (1638-1694), Marie-Catherine de Villedieu (1640-1683), Hortense Mancini (1646-1699), Jeanne-Marie de la Motte-Guyon (1648-1717), Marie Mancini (1649-1714), Marie-Catherine, baronne d’Aulnoy (1651-1705), Charlotte-Rose de Caumont La Force (1654 - 1724), Anne Le Fèvre Dacier (1654-1720), Catherine Bernard (1663-1712), Marie-Jeanne L’Héritier de Villandon (1664-1734), Henriette-Julie de Castelnaut, marquise de Murat (1670-1716), Louise de Bossigny, comtesse d’Auneuil (d. 1700?), and Catherine Durand (d. 1736).

¹³ Marie de Gournay’s *Égalité des hommes et des femmes* (1622) is the first proponent of gender equality, and Gabrielle Suchon’s *Traité de morale et de politique* (1693) condemns the denial to women of freedom, knowledge and authority. In addition, Suchon’s *Du Célibat volontaire ou la vie sans engagement* (1700) denounces the practice of forcing young women into the convent or into marriage, and offers an alternative life of secular celibacy (see my discussion of Suchon’s stand against marriage in Chapter III.) Mention must be made of François Poullain de la Barre (1647-1723), who applied Cartesian method to examine and to demolish anti-women arguments and who reached a conclusion in favor of gender equality. See his *On the Equality of the Two Sexes*, in *Three Cartesian Feminist Treatises*, ed. Marcelle Maistre Welch, trans. Vivian Bosley. *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, 49–121. De Gournay, Suchon, and de la Barre wrote in reaction to the misogynistic strain of the *querelle des femmes*, a debate initiated in 1404

Many of these women's works emerged as a result of gatherings they held in literary circles known as *ruelles*—a tradition that can be traced back to Marguerite de Navarre (1492-1549) and Madeleine des Roches (1520-1587) and her daughter Catherine des Roches (1542-1587), in the sixteenth century, and that Marguerite de Valois and Catherine de Vivonne, marquise de Rambouillet (1588-1665) continued in the seventeenth century, the former in the hotel she built across the Louvre, and the latter in the celebrated *chambre bleue* of her hotel.¹⁴ Needless to say, the historical context had also placed women at the foreground of

with Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* (1404), a response to Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's *Le Roman de la rose* (1230). As Joan Kelly synthesized it, Pizan questioned "male defamation and subjection of women (...); had a sure sense that the sexes are culturally, not just biologically, formed (...) [and] oppose[d] the mistreatment of women" ("Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes, 1400-1789." *Women, History and Theory*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984, pp. 65-109) Misogynists regarded women as "rationally defective," who could not even gain real knowledge, and, as a result, could not be entrusted with intellectual or artistic authority of any kind" (66-67). In the seventeenth-century, some of the best known works in this anti-women camp include, among many others, Jacques Olivier's *Alphabet de l'imperfection et malice des femmes* (1617); Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659) and *Les Femmes savantes* (1672); and Boileau's *Satire X* (1667). Between the two extremes, advocates such as Christian moralists François de Grenailles (1616-after 1678), who wrote *L'Honnête fille* (1639), and Pierre Lemoyne S.J. (1602–1671), who wrote *La Galerie des femmes fortes* (1647), praised women as long as they did not transgress the boundaries of virtue. In this spirit, Charles Perrault (1628-1703), too, appeared to defend women but he confined his argument to demonstrating that women could, indeed, be good wives and good daughters. In his *Defense des dames* (1697), Perrault's position, then, was to confine woman back in the home. For a chronology and analysis of texts on both camps of the *querelle* written in the seventeenth-century, see Maïté Albistur and Daniel Armogathe, *Histoire du féminisme français*, Paris: Des femmes, 1977. pp. 122-177, and Carolyn Lougee, *Le Paradis des femmes: Women, Salons and Social Stratification in 17th-century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

¹⁴ Other important *salon* women included Mlle de Scudéry, Mme de Lafayette, Marguerite de la Sablière (1640-1693), Mlle L'Héritier de Villandon, and Mme d'Aulnoy. For Carolyn Lougee, salons were "an extension of the institutionalized court which, since the early sixteenth century, had accorded royal women positions of leadership in matters of taste and pleasure; they extended to a city elite, which overlapped with the court only at the top, what had flourished in the Valois courts during the previous century" (*Le Paradis des femmes: Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1976, 5). Linda Timmermans, who examined the influence of salons on the French literary and cultural landscape in the seventeenth century, observed that, at least until Louis XIV's reign, not only did salons promote women's education and encourage the proliferation of women writers but they also had significant impact on French social refinement. (*L'Accès des femmes à la culture* (1598-1715). Paris: Honoré Champion, 1993). More recent works on salons include Anne E. Duggan's *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies: The Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France*. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), which focuses on the works of Mlle de Scudéry and Mme d'Aulnoy, and Faith E. Beasley's *Salons, History, and the Creation of Seventeenth-Century France: Mastering Memory*. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), which shows how the legacy of salons was distorted by nineteenth-century literary historians who, in forming the national literary canon, minimized or excluded the contributions of seventeenth-century salon women.

political issues for over a century, starting with the important roles played by queens, regents, and princesses Anne de Beaujeu (1461-1522), Anne de Bretagne (1477-1514), Louise de Savoie (1476-1531), Marguerite de Navarre (1492-1549), Catherine de Médicis (1519-1589), Jeanne d'Albret (1528-1572), Marie de Médicis (1575-1642), and Anne d'Autriche (1601-1666). As a result, tensions arose between the model they provided as regents and those individuals who contested their role in political matters. This enormous controversy, which is central to the *querelle des femmes*, was first ignited with the regency of Anne de Beaujeu but took particularly virulent overtones during the regency of Catherine de Médicis, especially after the massacre of Saint-Barthélémy. Accordingly, it was manifested in the continued publication of treatises that advocated and justified Salic Law, the fundamental law of the French nation, which allegedly prevented women from inheriting and transmitting royal power.¹⁵ The controversy also affected Marie de Médicis's regency, as she had at first to confront the political instability originated with the revolts that the Prince de Condé initiated against her, and then was exiled twice by Louis XIII, who feared she was exceeding her role as Queen Mother and as a member of the Royal Council.¹⁶

¹⁵ These treatises justify women's exclusion from power with the claim of female inherent incapacity and weakness. Francois Hotman's *Gaule Française* (1574) casts women's participation in government as a mark of the "decadence" of the nation. According to Hotman, when women are in power, they bring great tragedies and confusion to the kingdom (158). He advocates Salic law as a weapon against the institution of female regency: "celle-là qui n'est point reçue à être reine et héritière légitime de la couronne ne doit non plus être admise à la régence et au gouvernement du royaume" (163). The anonymous *Discours merveilleux* (1574) demonizes the regency and queenship of Catherine de Médicis, giving birth to the infamous "légende noire" that was to stigmatize her to this day. Jean Bodin's *Les Six Livres de la République ou Sur la chose publique* (1576) argues that if "gynecocracy," which is against the laws of Nature and God, were accepted in the public realm, it would also contaminate the private sphere (62). Yet, recent research supports the argument that Salic law was little else than an act of forgery—at best, a custom for the inheritance of property—perpetrated to exclude women from ruling France since the Middle Ages. See Sarah Hanley, "Identity Politics and Rulership in France: Female Political Place and the Fraudulent Salic Law in Christine de Pizan and Jean de Montreuil" in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*. Ed. Michael Wolfe. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, 78-94.

¹⁶ Katherine Crawford, *Perilous Performances: Gender and Regency in Early Modern France*. Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 2004, pp. 75-79.

Despite the controversies over how much knowledge, authority and power women should wield, many male writers and thinkers recognized their *ruelles* as spaces in which to have their work read. Thus, these gatherings were a far cry from what later critics wanted to reduce them to: a mere “*précieux*” movement of women with little acumen and shallow intellectual ambitions, as did Molière, with *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (1659) and *Les femmes savantes* (1672), Antoine Somaize (1630- ?) in *Grand Dictionnaire des Précieuses ou La Clef de la Lanque des Ruelles* (Paris, 1660), and Michel de Pure (1634-1680) in *La Précieuse, ou le mystère des ruelles* (1658), all of whom mock women’s aspirations to a life beyond marriage in which they would play a significant cultural and intellectual role. Yet, although the marquise de Lambert (1647-1743), in 1727, lamented how devastating the effects of Molière’s satires had been, since, she claimed, after them “on a attaché presque autant de honte au savoir des femmes qu’aux vices qui leur sont le plus défendus” (39), women did not cease to voice their concerns, to write fiction, non-fiction, plays, and poetry, and to hold salons that became important centers of the French cultural and social landscape.

To be sure, the accomplishments of feminist scholars are far from complete. Much remains to be done in exploring the struggles of earlier modern women to (re)write their history. Much remains to be done, too, in revising the tools with which these efforts are achieved. Distorting the stories of women to devalue them or, then, to exaggerate their achievements to make them fit utopian visions, for instance, are not effective strategies, for they transform literary criticism into mere panegyrics. And rather than idealize these early modern women into models of perfection—as traditional literary history has done too often with its herd of genius (male) writers—we should be ready to examine women’s limitations

and blind spots, especially of those who belonged to an elite that saw its status as divinely ordained and thus who legitimized the perpetuation of social injustices.

Still, these women's struggles for emancipation, from both external and internalized oppression, are a worthy object of attention for they reflect issues that are still urgent in most parts of the world, including sections of our own, regardless of the social status of women. It is from this perspective that I explore the mechanisms through which Mlle de Montpensier dealt with the paradoxes of her position and pursued her ideals of freedom—a pursuit clearly manifest in her writings. Indeed, her works challenge the image created by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1989 [1952]) when she cast women in general as passive and static victims of men, as willing participants in their own subjection, as not seeing themselves as a group, and, thus, as lacking “subjective attitude” (xxv). To the contrary, my research shows that Montpensier persistently enlisted as her models other women—with whom she implicitly created a “group” or collectivity bound together by their common social status. And since these women were queens, regents, and princesses of the blood,¹⁷ and thus often in positions that gave them exceptional political power, they were a far cry from the stereotype of “woman” as inferior, weak, passive, or “the inessential Other” that structures de Beauvoir's Hegelian categories of subjectivity. In fact, despite the constraints that bound her to the will of her male relations, notably her father and her cousin king Louis XIV, Montpensier succeeded in deflating their flawlessly constructed images, and in affirming herself as autonomous from them.

¹⁷Although she did not openly admit it, Montpensier was also influenced by women who were less exalted but who were also active women of letters, or salon women, such as Mlle de Scudéry, the comtesse de Maure and Mme de Sablé. See details in Chapter IV.

Montpensier accomplished this through a series of self-construction strategies that she initiated in exile and continued throughout most of her life, including: 1) learning how to manage her finances successfully so that she could be in charge of her estate and bolster her financial independence; 2) outlining, in her writings, her aspirations to autonomy and power, and disclosing her struggle to attain and preserve them; and, 3) creating a court of her own where she could perform herself—if not as the queen she aspired to be—at least as a woman whose power resided in part in her wealth and her royal station, and in another part, in adopting the models left by women, ranging from Sainte-Thérèse d'Avila and Marguerite de Valois, whose memoirs inspired her to write her own, to Marie de Médicis, whose palace of Luxembourg prompted her to build her own chateaux. In other words, as she grounded herself both in a courtly life of her own, and in the (re)construction of three chateaux that followed the models left by France's queens, wealth, status, and gender became fundamental devices in Montpensier's self-construction strategies.

By self-construction I refer to the process by which individuals deploy strategies, be they in the form of verbal and visual expressions or acts, in which existing gender, class, and ethnic constructs are constantly reproduced and reinforced, but which, at times, can also be resisted and/or challenged. These strategies can serve to assert one's allegiance to these constructs, to propose alternate options in which to situate oneself, or then, to negotiate both, and produce a fusion of, or transition between, old and new constructs. Some verbal vehicles include, but are not limited to, the genres of life writings, such as autobiographies, memoirs, self-portraits, personal essays, and letters, but they can also be found in the fictional and theatrical modes. Some visual strategies may include representations and/or performances of oneself in particular attires, poses and contexts, or in works produced by others through

patronage.¹⁸ Consequently, this constructed/performed self, while based on reiterative practices, is neither static, nor unitary, nor is it a transcendental category that one may ever “know” or “find.” Instead, one constitutes oneself in relation to others in a fluid (and often conflicted) movement between contradictory forces in the social context.¹⁹

Beyond the self, construction is a notion that can be applied both to the symbolic and to the material. In fact, it has been linked to the process of writing since Christine de Pizan published her *Cité des Dames* (1405). Guided by the allegorical (female) figures of Reason, Rectitude and Justice, Christine builds a city aimed at defending women from misogynistic attacks: she first creates strong foundations with arguments against those who claim women lack intelligence, courage and virtue, and then she erects its walls with stories of exemplary ladies. In the seventeenth century, Descartes deploys a similar metaphor in the first three parts of his *Discours de la méthode* (1637) to describe the process of forming his method for acquiring knowledge. He uses terms, such as “bâtir,” “fondements,” and “palais,” to argue that the treatises of the Stoics and the sciences of jurisprudence and medicine seemed magnificent palaces but were, in fact, built on sand and mud, and therefore had such shaky foundations they could not provide the solidity they appeared to offer and that humankind needs (36-8). Then, he develops a full-fledged analogy between construction and his

¹⁸ As Judith Butler observed in analyzing the performativity of gendered identities (1999), these bodily (and verbal) acts and expressions are not always necessarily conscious or voluntary, but do serve to reinforce, resist, and/or renegotiate those constructs. In her preface to the 1999 edition of *Gender Trouble*, Butler reminds us that “performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” and that “what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body. In this way, (...) what we take as to be an ‘internal’ feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts, as an extreme, an hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures” (xv).

¹⁹ However, I am aware of the limits of the constructionist approach in freeing itself from essentialist vocabulary. See Diana Fuss’s *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference* (New York: Routledge, 1989), on the debate between essentialist and constructionist conceptions, and her argument that essentialist language cannot be escaped, not even by constructionists.

methodology, whereby Descartes compares the practice of analyzing received knowledge with the act of demolishing, and the process of finding knowledge with the act of building (43). To him, one can erect new knowledge on old foundations, but one also can, as he did, “bâtir dans un fonds qui est tout à moi” (45). And since his “ouvrage” pleases him, he shares its model with us, readers, so that, as construction workers in our own right, we may replicate it to build palaces of knowledge of our own.

Descartes weaves an autobiographical narrative throughout his *Discours* that emphasizes the self as the source from which to build knowledge. This narrative employs two main metaphors: that of the personal journey towards the truth, populated by images of forests and mountains, rocks and bushes, but also foreign countries and cultures—a path that conveys notions of horizontality, chronology, and linear acquisition of knowledge over time; and the metaphor of architecture, or construction, which is filled with images of palaces, materials and foundations, and evokes notions of strength and firmness, in-depth excavation and vertical accumulation of knowledge. At the intersection of these images of horizontality and verticality, stands the traveller/architect who traces/builds his own path/palace of knowledge. Indeed, if knowledge or thought, or the process through which we build this thought, is inherent to our existence—*cogito ergo sum*—then, in Cartesian logic, the building of knowledge, intertwined with the autobiographical, becomes part of a process of self-construction.²⁰

While the metaphor of the traveller searching for knowledge applies more often to men than to women, in literature and philosophy, due to women’s history of confinement at

²⁰ Charles Perrault, too, in his *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences* (1688), made this connection between architecture and language. To him, ornaments echoed the function of rhetorical figures in language and the merit of an architect lied in placing these ornaments with “good judgment” in order to compose beautiful buildings.

home or in the convent, the image of the builder can certainly be applied to women, even when their involvement with architecture has been largely effaced from architectural history. Indeed, the autobiographical narrative of the traveller/architect who spent eight years in a remote town of Holland, as Descartes put it, a “désert” (63) far from the agitations of great cities, ruminating what would later become his *méthode*, prefigures Mlle de Montpensier’s own narrative in some ways. Like him, she spent several years in a “désert,” building a chateau and writing a memoir, both of which became material and discursive spaces in which to achieve knowledge and to (re)construct and perform herself. And, if Descartes used architecture as a metaphor for knowledge construction and deconstruction,²¹ material architectural devices, be they representational or in the form of distribution of spaces, can also be used (and read) as texts. For, other than fulfilling the primary function of providing shelter to those who dwell in them, houses, and castles in particular, materialize a full range of codes belonging to social discourses of class and gender. Certainly, declaring that castles are texts—that is, forms of speech, or communicative acts through which those who “say” them or build them reveal their concerns and desire through the selection and organization in space of specific units of construction materials, according to certain codes of the language of architecture—evokes a panoply of methodological possibilities. Early modern architectural discourses provides a useful tool for the interpretation of architectural images and metaphors, for they help to articulate the class and gender constructs that served owners/builders/patrons in constructing their self-image through visual and spatial display.

²¹ Descartes aims to “deconstruct” or closely examine and contest received knowledge when he writes that “comme en abattant un vieux logis, on en réserve les démolitions pour servir à en bâtir un nouveau, ainsi, en détruisant toutes celles de mes opinions que je jugeais être mal fondées, je faisais diverses observations et acquérais plusieurs expériences, qui m’ont servi depuis à en établir de plus certaines” (61).

In this approach to interpreting castles as texts, I have adopted some of the methodology deployed by Alice T. Friedman (1992) in her analysis of Wollaton, a country house in England, which she treats as a “repository of evidence, a living record of [the] human relationships” of its inhabitants (4). As she observes,

by outliving its original occupants and accommodating new ones over successive generations, a house becomes a sort of palimpsest on which successive texts are written, some more boldly than others. Each text represents a shift in cultural norms and mental habits, expressing values and aesthetic conventions that can also be found, often much more clearly presented, in the newly constructed buildings of each period” (4).

In this sense, Friedman adds, one can “read” a building “in terms of its symbolic language (including, for example, the implications of the material of which it is made, its size, overall organization, and the presence or absence of the Orders or other surface detail)” (10). And, as any language, this architectural system is made of “size, shape, sequences, juxtapositions, boundaries—all of [which] are elements not of form but of language, subject to cultural as well as individual differences” (10). In other words, in “interpreting” a building, one can look at both its representational devices and its distribution of spaces.²²

As the wealthiest single woman in France throughout the seventeenth-century, Montpensier could use architecture to inscribe her aspirations to autonomy as much as she

²² Other historians who interpret architectural shapes as a form of language include John Onians (1988) and George Hersey (1988), both of whom focus on the multiple meanings attributed to the Orders throughout fairly long historical periods. In his introduction to *Bearers of Meaning* (1988) for example, Onians identifies the Orders as “a material means of expression for communities, groups and individuals” (3), and he adds that, “[b]etween their first appearance in ancient Greece and their eventual codification in Renaissance Italy, these forms were striking features of the buildings in which people in Western Europe formulated and developed their relationships to the gods, to each other, and to themselves; and it was often through their use that these relationships were articulated” (3). In a similar vein, Hersey sees architecture’s representational devices as former “tropes” of hunting, war, and sacrifices. Accordingly, the ancients, “at a certain point saw their temples as assemblages of the materials, including food, used in sacrifice. This vision (...) imparted to temple ornament a sacred, indeed tabooed, nature” (2). Thus, if the Orders and other representational devices are tropes or metaphors that serve to convey specific meanings, then castles, palaces, and any other building that display them can be considered as the texts in which tropes are inscribed.

did in her writings. She held sixteen nobiliary titles—some of the most prominent being those of Petite-Fille de France, sovereign Princesse de Dombes, Duchesse de Montpensier, Duchesse de Saint-Fargeau, and Comtesse d' Eu, the last of which gave her the first “pairie” of France²³—and she increased the value of her estate by buying additional land and commissioning the (re)construction of the chateaux of Saint-Fargeau, in Burgundy, Eu, in Normandy, and Choisy-le-roi, in the Paris region.²⁴ On the one hand, the choices she made in their acquisition, design, construction, landscaping, and interior decoration functioned in ways that were similar to those of the noble and royal men and women who, like Francis I and other kings, as well as the women I mention below, had commissioned castles and palaces before her in order to affirm their public identities. On the other hand, these chateaux also materialized to a great extent spaces in which to enact her aspirations to freedom and power and to perform herself as mistress of her own life.

As architectural historian Mark Girouard has noted,²⁵ the building of chateaux was a highly regimented undertaking that served, among other purposes, to affirm a lord's social

²³ Saint-Simon explains how the rank of Petite-Fille de France was created exclusively for Montpensier to mark her distinction above the princes of the blood. The rank was “plus approchant de celui des fils de France que de celui des princes du sang” (*Mémoires*, I, 980). She was “la plus riche princesse particulière d'Europe” (I, 52), and, indeed, her other titles included those of « duchesse de Chastellerault, princesse de la Roche-sur-Yon, dauphine d'Auvergne, marquise de Mazière, comtesse de Bar-sur-Seyne et de Mortain, vicomtesse d'Auge, de Domfront et de Bresse, baronne de Beaujolais, dame de Champigny, d'Argentan » (Jean Vatout, 324-5.) At her death in 1693, her fortune was estimated at 12 millions livres—a figure that, within the royal family was surpassed only by that of the Condé family's, valued at 19 million in 1715 (Vincent Pitts, 266).

²⁴ Montpensier also built a hospice in Trévoux, the main city of the principality of Dombes, of which she was the sovereign princess; the collège de Thoisse, near Trévoux; a hospital in Saint-Fargeau, a hospital and a school for girls at Eu, and several additional buildings in villages within the county of Eu, including a school for girls at Tréport, a hospice at Blangy, and another school for girls, a hospice and an orphanage at Criel. See Abbé A. Legris, *Monographies Eudoises* (1986). For the purposes of this dissertation, I have limited my analysis to her chateaux, but clearly these constructions point Montpensier's charity works, an important aspect of female patronage during this period.

²⁵ See Mark Girouard's *Life in the French Country House*. New York: A. Knopf, 2000.

status in medieval and early modern France.²⁶ In addition, the numerous treatises of architecture of that period helped to reproduce gendered notions of beauty. Indeed, early modern architectural discourse, which emerged from the revival of the architectural treatises written by Vitruvius (c. 80–70 B.C – c. 15 B.C), is grounded on an anthropocentric conception of beauty located in ancient Greek Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian Orders. These Orders correspond, respectively, to the male body, represented by the Doric’s proportions, plainness, and straight lines; the “matronly” body, which, in the Ionic Order, is reduced to fluted columns and curled volutes on its capital meant to symbolize a woman’s robes and hair curled in buns at each side of the head; and, finally, the “maiden”’s body, which in the Corinthian Order disappears altogether and is substituted by a basket of acanthus meant to represent the maiden’s dead body. In other words, although not all authors repeated it, the Vitruvian discourse on the Orders is one that either erases the female body or reduces it to its reproductive capabilities and, as a result, grants supremacy to the male.

The exclusion of women is a practice that permeates the corpus of French architectural history, where major survey texts either efface or diminish the contributions of women to the built landscape of France.²⁷ Indeed, to this day, much of the collective

²⁶ See also Alice T. Friedman (1989), who observed in her analysis of women’s lives in the country house of England, that castles, as any other architectural space, also reflect the status of women and their place in a household structure (see Friedman’s Introduction to *House and Household in Elizabethan England: Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, esp. 4-7.)

²⁷ When art historians do include women’s contributions, they tend to eschew any analysis of their roles and of their architectural choices, and confine their discussion to either passing acknowledgements of women’s patronage, mere descriptions of their buildings, or an exclusive focus on the architects who built them. The contrast between these passing remarks and the extended discussion historians make of male patrons’ roles is striking. For instance, (and this example resonates with the approach of many other historians), Henri Zerner (2003), an influential art and architecture historian, dedicates entire pages to Francis I’s role in the constructions of Chambord, Fontainebleau and other palaces, but only mentions, in passing, Catherine’s patronage, most of which he reduces to her commission of the *chapelle des Valois* and the tomb for her husband and herself. Thus, he reduces her patronage to what is considered appropriate female involvement in architecture, which is to build in homage to a woman’s male relatives. Further, his effacement of Catherine’s role operates through a deployment of the passive voice and the omissions of her name, as when he mentions that artists Francesco

awareness about the history of the hundreds of chateaux built throughout France seldom includes women as agents who, like their male counterparts, commissioned some of them and, in many cases, made important decisions regarding their location and design. Starting with Anne de Bretagne (1477-1514) and her daughter Renée de France (1510-1574), queens, princesses and noblewomen of France erected dozens of castles, palaces, churches, convents and other buildings throughout France. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these women include, among others, Anne de Pisselieu (1508-1575), Duchesse d'Estampes and Francis I's favorite, who commissioned the chateaux of Limours and Challuau (Coope, 225); Diane de Poitiers (1499-1566), Henri II's favorite, who enlarged the chateau of Chenonceau, and built the chateau of Anet; Catherine de Médicis, who undertook over seventeen architectural projects throughout the country, including the majestic palace of Tuileries; Diane de France (1538-1619), daughter of Henri II and Philippa Ducci, who built in 1584 the Hôtel d'Angoulême, which now houses the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (Pébay); Catherine de Clèves (1548-1633), duchesse de Guise, who undertook the construction of the chateau of Eu, in Normandy; Gabrielle d'Estrées (c.1570-1599), Henri IV's favorite, who had the châteaux of Challuau and Montceaux-en-Brie renovated and transformed (Hauteceur, 104; Garrison; Murat); Henriette d'Entragues (1579-1633), Gabrielle's successor as the king's favorite, who completed the construction of Verneuil (Coope, 39); Marguerite de Valois, who commissioned the Hotel de la Reine Marguerite, and its adjacent chapel and monastery for the Augustins, which today is part of the Ecole des

Primaticcio (1504-1570) and Bernard Palissy (1510-1589) had increased responsibilities after Henri's death. Although he does mention that Catherine "took an important role in government," (109) the focus of the sentence shifts back to Primaticcio, when, accordingly, "favor returned to the Italian master and, with it, increased responsibilities in an era ever more troubled by religious conflicts" (109). (See Henri Zerner's *Renaissance Art in France: The Invention of Classicism*, Paris: Flammarion, 2003, first published in French as *L'Art de la Renaissance en France*, Paris: Flammarion, 1996, 2002).

Beaux-Arts (Duplomb); Marie de Médicis, who built the palace of Luxembourg, renovated the Hotel of Luxembourg, and undertook several religious buildings (Coope; Johnson; Marrow); and Anne d'Autriche, who commissioned the Val-de-Grâce, in Paris. Women also sponsored important green spaces: the Tuileries' gardens, the Luxembourg's gardens, the Cours-la-Reine, the Parc de la Reine Marguerite, and the gardens of Chenonceau and Anet. Yet, except for one recent collection of essays and some sporadic articles and dissertations,²⁸ little has been done to explore the ways in which these women enlisted architecture to construct their identities.

In Chapter I, I examine Diane de Poitiers's chateau of Anet, Catherine de Médicis' palace of Tuileries, and Marie de Médicis' palace of Luxembourg. These buildings were neither "rounder" nor "more feminine," as initial responses to my research suggested. Rather, their structural and representational devices manifested the ways in which their patrons grappled with the gendered meaning of these forms to establish their public identities. In some cases, such as the palace of Luxembourg, for instance, the Doric order contributed to exude a "manly" strength and solidity that served the purposes of a queen who, like Marie de Médicis, was struggling to maintain a position of power as the queen mother. In Anet's case, the use of mythological figures served to display the ambiguous status of Diane de Poitiers as

²⁸ See *Patronnes et mécènes de France à la Renaissance*. ed. Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier. Saint-Etienne : Université de Saint-Etienne, 2007, a collection of essays examining female art and architectural patronage in the late fifteenth century and in the sixteenth century, including commissions undertaken by Anne de Beaujeu, Anne de Bretagne, Louise de Savoie, Marguerite de Navarre, Diane de Poitiers, Catherine de Médicis, Antoinette de Bourbon, duchesse de Guise, Christine de Lorraine, Eleanor of Austria, and the « abbesses » of Fontevraud. On Marie de Médicis, see Rosalys Coope's *Salomon de Brosse and the Development of the Classical Style in French Architecture from 1565 to 1630* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972), which focuses on the architect rather than the patron, while Deborah Marrow's *The Art of Patronage of Marie de Medicis* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982) studies art rather than architecture patronage. Finally, Nina Lewallen's dissertation, « The Aristocratic Town House in Regency Paris: Hotel du Maine et Hotel de Matignon, » Columbia University, 2000, and subsequent article, "La Duchesse du Maine: une mécène entre deux siècles." *Etudes sur le XVIIIe siècle* 31 (2003): 65-80) examine the patronage of Anne Louise Bénédicte de Bourbon, Duchesse de Maine (1676-1753).

a widow and as the king's lover, all the while asserting her power over him. Finally, in the case of the Tuileries, architectural choices point to a blurring of binaries, such as masculine/feminine, structural/ornamental, palace/garden, in an operation that perhaps reflects the fusion of roles between king and queen mother during the years of Catherine's regency and afterwards.

Besides being great examples of female architectural patronage, the palaces of Tuileries and Luxembourg inspired Montpensier's own building projects. The Tuileries was her primary residence until she was exiled, and the Luxembourg, which she visited as a child and which she later inherited through her father, appears as the inspiration for reconstructing Saint-Fargeau and for some of the choices she made in the design of Choisy-le-Roy.

In Chapter II, I explore links between Montpensier's works and those of her female predecessors, but, most important, I argue that, at the onset of her exile at Saint-Fargeau, when she found a ruined medieval fortress that reflected the utter collapse of her life, not only did she decide to rebuild it, but she also began a parallel enterprise: (re)constructing herself through this new chateau and through a life narrative that would end only a few years before her death in 1693. Written at three intervals of her life, this memoir takes her participation in the Fronde as the major topic of the first section, a love affair she had later in her life with Antonin Nompar de Caumont, comte de Lauzun (1632-1723), in the second, and her break-up with him and subsequent return of focus to herself in the last and much shorter section. In this chapter, I concentrate on the section written during her exile at Saint-Fargeau, a section in which she casts herself as a powerful woman through the narrative of her role in the Fronde, the exposure of the flaws of the men in her life, and the adoption of key female figures as role models. In architectural terms, these strategies translate into the choices of

representational and structural devices to transform the former medieval fortress into a modern courtly palace and to emphasize both her royal lineage and images of female power.

Montpensier's response to the devastating effects of exile by reclaiming her royal status does not represent a radical gesture; on the contrary, it validates and maintains the class hierarchies—and social injustices—of her times. Yet, as she turned the space of exile into a courtly chateau, she experienced a life on her own, in which she was in charge of herself and of those who depended on her, and thus reconsidered some of the norms that regulated women's lives. As a result, marriage, which she had formerly seen as the means to becoming queen, loses its appeal. It is, in fact, after this exile that she becomes an advocate of a non-conjugal (and non-sexual) life for women, and imagines, in a series of letters she exchanges with Mme de Motteville, a retreat in which men and women could live away from court and free from the constraints of marriage. These views are part of a process that starts from seeing marriage as a means to becoming a queen, evolves into privileging celibacy and autonomy, shifts to reconsider marriage again, but as an instrument for achieving love with a man of her choice, and finally resumes her earlier position of advocacy for female autonomy.

In Chapter III, I explore these stages as they correspond both to different periods of Montpensier's life and to the chateaux she commissioned. Here I claim that the Tuileries, the palace she was given at birth, represents the expectations already set for/by a woman of her rank; that Saint-Fargeau, symbolizes self-reconstruction as an autonomous woman whose views are increasingly drawn towards celibacy and chastity—a stand she reinforced with the enlargement of the chateau of Eu as well as the art she commissioned and the lifestyle she maintained there; and, finally, that Choisy-le-Roi, a palace she designed and built from scratch soon after her affair (and attempted marriage) with Lauzun, corresponds to the return

to a lifelong search to set herself free from kingly, paternal, and marital authority. As a result, the three chateaux she built in her life (Saint-Fargeau, Eu, and Choisy) represent Montpensier's varying but consistent efforts to assert herself as an autonomous person.

Finally, in Chapter IV, I analyze the ways in which Montpensier's strategies of self-construction permeate the imaginary spaces she created in the fiction she wrote between 1653 and 1661, including *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolles* (1653), *Relation de l'isle imaginaire* (1659), *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie* (1659), and in the letters she exchanged with Francoise Bertaut de Motteville²⁹ between 1660 and 1661. I argue that these spaces—a moon, an island, a faraway kingdom, and a retreat on a French riverbank—function as “doubles” of the material spaces in which Montpensier constructed herself, both in terms of class and gender. As a result, spaces such as the moon and the island serve to reinforce and legitimize her royal status, for they become the locus in which she “others” individuals who, in her view, are not worthy of the class privileges she enjoys. Similarly, spaces such as the exotic kingdom and the retreat give shape to the ideals of female autonomy and power she envisioned for herself. I support my claim not only through an analysis of these texts' characters but also by contrasting the descriptions of these imaginary spaces with some of the strategies she deployed in her chateaux.

Although Montpensier's efforts of self-construction, in her writings and in her chateaux, reveal desires and concerns that may have been particular to her, they are not far removed from the efforts—and limitations—of other women of her class and period who

²⁹ Françoise Bertaut, dame de Langlois (1621-1689), was Anne d'Autriche's most devoted lady-in-waiting. Married at eighteen with the octogenarian Nicolas Langlois de Motteville, first president of the “Chambres des comptes” of Normandy, she became a widow at twenty and never remarried. She wrote *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Anne d'Autriche, épouse de Louis XIII, roi de la France*, first published in Amsterdam in 1723 (Albert Pauphilet et al. *Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises*. Paris: Fayard, 1996 [1951]).

sought to emancipate themselves from the norms of their times and to appropriate images of power that were nonetheless rooted in ideologies that justified existing class hierarchies. Yet, Montpensier and her contemporaries still offer compelling stories with which to nourish the imagination of today's men and women who join the immemorial struggle to build paths and palaces of freedom and self-empowerment.

* * *

CHAPTER I

Rethinking Gender, Space and Architecture in Early Modern France

Critics and scholars have used various perspectives to discuss social space, architecture's representational devices, space distribution, the history of buildings, and the practice of architects and their clients or patrons. As with any discourse, these perspectives can address the power relations that structure social interactions, such as relations of class and gender. While critics have confronted the issue of class,³⁰ little work has addressed the reproduction of gender ideology in the built environment. Indeed, apart from some exceptions I discuss below, architecture theory and the history of its practice show that theories of space, architectural treatises on representational devices and space distribution, and even historical surveys of the patronage of architectural works, feature women's roles, and what some feminist critics identify as the "feminine," as decidedly marked by the containment, subordination, exclusion, and even total erasure of women.

This erasure can be traced as far back as Plato's *Timaeus*, a text that aims to explain the origin of the universe, and in so doing, portrays women as reincarnations of men whose behavior in a previous life merited the punishment of a female body, and, as feminist critics, such as Ann Bergren (1992) and Elizabeth Grosz (1995), have argued, also erases "the contributions of women, femininity and the maternal" (Grosz, 55). Such erasure, Grosz

³⁰ See Edward Soja's *Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989) and David Harvey's many publications, including *Social Justice and the City* (1973), *Limits to Capital* (1982), *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (1996), and *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (2003), for a discussion of urban spaces in terms of class and socio-economic power relations. For an analysis of how representational devices, such as the Orders, were used to mark an allegiance to constructs of race, class, regionalisms, and nationalisms from Antiquity to the early modern period, see John Onians's *Bearers of Meaning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). See below my brief discussion of early modern treatises of architecture that addresses the correspondence between dimensions and forms of palatial and princely houses and their owners' positions in social hierarchies.

observes, has been “the foundation or ground on which a thoroughly masculine universe is built” (55). Both Bergren and Grosz locate the “feminine” in Plato’s concept of *chôra*, which they see as merely a vessel or receptacle caught within a narrative of “conjugal subordination of Necessity by Intelligence,” an “intercourse” in which Being engenders Becoming (by making copies of the Same) through “the *triton genos* ‘third kind, kindred, gender’ –*chôra*” (Bergren 22). As such, *chôra* cannot “write or draw or imprint or build these Types (on) herself” (23) and thus, has no impact over the “types” she receives. As a result, *chôra* is always in a state of absolute ‘passification’ (27-28).³¹

Bergren and Grosz also denounce, to varying degrees, the failure of recent male theorists either to foreground the role of women and the “feminine” or to contest the gender bias implicit in Plato’s views of space and universe. In this sense, Bergren argues Derrida’s article “Chôra” (1993) not only fails to address *chôra*’s ‘passification’ to deconstruct classical ontology, but in fact it reproduces Plato’s exclusion of the “feminine” as he places *chôra* outside the binaries that structure Plato’s system.³² As a result, Derrida reproduces the elimination of the one power women have within the generative process, which is the

³¹ Grosz, too, identifies an erasure of the maternal in Plato’s metaphor of birth when she argues that despite the paradox of only designating *chôra* “by ‘its,’ by ‘her’,” function: to hold, nurture, bring into the world,” it is “[n]either an ‘it’ nor a ‘she,’ *chôra* has neither existence nor becoming. Not to procreate or produce – this is the function of the father, the creator, god, the Forms – but to nurse, to support, surround, protect, incubate, to sort, or engender – the worldly offspring of the Forms. *Chôra*’s function is a neutral, traceless production, a production that leaves no trace of its contributions and thus allows the product to speak indirectly of its creator without the need to acknowledge its incubator (50). As Grosz explains, these functions and characteristics of the *chôra* are the same that the Greeks have always attributed to ‘femininity,’ which is not just “an abstract representation of generic features (softness, nurturance, etc.), but is also derived from the attributes culturally bestowed on women themselves, and in this case, particularly, the biological function of gestation” (51).

³² Bergren writes: “Derrida argues that *chôra* as the third ontological *genos* ‘kind, kindred, gender’ cannot belong to either member of any opposition (including that of gender, ‘female’ versus ‘male’), since oppositions belong to the other two ontological kinds, Being and Becoming. For *chôra* as ‘place’ of inscription ‘gives place’ to intelligible and sensible oppositions, but is herself always outside of them. She bears no property of Being or Becoming. Nothing can be predicated of *chôra*. Thus anything said of *chôra* should be put under some form of erasure, enclosing it in quotation marks or over-marking it with a slash-sign (/), for example. No pronouns or definite articles, whether feminine or neuter, are appropriate to ‘her/it.’” (28).

authenticity and legitimacy of the offspring (27-28). Grosz, on the other hand, offers a more lenient reading of Derrida, and admits that his deconstructive approach implies a “rethinking [of] the requirements of those oppositions that have structured architecture to the present: figure and ground, form and function, ornament and structure, theory and practice; and, most particularly, both architectural consumerism (...) and architectural functionalism” (53). This rethinking, Grosz claims, would bring about a reconceptualization of space that is not so far removed from the concerns of feminist philosophers who have addressed architectural theory and practice.³³

Bergren’s and Grosz’s critique resonate with Mary McLeod (1996)’s observation that much of the recent theoretical discussions of “otherness” and “other” spaces by postmodern architectural theorists have ignored the place of historical, “flesh-and-blood” women (8-9). Such theorists, McLeod notes, are broadly divided into those who follow Derrida’s approach and those who explore the more historical conception of “heterotopia” deployed by Foucault in *Des espaces autres* (1967) (McLeod 2-3).³⁴ The first group aims to develop an architectural equivalent of Derridean *différance* by re-valorizing the second term of the binary oppositions that have traditionally structured architectural discourse. In other words, “otherness,” to these theorists, is a linguistic or formal aspect of architecture, with few implications for the historical persons traditionally considered as “other.”

³³ With some reservations as to the relevance of Derrida’s work to feminist concerns, Grosz links his rethinking of space to Luce Irigaray’s texts, which, she argues, are directly related to the understanding of the built environment (53).

³⁴ These theorists, McLeod writes: “claim that by revealing how binary oppositions such as form and content or structure and decoration are inscribed within a seemingly fixed, hierarchical structure and then eroded by the second or subordinate term in the opposition, the value system of architecture itself is eroded and put into flux. The second term is then seen as a condition of possibility for the whole system. For the most part, these theorists view the “secondary,” the “other,” as something largely internal to architecture. They assert that binary oppositions in architecture can be undone, or dismantled from within, through an investigation of the object (2).

The “Foucauldian” group of architectural thinkers, on the other hand, champions a view that also fails to include the female “other.”³⁵ Foucault’s examination of the power/knowledge that structures prisons, hospitals, museums, theaters, brothels, colonies and cemeteries does not include, McLeod shows, “the residence, the workplace, the street, the shopping center, and the more mundane areas of everyday leisure, such as playgrounds, parks, sporting fields, restaurants, and cafés (...) all the messy, in-between urban spaces that might be considered literally heterotopic (...)” (6-7). Consequently, Foucault’s notion of heterotopias excludes “all the traditional arenas of women and children—two of the groups that most rightly deserve (if by now one can abide the term’s universalizing effect) the label of ‘other’” (10).³⁶

Still, inclusion of the “feminine” does not necessarily mean its valorization—indeed, when included, its function has mostly been to occupy the negative side of a binary that grants supremacy to what are perceived as inherently masculine qualities. From Antiquity to early modernity at least, this subordination can be found in architectural treatises dealing with both the distribution of spaces and representational devices.³⁷ In her analysis of the

³⁵ McLeod classifies as Derridean Peter Eisenmann, Mark Wigley, Andrew Benjami, Geoff Bennington, Jeffrey Kipnes, and Bernard Tschumi, and as Foucauldians Anthony Vidler, Demetri Porphyrios, Aaron Betsky, Catherine Ingraham, and Edward Soja (1996, 1-2).

³⁶ McLeod also examines theorists of everyday life spaces such as Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre, and observes, de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980) is “strangely silent on the issue of women (except for one female *flâneur* in his chapter “Walking the City”)” (13). As to Lefebvre’s text, its argument that consumption has been “both [woman’s] demon and liberator” with the means to grant her “entry and power in the public sphere” has been debated by feminist theorists such as Janet Wolff, Elizabeth Wilson, Anne Friedberg, and Kristen Ross in their “emphasis on pleasure, the intensification of sensory impressions, and the positive excesses of consumption as experiences that counter the webs of control and monotony in daily life” (15).

³⁷ These treatises also reproduce constructs of class. As John Onians shows in *Bearers of Meaning*, associations of architecture with class can be traced back to Saint-Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-74). In his *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* and *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas responded to those who, like Jerome and Saint Bernard, had criticized the building of lavish temples and equated them to mere expressions of human vainglory. Saint-Thomas reformed the position of the Church in regards to architecture by drawing from

vocabulary of gender in architectural discourse from Vitruvius to the modern day, Mary McLeod (1994) observes how in Book Four of his *De Architectura* (first century B.C.), the Roman architectural theorist compares the Doric order to “the strength and beauty of the body of a man,” the Ionic to the matronly woman, and the Corinthian to the body of the young maiden (McLeod 41). Vitruvius’s association of the male body with simplicity, nudity, and brute strength, and of the female body with adornment and clothes, McLeod maintains, is a juxtaposition that has “persisted into twentieth-century architectural rhetoric” (42). Yet, she adds, it is not until the end of the seventeenth century that these descriptions of the Orders begin to adopt a “moralistic and judgmental tone” to become, by the eighteenth

Aristotle’s argument, in *Ethics*, IV, 2, that the greatest works of architecture were first those dedicated to the gods, second, those for the common good, and third, those for the individual. Onians points out that, for Aristotle, “of those [buildings] undertaken for the individual one of the best was the building of a house appropriate to a man’s wealth; and, in general, expenditure on permanent things was to be preferred. Large-scale expenditure on building, whether for God, for the state, or even for oneself, was thus no longer damnable but desirable; for if the rich and powerful man did not spend money in this way he would be liable to the charge of meanness” (123-24). Thus, as Onians concludes, Aquinas was able to turn into a virtue what earlier Christian fathers had spurned as a vice. Certainly, Aquinas’ reform favored the emerging class of merchants, especially in his native Italy, where the expansion of trade, production and banking increased the wealth and status of merchants and despots, albeit without the validation of a feudal system like the one in the north of Europe. As a result of the reform, Onians argues, merchants could now have “a remarkable degree of freedom to give expression to their ambitions, which increasingly received architectural expression as they sought through buildings to give permanence to their unstable positions. The “house” became as never before the emblem of permanent power and was marked as such by arms and inscriptions.” (124). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this use of architecture to express an individual’s status is addressed in Alberti’s *De Re Aedificatoria* (1452), subsequently translated into French by Jean Martin in 1553, and Filarete (c.1400-c.1469)’s *Trattato di architettura* (1464). Alberti discusses social organization (Livre IV) and argues that there are buildings “expressement batiz pour recevoir l’assemblée de toute une commune, d’autres pour les grans personnaiges constituez sur le gouvernement de la police, & outré cela certains autres pour la tourbe du populaire, a chacun selon sa qualité, ayant (ce me semble) absolu ce qui est requis pour le tout” (Livre V, I, 75). Further, not only does he classify buildings according to the rank of those who occupy them, but he prescribes their interior spaces to be arranged according to the hierarchies that separate masters from servants, as when he argues that “les salles hautes au dedans et chambres secretes (...) seront distinguees en sorte que la communication et hantement des hostes ou servans avec les ordinaires ou domestiques, ne vienne a diminuer aux uns leur dignité, aisance, ou plaisir; & a augmenter aux autres leur insolence & incivilité” (IV, 2, 77). See additional discussion in the Conclusion of this dissertation.

century, a discourse in which “femininity tend[s] to be associated (...) with change, fashion, capriciousness, play, artifice, frivolity, charm, delicacy, ornament, and masquerade” (43).³⁸

Still, a close reading of a 1547 French translation of Vitruvius’s text by Jean Martin (1507-1553) reveals that the binary structure inherent in the Orders—by the attribution of physical strength and solidity to the male, and adornment and decoration to the female—does provide the ground, if not for moralistic overtones, then certainly for misogynistic connotations. This binary remained unchallenged until 1672, when Claude Perrault³⁹ (1613-1688) published a new translation of Vitruvius (1673), filled with footnotes that questioned the absoluteness of fundamental conceptions such as beauty and Proportion, and provided re-definitions that eliminated the gender bias.

Thus, Vitruvius does not exclude the “feminine” —as Bergren and Grosz argue about Plato’s philosophy of space—but to the contrary, as he grounds his architectural discourse on the Orders, he *must include* the “feminine” in a hierarchy that serves to maintain masculine supremacy. In this chapter, I examine how this inclusion of the “feminine” (and thus a

³⁸ McLeod provides an excellent example of this moralistic and judgmental tone by quoting a letter (1665) from English designer, astronomer, mathematician, and architect Christopher Wren (1632-1723), in which he complained that “the Women, as they make here the Language and Fashions, and meddle with Politics and Philosophy, so they sway also in Architecture; but Building certainly ought to have the Attribute of eternal, and therefore the only Thing incapable of new Fashions” (42). This letter, which reveals objections to women’s participation in architecture as well as in politics and philosophy, assigns to women the attributes of change, fashion, and the ephemeral, while men are associated with eternity and stability.

³⁹ Claude Perrault (1613-1688), a medical doctor and a biologist, was a member of the Académie Royale des Sciences (1666) and a founding member of the Académie Royale d’Architecture (1671). He often collaborated with two of his four brothers: Charles Perrault, the author of fairy tales and of the *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, published in 1688, the same year of Claude’s death, and Nicolas Perrault (1624-1662), a physicist and a Jansenist theologian who further developed the Cartesian understanding of the universe, and with whom Claude wrote *Essais de physique* (published in 1680-1688.) (See Alberto Pérez-Gómez’s Introduction to his edition of Claude Perrault’s *Ordonnance des cinq espèces de colonnes selon la méthode des anciens*, translated by Indra Kagis McEwen, Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Arts and the Humanities, 1993). According to Pérez-Gómez, “the Perrault brothers held a prominent position in the intellectual hierarchy of Louis XIV’s reign, and it was through Charles’s influence with Jean-Baptiste Colbert that Claude Perrault’s architectural activity was furthered” (5). Thanks to this influence, Claude was commissioned by Colbert to design the eastern wing of the Louvre, the Observatoire, which became the seat of the Académie Royale des Sciences, and an obelisk dedicated to Louis XIV.

gendered binary) is embedded in the discourse on spaces and shapes of several French architectural treatises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that followed the Vitruvian model, and I explain how Perrault's treatises, in challenging ancient authority, undermine this hierarchy and eliminate the vocabulary of gender from architectural discourse. I then examine the disconnections between discourse and practice, particularly in some of the architectural projects commissioned by women of this period as they appropriated, circumvented, and/or manipulated these dichotomies when using the language of architecture to assert themselves within their particular social and political contexts.

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Vitruvius's Bodies and Shapes: Looking Closely at Fluids and Feet

Vitruvius's *De Architectura*, the first treatise to address theoretical and practical aspects of the discipline, was not entirely unknown in the Middle Ages, but was "re-discovered," discussed, and translated into Italian versions that informed the practice of French architects and patrons until 1547, when Jean Martin (1507-1553), a humanist, translator and secretary to the Cardinal Lenoncourt, translated the treatise into French. Dedicated to Henri II and illustrated by Jean Goujon,⁴⁰ Martin's translation was re-printed

⁴⁰ Jean Goujon (1510-1575), an important sculptor and architect of the period, worked for Diane de Poitiers, building a monument to her belated husband at Rouen (Blunt 77) and several sculpted works for her chateau at Anet (Roussel 153-4). At Ecouen, he also worked on the construction of a chateau for the Connétable de Montmorency (Blunt 77). As a sculptor to the king, he collaborated with architect Pierre Lescot (1510-1578) at the Louvre (44). Goujon is also responsible for the engravings of Jean Martin's translation of Francesco Colonna's *Le Songe de Poliphile* (1546), a utopian text filled with architectural descriptions (63). A Huguenot, he left France in 1562. See his drawing of the Orders in Appendix A (Fig. 4).

several times throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the following pages, all references to Vitruvius are taken from this translation.

According to Vitruvius, beauty, the third of his architectural principles—*firmitas*, *utilitas* and *venustas*—is based on the notion of Order or “ordonnance,” a concept that Martin’s translation renders as “une commodité des *membres de l’ouvrage*, & [...] modèle faict apart correspondent en symmetrie a toute la masse du bastiment: & cela se compose de *quantité*, que les Grecs disent Posotis” (I, iiii, 6). Order, thus, means “Proportion,” as in the *quantitative* relation between the parts and the whole—in a building and in a human body.⁴¹ However, since “ordonnance,” from the Latin “ordinatio” (meaning order or the organization of things) also establishes categories and differences, in this case, not only between the parts and the whole of a building but also among the types of people or deities who dwell in them or to whom these buildings are dedicated, then the Vitruvian notion of Order carries implications that are both aesthetic and socio-political. Aesthetically, it implies a concept of absolute beauty rooted in a fixed ideal given from above and manifest in the human body; politically, it creates a hierarchy of gendered identities that privileges the male. At least, this is what Vitruvius’s prescription for the use of the Orders in sacred temples implies in the symbolic and social organization they establish:

Mais quand l’on edifie a la façon Dorique pour Minerve, Mars, ou Hercules, il fault que ce soit sans *mignotize*: autrement cela *repugneroit* a la *force & vertu* de leurs divinitez. Si c’est pour Venus, Flora, Proserpine, ou quelques Nymphes de Fontaines, qu’il faille edifier des Temples, ilz requierent la mode Corinthienne, d’autant qu’elle en ses proprietiez est garnie des *delices* convenables a ces Deesses, veu mesmement que pour exprimer *leurs natures delicates*, on fait toutes ses parties plus simples & *moins fortes* que les precedentes, & davantage l’on les orne de *fleurs, feuillages, volutes ou tortillemens*, en quoy la grace & iuste decoration est observee. Si c’est a Iuno, a Diane, a Bacchus, & autres semblables l’on leur fera des temples Ioniques,

⁴¹ It is not until the seventeenth century that “proportion” acquires the significance we now ascribe to the modern concept of “symmetry.”

afin de tenir *le moyen* : car l'ordre Ionique temperera uniquement *la severité* du Dorique, & la *mignardise* de celui de Corinthe : & par ainsi sera entretenue bonne & vraye propriété (I, iiii, 7, *my emphasis*).

Here, the Orders are assigned to anthropomorphic deities organized in terms of a masculine/feminine dichotomy. Gods of war such as Minerva and Mars and the hero Hercules embody the masculine, whereas deities connected to nature and fertility stand for the feminine. The fact that Minerva and Bacchus are both included in the opposite-gender camp implies that abstract attributes such as “feminine” and “masculine” do not need to correspond to female or male bodies. Minerva’s masculinity stems from being a goddess of war and of rational power, having sprung out of Jupiter’s head rather than from a mother’s womb, and remaining an effective guardian of her chastity—thus never falling prey to male desire. As such, she is neither a sex object nor a maternal figure. Bacchus, on the other hand, is a much messier creature, primarily associated with fertility, madness, excess, fluids and the disorderly.⁴² Placing him along with female deities not only reproduces mythical connections between Bacchus and female figures, but also relegates to the category of the “feminine” the traits he stands for.

As McLeod had observed, in Vitruvius’s sequence, severely straight, simple, and clean lines, “sans mignotize” (Martin’s translation for the Latin “sine deliciis”) best represent

⁴² According to Harry Thurston Peck’s *Harper’s Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1965), this son of Jupiter and the mortal Semele was the god of “luxuriant fertility, especially as displayed by the vine; and therefore the god of wine (...) After [his mother’s] death [due to Hera’s jealousy], the nymphs of Mount Nysa (...) brought him up and hid him in a cave (...) As the god of the earth, Dionysus belongs, like Persephone, to the world below as well as to the world above (...) Festivals (...) in celebration of the extinction and resurrection of the deity were held by women and girls only, amid the mountains at night, every third year, about the time of the shortest day. The rites, intended to express the excess of grief and joy at the death and reappearance of the god, were wild even to savagery, and the women who performed them were hence known by the expressive names of Bacchae, Maenads, and Thyades. They wandered through the woods and mountains, their flying locks crowned with ivy or snakes, brandishing wands and torches, to the hollow sounds of the drum and the shrill notes of the flute, with wild dances and insane cries and jubilation.” (524-5).

the masculine might of the Doric order. In the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French, “mignotise,” or “mignotize,”⁴³ was associated with “mignot” or mignon, and meant “pretty dainties”, “trinkets”, “fine toys”, “affected delights”, but also a “dandling, fedling, cockering, cherishing, gentle handling, tender usage; also, wantonnesse, tamenesse, gentleness” (Cotgrave). Similarly, “mignardise” denoted “quaintnesse, neatnesse, daintinesse, delicacie, wantonnesse” (Cotgrave)—terms that point to both feminine prettiness and sensual activities, as well as to the performative quality of so-called “feminine” behaviors such as “affectation,” daintiness and delicateness. Further, the pejorative connotation implied in the diminutive endings of these terms underscores the lower moral status that the term “repugneroit” brings forth. In other words, “mignotizes” and “mignardises” refer to qualities that are hierarchically inferior and morally opposed to the manly “force & vertu.”

Vitruvius’s second category includes goddesses connected with nature and fertility: Venus, the goddess of beauty and love, but also a deity of the sea, gardens, groves, springs, plants and flowers (*Harper* 96); Flora, a deity of flowers; Proserpine, a goddess of fertility that ruled the seasons of the year; and the fountain nymphs or Naiads, the goddesses of the “nourishing and fructifying water,” nurturing “plants, herds, and mortals,” also considered as guardians of marriage and caretakers of children of the gods (*Harper* 1116). As such they are best represented by adornments (flowers and foliage) evoking nature and fertility, and by soft, curved lines (“volutés” and “tortillemens”), which suggests fluidity.

⁴³ Furetière defines “mignotise” as “flatterie, caresse qu’on fait à quelqu’un. Un amant gagne sa maîtresse par mille petites mignotises et flatteries. Les vieillards aussi bien que les enfants aiment fort les mignotises, les caresses.” (s.v. “mignotise.”) Thus associated with female lovers, children and old people, the term carries connotations of both frivolity, frailty, and sexuality. As to “mignardise,” Furetière defines it as “délicatesse de quelque chose, soit qu’elle vienne de la nature, ou de l’art.” (s.v. “mignardise”).

The third group supposedly represents a “middle” or moderate ground but in fact, again, it is a mixed category populated by male and female figures, all of them evoking nature and fertility: Juno is the goddess of family and—as Jupiter’s wife—the matron par excellence; Diana, although a chaste hunter, lives in the wilderness (mountains, valleys, woods and meadows) and is associated with assisting child-birth (*Harper* 136); Bacchus, on the other hand, far from standing for moderation, is the god of wine and “luxuriant fertility,” and is usually represented, as seen above, in a “soft and feminine shape,” surrounded by animals, and covered with vines and ivy (*Harper* 525). This mixed category representing motherhood, chastity, and excess at once meshes together qualities that are attributed to the “feminine,” even as they conflict with one another.

Vitruvius’s narrative of the “origin” of the Orders displays a similarly organized hierarchy. According to him, the masculine Doric order came first, when Dorus, son of the patriarch Hellen and a nymph, and king of Achaea and the Peloponese, built a temple of this style in Argos. The people of the region followed his example, called the style “Doric” (IV, i, 46) and then:

Quand ilz y voulurent dresser des colonnes, ces bonnes gens ne sachans queles symmetries ilz leur devoient donner, mais cherchans les practiques pour en venir about, mesmement par ce qu’ilz desiroient les faire fortes, & commodes a supporter grand fardeau, avec ce qu’elles eussent bonne grace, & se rendissent agreables a la veue : ilz se prindrent a mesurer l’impression de la plante du pied d’un homme : & trouvens que ceste mesure faisoit une sixieme partie de sa haulteur, ilz donnerent ceste proportion a leurs colonnes (...) Voyla comment la colonne Dorique fut premierement formée sur la proportion du corps de l’homme, mais depuis elle commença d’estre pour belle & ferme usitée en bastimens (IV, i, 46-8).

Thus the Doric, standing for the beginning of architecture itself, is modeled on an ideal male body whose beauty is articulated not only in terms of clean, straight and severe lines, as seen earlier, but also on the relation between its height and the size of its foot. Thus shaped by,

centered on, and measured by the male body, the beauty conceived in this passage becomes inherently gendered. Moreover, to further emphasize the perfection of the male body demonstrated in mathematical terms (i.e. quantitative proportions), Vitruvius employs visually efficacious geometrical shapes (i.e. circles and squares):

Or le centre ou point du mylieu du corps de l'homme, est naturellement le nombril : car si ledict homme estoit couché tout plat, ayant les piedz & les mains estendues, puis que l'on meist une iambe du compas sur icelluy nombril, & qu'on allast de l'autre faisant un rond, la ligne de la circumferance toucheroit iustement aux extremittez des doys de ses piedz & de ses mains. Encores tout ainsi qu'il fait la figure ronde, ne plus ne moins se treuve en luy la parfaitement quarree : car si lon mesure depuis la plante des piedz iusques au plus hault de la teste, & que l'on tire une pareille ligne par-dessus ses mains estendues, lon trouvera que ceste la sera autant large que l'autre est longue, & que lon en pourra former le quarré perfect aussi bien que des choses plates esquarries au moyen de la regle. Si donc nature a en tele sorte composé le corps de l'homme, a savoir que tous les membres correspondent par proportions a sa iuste figure : il semble que les antiques n'ont sans bonne cause ordonné que pour rendre les ouvrages en perfection, toutes les especes de mesure y estans requises, ayent en chacun de leurs membres une convenance legitime (III, i, 28-9).

This passage establishes the geometrical perfection (per= thorough; fectum= done; that is, thoroughly completed) of the male body by means of two figures that are intrinsically perfect: the circle, which is a curved line thoroughly completed unto itself, and the square, which is an area whose altitude and latitude are equal. Vitruvius's apparently innocuous geometrical explanation conceals an ideal of beauty that is both anthropo- and phallocentric, as two tools of geometry can easily demonstrate. A compass, acting as a dual vertical limb erected from the "nombril," draws the circle around the body in a gesture that, as it aligns the center of the circle with the navel of man, creates a perfectly male-centered universe. For the square, two straight diagonal lines drawn over a ruler from each of its opposite corners will show that its center converges exactly on the man's genital (Fig. 1 Appendix A).

The phallocentric perfection of the Vitruvian man, represented in Leonardo Da Vinci's famous drawing, reappears in several subsequent sixteenth-century illustrations of

Vitruvius's text. In Martin's translation, for instance, Goujon's drawings show a man standing (instead of lying on his back with extended limbs) on a background grid whose center also lies on the penis (Figs. 2 and 3 Appendix A).

Vitruvius's narrative about the origin of the Orders succeeds equally well in establishing the supremacy of man already demonstrated in mathematical and geometrical terms. For instance, while the Doric order has been endowed with a lengthy story of its invention and propagation, the Ionic order is presented as a modification of the first Order, without an etiology of its own:

Quelques temps après le plaisir de ces Ioniens fut d'edifier encores un temple à Diane : parquoy cherchans une facon nouvelle, ilz par semblable invention transporterent la *gayeté* feminine a l'usage des colonnes, & tendrent la grosseur de leurs tiges d'une huictieme partie de la haulteur, afin qu'elles eussent une espee plus relevee. En la base ilz supposerent la *Spire ou Bozel en lieu de soulier* : & au chapiteau colloquerent des *volute*s comme perruques ou *chevellures crespes entortillees* & *pendantes* tant d'un costé que d'autre : puis enrichirent leurs frontz de cymaises ou doulcines, les *ornant* de beaux *festons de feuillages* pour représenter une *teste de femme bien ornee*. En oultre, tout al'entour du corps de la colonne depuis le hault iusques au bas, feirent des *canelures creuses*, afin d'exprimer les *pliz des vestemens des dames*. Et ainsi avec deux inventions differentes pervindrent a l'effect de leur desir, considéré qu'ilz en formerent (...) une sur la facon du corps masle, (& ceste là *nue de tous ornemens*) puis l'autre sur la delicature de la femme, quilz *parerent de beaux ouvrages* (IV, i, 48, *my emphasis*).

As in a biblical Genesis, the 'matronly' Order appears only secondarily, taking the already existing male column, curving its lines and displacing the focus from certain body parts.

While the male body represents austere beauty and strength, the female offers "gayté." And far from being severe, straight, clean, and erect, the Ionic lines are concave, convex, curled, volute-like, fluted, folded, disorderly, and "pendants." The column displays "cannelures creuses," hollow or sunken grooves representing the "pliz" or folds of ladies' robes, and topped with "chevellures crespes entortillees," curly, twisted, wrapped-up hair—a description that might even evoke pubic hair. The female head is then adorned with "cymaises ou

doulcines,”—figures in the shape of vases, perhaps reminders of the domestic functions assigned to women—and “festons” or garlands, symbols of fertility. Her foot, unlike man’s, is appropriately enclosed by a “Spire ou Boze en lieu de soulier,” that is, convex moldings representing the shoe.⁴⁴ In other words, while the male body is signified by the exposed navel, penis and feet, the female is marked by the hair and the folds of robes that cover her body and assign her the status of matron. Throughout, man is bare in all his splendor, woman is chastely covered and hidden.

Yet, the female body is not the only thing concealed in Vitruvius—so are her stories. The only instance in which a woman’s legend seems worth telling is to relate how her death inspires male architects:

Mais la troysieme espece de colonnes qui est dicte Corinthienne, fut faicte a l’imitation du gent corps de quelque pucelle, pource que les filles en leur aage tendre sont de membres graisles & menuz, tellement que quand elles sont bien *parees*, leurs personnes s’en monstrent beaucoup plus belles, & d’apparence plus exquise. Au regard du chapiteau de cest ordre, lon dict que son invention fut tele.

Une vierge Corinthienne estant en aage d’estre mariee, fut surprise de quelque maladie dont a la fin la mort s’en ensuyvit. Quoy voyant sa norrice, après sa sepulture assembla tous les vases ausquelz la fille en son vivant souloit prendre delectation, & les meit en un panier: puis les porta dessus son monument: ou afin qu’ilz se gardassent plus longtemps au vent & a la pluye, *les couvrit d’une tuyle*. Ce panier fut d’avanture pose sur une racine d’Acanthe, ou Branque Ursine: & par succession de temps, pour estre icelle racine *pressee du fardeau*, environ le printemps getta ses tiges qui croysoient al’entour du panier, mais estant *rabatues* par les coingz de la tuyle, force leur fut de *se courber contre bas*, comme lon veoit faire a rouleaux ou cartoches. Ce temps pendant, Callimachus,⁴⁵ qui pour l’excellence & subtilité de son art en matiere de taille de Marbre, avoit esté par les Atheniens surnommé Catatechnos, c’est a dire homme industrieux & plein d’artifice, passant de fortune par aupres de ceste sepulture, *getta sa veue sur le panier*, & sur la tige d’ou procedoient ces feuilles: a quoy *prenant plaisir*, & *se delectant* en la nouveauté de tele forme,

⁴⁴ In his footnotes to Vitruvius’s *De Architectura*, Perrault explains that the term “Spire” comes from the Latin “spira” which means “les replis d’un serpent quand il est couché en rond, ou ceux d’un cable de navire qui est plié” (74, footnote 3). Thus, again, the shape is clearly that of a curled and folded figure.

⁴⁵ Callimachus, architect and sculptor of the second half of the 5th century B.C., lived and worked in Athens and Corinth.

feict a la semblance de cela puis après des colonnes aux Corinthiens, & leur ordonna symmetries convenables, assignant les moyens pour conduire les oeuvres en perfection, suyvant ceste espece de Corinthe (IV, i, 49-50, *my emphasis*)

In this passage, death, woman and nature sustain life, the male architect, and architecture itself. Twice silenced through anonymity and death, the virgin female provides a deceased body (or sepulture) on which the male architect can create a new Order (or sculpture.) Buried under the plant of acanthus, with her body covered by a tile, pressed down by its weight and penetrated by the roots of the plant, she yields the shoots and leaves that will replace her body in the column that is meant to represent her. The reference to the architect/sculptor's gaze reinforces the sexual innuendo as he “getta sa veue sur le pannier” and created the new Order out of the pleasure he took —“prenant plaisir & se delectant,”— from the sight of the foliage. Further, far from growing erect and dignified, like the male, the leaves representing the virgin body sprout “rabattues” and “coub[ées] contre bas,” curved and facing downwards, as if evoking the physical expression of reverence performed by someone in a socially or symbolically inferior position. Finally, while the passage intends to relate how a sculptor invented the third Order “a l'imitation du gent corps de quelque pucelle,” he never actually sees this body. The passage has thus effectively buried, hidden, and denied the female body of any possible agency within the narrative.

As in the mathematical and geometrical accounts, Vitruvius's narrative carries an inevitably gendered notion of beauty. The male body represents a primary, monumental form that can stand on its own, while the female body stands for a secondary, inferior, and decorative beauty that, like Eve, depends on the former to exist. Indeed, monuments can stand without adornments but no adornments can exist separate from the monument.

This gendered dichotomy permeates the entire treatise, not only in sections relating to the Orders, but also in passages that are conceptually grafted on oppositions such as solidity vs. softness. The opposition is furthered gendered when Vitruvius uses a language that evokes the human body when he faults the excess of moisture for robbing the mortar of its strength (II, viii). Similarly, when discussing trees and their use for construction, Vitruvius adopts a humoral language as if he were writing about human bodies. He instructs:

que l'on taille la tige de l'arbre iusques a la seve, & qu'on le laisse (...) dessecher ses humeurs. Ce faisant, *la liqueur inutile* qui flue du cueur aux racines, ne se convertira iamais en *putrefacion*: & la qualité de la matiere n'aura moyen de *se corrompre*. Quand ledict arbre sera sec, il le faudra mettre par terre: & ainsi se trouvera bon pour appliquer en usage de charpenterie (...) car quand ilz sont en leur deue saison *chatrez ou percez par le pied*, ilz espendent par les pertuiz & gettent hors de leurs moelles, *la mauvaise & superabondante humidité* qu'ilz contiennent: parquoy venans a se dessecher, en acquierent plus longue duree. Mais au regard des arbres qui n'ont point *d'emonctoires pour se purger*, les humeurs croissants en leurs tiges, se viennent a *putrifier*, de sorte qu'elles les rendent *inutiles & corrompuz* (II, ix, 25, my emphasis).

These instructions, which bring to mind medical techniques for bleeding the human body, are laden with terms such as “humeurs,” “liqueur inutile,” “putrefaction,” “mauvaise et superabondante humidité,” “putrifier,” “inutiles & corrompuz,” reflecting the view that excessive fluids, in trees as in human bodies, should be feared and avoided since they are not only useless and excessive but also lead to putrefaction. Martin’s language gains misogynistic overtones in his translation of Vitruvius’s comparison of trees to pregnant women:

Quand doncques leurs conduictz sont ouverz, & toutes leurs parties humectees par le temps, il n'est pas bon de les couper, a raison qu'iceulx leurs conduictz ne se peuvent puis après resserer, ains sont comme les corps des femmes enceintes, lesquelz ne sont estimez sains & entiers depuis le temps de leur conception iusques après la delivrance (II, ix, 24).

In other words, moisture and fluids linked to fertility—both in trees and women—result in fragility and weakness. The connection lies not just in terms of the “health” of trees and

women, but also in terms of the saps and “conduit” in trees, which are, in his comparison, the equivalent of canals and vaginal fluids in women. Consistent with his account of the Orders, Vitruvius links the female body to nature and fertility—a moment in life when he deems the female body incomplete and unhealthy.

In sum, Vitruvius’s hierarchy of values associates strength, health and durability—the aim of the ideal architectural endeavor—with the masculine, and links their opposite—weakness, fragility, and disease—with the feminine. This hierarchy overlaps with that of the two kinds of beauty embedded in his conception of the Orders: the masculine, austere and monumental grace, and the feminine, coquettish and decorative delicacy.⁴⁶ In what follows, I examine sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries architectural treatises that followed and/or challenged the hierarchies established by Vitruvius.

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From the Body to the Minute: Early Modern Treatises of Architecture

Jean Martin’s translation of Vitruvius was part of a larger project that served to transmit Italian Renaissance thought into French. These works included Martin’s translations of the first two books (1545) and the fifth book (1547) of Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554)’s treatises on architecture; and *De Re Aedificatoria* (1553), a treatise by humanist and architect Leon Batista Alberti (1404-1472). Both authors rework Vitruvius’s ideas and adapt them to

⁴⁶ Further, the dichotomy that separates the “masculine” and the “feminine” in the Orders reappears, in traditional art and architectural history books, in the gendered hierarchy that differentiates the Classic from the Baroque—the Classic being identified, like the Doric order, with straight, clean and severe lines, while the Baroque is associated with curly, disorderly, concave and convex, and profuse lines.

their historical context.⁴⁷ In their treatises, gender constructs of space surface in different ways than in Vitruvius's: for the Orders, they maintain Vitruvius anthropocentric conception, but whereas Serlio reproduces almost entirely Vitruvius's identification of each Order with either the male, the matronly, or the maiden, Alberti associates them with people belonging to either the upper, the middle or the lower classes.⁴⁸ At the same time, following Vitruvius's prescription of assignment of temples to the gods, both Alberti and Serlio assign interior space in terms of gender. Accordingly, for Alberti, a house is mainly designed to serve its lord or the father of the family, and therefore all its compartments should lead to him. Thus, the palace of a great lord should not only be much larger to accommodate those who have dealings with him, but it should also be built "au lieu plus apparent que l'on pourra choisir

⁴⁷ According to Onians, one of the most important changes achieved by Alberti was that, if "for Vitruvius and other writers a building had been an integrated whole from the finest carving on its surface to the unformed rubble of its core," to Alberti, it had to be treated by addressing separately *utilitas* and *pulchritudo/ornamentum*, a dichotomy that he drew from Cicero's moral distinction between *honestas* and *utilitas*. With this dichotomy, Onians argues, "Alberti formulated for the first time the opposition between structure and ornament" (153). As to Serlio, who presumably was the most influential of all Italian architecture treatise writers since he came to France in 1539 invited by Francis I, he adopts Vitruvius's gendered conception of the Orders, but adds two "Latin" orders that he identifies as invented by the Romans, the Tuscan, which is the "most solid [*sodo*] and the least ornate [*ornato*] order... the most rustic [*rustico*] and the most strong and of the least thinness [*sottigliezza*] and slenderness [*gracilità*]" (Book IV, 126v, quoted in Onians, 271), and the Composite, which Alberti had identified as Italic, and which is a conflation of both the Ionic and Corinthian orders. As a result, Serlio sees the Orders as a series of five arranged in both increased proportions and richer ornaments (Onians, 271). To this, he adds a similar progression in the work of masonry, which can display a rustication or roughness in the stonework, ranging from an almost unpolished or "natural raw stone" to an extremely elaborate carving of the stones. The rougher these stones are, the more "manly", and the more elaborate, the more "refined" or artificial, and therefore "feminine." The Orders can be further combined with different gradients of rustication in the masonry according to the purposes of a building. Thus, since the Tuscan expresses strength (*fortezza*), it should be used for fortifications such as "citadels, castles, treasuries and places for storing munitions and artillery, prisons, ports, and other such structures built for war" (126v, quoted in Onians 272), and it should be combined, even bound to blocks displaying heavy rustication, which "represents great strength" (272).

⁴⁸ See my Conclusion as well as note 37, earlier in this chapter, where I address architectural discourse and its connection to class. However, in his chapter on the Orders, Alberti discusses three types of body that a man would like in a woman: "Un homme aymera une femme gresle de corps, & delicate de personne: un autre la voudra tele que la vouloit le bon compaignon de qui fact mention le Comique, qui preferoit son amye a toutes filles, pour ce (disoit il) qu'elle estoit en bon poinct, & moelleuse au possible. Encore qulqu'un de bon sens desireroit avoir une femme moyenne entre ces deux, a savoir qu'elle ne fut si debile de ses membres qu'elle n'eust ne force ne vertu; ny pareillement si homasse, qu'elle semblast un rustaud desguisé, ains que ce dont l'une auroit peu, cela luy feust donné de l'autre, la dignité toujours gardée" (IX, v, 191).

dans le pourpris; et si la place est élevée, tant qu'il puisse veoir de ses fenestres, galleries, ou terrasses, la mer, les montaignes, les boys, & un beau plain pays au devant de sa veue, cela donnera grande majesté a l'assiette" (V, iii, 78).⁴⁹

In contrast to Serlio, who ascribes a lot of authority to Vitruvius, Philibert Delorme (1515-1570),⁵⁰ the first French architect to write architectural treatises, reads the Roman architect with caution, and, contrary to Serlio, downplays the importance of the Orders. First of all, he sees the Orders and the proportions as merely ornamental and decorative (1567, V, 129) and rejects the view that the Orders (or beauty for that matter) are the fundamental principles or goals of architecture. He finds Vitruvius's discussion of the Orders obscure, confusing and difficult (V, 135), and refuses to repeat his narratives on the origins of the Doric order (V, 142). As he describes the Ionic order, he explains why he chose it for the Tuileries:

L'ay voulu accommoder le present ordre à son dit Palays pour autant qu'il n'est gueres usité, & que encores peu de personnes l'ont mis en œuvre aux bastiments avec colonnes (...) L'autre raison pourquoy i'ay voulu figurer & naturellement représenter ledit ordre Ionique au Palays de la maiesté de la Royne [Catherine de Médicis], c'est pour autant qu'il est femenin, & a esté inventé apres les proportions & ornements des dames & déesses, ainsi que le Dorique des hommes, comme m'ont appris les anciens : car quand ils vouloient faire un temple à quelque Dieu, ils y employoient l'ordre Dorique : & à une Déesse, le Ionique (V, 156).

⁴⁹ Alberti adds that when the lord of the house is not a public figure, the house should still be properly divided so that "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 (...) Toutes fois ilz seront telement conjointz par galleries ou allés couvertes, que quand le seigneur voudra faire appeler ses gens, pour leur dire sa volonté, il ne semble qu'ils sortent d'une maison étrange, ains se puissent incontinent trouver en sa presence pour ouyr son intention." (V, ii, 78). In other words, since all rooms should be separate from those of the master of the house, but still connected so that they can have direct access when needed, the master's quarter is the centerpiece of this spatial arrangement.

⁵⁰ Author of *Nouvelles Inventions pour bien bastir et a petits fraiz, trouvees nagueres par Philibert de L'orme, Lyonnois, Architecte & Aulmonier du feu Roy Henry, & Abbé de S. Eloy lez Noyons* (1561) and *Premier Tome de L'Architecture* (1567), Delorme was architect of king Henri II, and built Diane de Poitiers's chateau of Anet, and after Henri II's death, Catherine de Médicis's palace of Tuileries.

Like Vitruvius, Delorme sees the Ionic as the “feminine” order, but, as an architect commissioned by women, he avoids being contemptuous towards “les femmes” or the “feminine,” and employs the respectful terms of “reine,” “dames,” and “déesses,” queens, ladies and goddesses—all of which refer (in theory, at least) to highly placed female figures, both socially and symbolically. Further, Delorme seeks to innovate and bring into the French architectural landscape a form, the Ionic, which had been “gueres usité,” rarely used so far—thus casting it as an architectural innovation. While he does repeat the gendered narrative of the Orders (V, 155, 162, 175-7, 201), he also justifies his preference for the Ionic order with the changing architectural needs of his times:

Je me suis doncques iustement voulu ayder au susdit Palays de la maiesté de la Roynne de l’ordre Ionique, comme estant delicat, & de plus grande beauté que le Dorique, & plus orné & enrichy de singularitez. Car l’ordre Dorique de soy, pour estre masculin est plus rude, & semble avoir esté inventé pour choses fortes, à fin de soustenir grands pois & grands fardeaux, (ainsi que nous avons dit au paravant) & porter grandes haulteurs de maconnerie, comme aux chasteaux & forteresses, sans gueres d’ornements. Mais cestuy cy est pour edifier un Palays ou chateau de plaisir, & donner contentement aux Princes & grands Seigneurs : comme aussi l’ordre Corinthien (156).

Delorme maintains the gendered binary system but he recasts the beauty of the Ionic and Corinthian orders as superior to that of the Doric. What Vitruvius saw as a “masculine grace” or austere and monumental beauty, is “rude” or rough to Delorme. In this sense, he aligns his preference with Alberti’s, who considered the Ionic and Corinthian as improvements on the Doric due to their refinement and elegance (Onians 155). Further, as this passage testifies, in the period of relative peace and prosperity that followed the end of the Hundred Years War, civil architecture had less need for mighty defensive fortresses made of thick, high and bare

walls, narrow windows and dark rooms.⁵¹ Thus, masculine gods of war could now leave room to the “feminine,” as the “rude” or rough was being replaced by the “delicat,” “grande beauté,” and “enrichy de singularitez” in the new palaces of pleasure and wealth built for the lords and princes who populated the French landscape.⁵²

In the seventeenth-century,⁵³ however, the Orders took such a high prominence in the discussion of architecture, that the entire discipline seems to be reduced to them. Except for Le Muet,⁵⁴ whose treatise redefines proportion as symmetry, and deals with materials, spatial dimensions and distribution, most treatises focus on what the right proportions of the Orders ought to be, which Orders are best, and whether or not architects ought to follow ancient

⁵¹ Delorme may also have highlighted these considerations because he was not a military engineer. As Kruft-Hanno explains, the technological changes brought about at the end of the fifteenth century with the use of gun powdered cannons that shot iron balls instead of stone balls led to the separation of architecture into two specialized fields: civil architecture, on the one hand, and, on the other, military engineering, where architects were actual engineers with a military background and worked with the collaboration of soldiers (Kruft-Hanno 109). Some sixteenth-century constructions show this transition in so far that they display both defensive and military elements such as moats, “meurtrières,” and turrets, and elements of “plaisance,” such as large windows and open gardens. Diane de Poitiers’s chateau d’Anet is an example of this architectural transition.

⁵² Not surprisingly, this “feminization” of castles coincides with a period in which women assume a new dominance in the political landscape. Indeed, women had a substantial role in important political events, from Anne de Bretagne (1477-1514), Louise de Savoie (1476-1531), and Marguerite de Navarre (1492-1549) during the first half of the sixteenth century, to Diane de Poitiers (1499-1566) and Catherine de Médicis (1519-1589) during its middle decades, to Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615) and Marie de Médicis (1575-1642), during the last quarter of the century and the first of the seventeenth century. As I show in the Introduction and in the next section of this chapter, women’s contribution to the architecture of the period was far from negligible and was connected to the power they exerted at the time.

⁵³ Other important sixteenth-century French architectural treatises include *Les plus excellens bastimens de France* (1576), a visually and textually descriptive catalogue of castles of France written by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau’s (c.1520-84), and *Reigle générale d’architecture des cinque manières de collones* (1564), by Jean Bullant (c.1520-78), a text that also adopts the human body as the model for architecture. In addition, Rabelais’s abbey of Thélème in *Gargantua* (1534) combines ideal architecture and an utopian society for the first time in French literature.

⁵⁴ Pierre Le Muet (1591-1669)’s *Manière de bien bastir pour toutes sortes de personnes* (1623) is filled with practical advice for the growing bourgeois population of Paris, and focuses on “la durée,” “l’aisance ou commodité,” “la belle ordonnance” and “la santé” of apartments (1-2). Le Muet defines « ordonnance » as « la simmetrie, qui doit estre prise selon la largeur ou hauteur » (4). His numerous and specific instructions on spatial dimensions and arrangements instead of the Orders highlight his concern for the comfort and health of the diverse bodies that will dwell in these apartments rather than with architecture as a representation of the human body.

authority. As a result, considerations such as space distribution, location and materials, the practice of an architect, and many other issues discussed by Vitruvius, Alberti, and Delorme, completely disappear from the debate. In addition, not only do some of these treatise writers reproduce the masculine/feminine dichotomy inherent in the Vitruvian notion of the Orders, but they enmesh it with an opposition between ancient and modern architecture that foreshadows what would be known in the last two decades of the century as the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, a heated literary debate led by Boileau and Racine, on one side, who championed the merits of Ancient authors, and Charles Perrault (Claude's brother) and Fontenelle, on the other side, who advocated the superiority of the "modern" authors of their times.

As Boileau would do with ancient literary figures in 1693, in his *Parallèle de l'architecture antique avec la moderne* (1650), Roland Fréart Sieur de Chambray (1606-1676) defends ancient architects, whom he restricts exclusively to the Greeks, inventors of the "true" and "best" Orders, which are the Doric, the Ionic and the Corinthian. And he severely argues against the plain and bare Tuscan and the elaborate Composite—both of which were invented by the relatively more recent Romans, and which he condemns as been used "barbarously" by the "modern" and lesser architects of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, Fréart carves an opposition not only between the Greek and Roman Orders but also between the architects who follow the rules and those who bend them. In so doing, he injects moral overtones in his discourse, whereby the Greek orders represent "order," beauty and excellence, whereas the Tuscan and Composite stand for either "pauvreté" (meagerness) and "rusticité" (simplicity) or disorder and confusion. At the same time, architects who follow Vitruvius's rules are superior to those who, like Delorme, are prone to

“gotthizer” (a pejorative term that casts medieval architecture as barbaric) because they deviate from the purity of forms (79). To Fréart, the “licence” the “modern” architects take to break the rules is as bad as an incurable disease and as morally undesirable as an act of “libertinage” (4). In the end, not only does Fréart reduce his discussion of architecture to the Orders, but he also defends and perpetuates an anthropo-, phallogentric and inherently gendered notions of beauty.

Twenty years later, when Claude Perrault published a new translation of *De Architectura* (1672), Vitruvius’s system came under close scrutiny and began to crumble. Under the guise of clarifying and correcting what he saw as Vitruvius’s obscurities, Perrault inserted numerous and lengthy footnotes that questioned the notion of absolute beauty and acted as a counter-discourse challenging the authority of the very author he was translating. In the process, he dismantled the gendered binary that had been heretofore embedded in the Vitruvian system.

To Perrault, beauty is of two kinds: one “positive,” grounded on “*raisons évidentes et nécessaires*,” and the other “*arbitraire*,” dependent on what the “*Autorités*” and customs have established (I, ii, 12). His second book of architecture, *Ordonnance des cinq espèces de colonnes selon la méthode des Anciens* (1683), develops these ideas with dazzling rhetorical dexterity and philosophical complexity as he compares the proportions of architecture with those of music (iii-iv). This strategy establishes, on the one hand, the beauty of musical proportions or “accords” as “*naturelle*” and “*evidente*”—and, consequently, as a true and absolute foundation—and, on the other hand, the beauty of architectural proportions as “*arbitraire*,” the result of mere social constructions. While musical beauty arises from “[d]es accords qui sont tous de nature à ne pouvoir changer” (iv) without hurting the ear,

architectural beauty is not necessarily affected by changes in the proportions of a building. Thus, “la beauté positive” is based on “raisons convaincantes” such as “la richesse de la matiere, la grandeur & la magnificence de l’Edifice, la justesse & la propreté de l’exécution, & la symmetrie (...) qui consiste dans le rapport que les parties ont ensemble à cause de l’égalité de la partie de leur nombre, de leur grandeur, de leur situation, & de leur ordre » (vii), while “la beauté arbitraire” depends on “accoutumance” and “prevention,” which is nothing but the acceptance of the opinion of others and has little connection with “beauté positive et convaincante” (viii). In other words, architectural beauty is neither an absolute ideal passed on to us from above, nature, God or the Platonic realm of Ideas, nor is it an anthropocentric concept that privileges the masculine above the feminine. On the contrary, it is either the product of concrete, material elements and processes, or the result of “accoutumance,” habit, custom, and the uncritical adherence to and excessive reverence for the opinion of “others,” the Ancients—an excess that he condemns throughout the Préface.⁵⁵

For instance, architectural proportions, deemed as *the* foundation of architectural beauty, are far from being easily subsumed in one, true, and fixed system, for “tous ceuz qui ont écrit de l’Architecture, sont contraires les uns aux autres; en sorte qu’il ne se trouve point,

⁵⁵ Especially in the following passage: “Car il n’est pas concevable jusqu’où va la reverence & la religion que les Architectes ont pour ces ouvrages que l’on appelle l’Antique dans lesquels ils admirent tout, mais principalement le mystere des proportions, qu’ils se contentent de contempler avec un profond respect, sans oser entreprendre de penetrer les raisons pourquoy les dimensions d’une moulure n’ont pas esté un peu plus petites, ou un peu plus grandes (...) Il est pourtant vray que ce respect excessif des Architectes pour l’Antique qui leur est commun avec la pluspart de ceux qui font profession des sciences humaines, dont l’opinion est que rien ne se fait aujourd’huy de comparable aux ouvrages des Anciens, prend sa source, tout deraisonable qu’il est, du veritable respect qui est *deu aux choses saintes* (...) Cet *esprit de soumission* dans la maniere d’apprendre & de traiter les Sciences & les Arts s’est tellement nourry & fortifié par la docilité naturelle aux gens de lettres, que l’on a beaucoup de peine à s’en defaire; & l’on ne peut s’accoutumer à faire la distinction qu’il y a entre le respect deu aux choses saintes, & celui que meritent celles qui ne le sont pas; lesquelles il nous est permis d’examiner, de critiquer, & de censurer avec modestie, quand il s’agit de connoistre la verité.” (xvii-xix, my emphasis). In a clear announcement of the stance that his brother Charles would hold in the literary debate a few years later in his *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes* (1688), Perrault suggests that architectural authority, contrary to religious authority, is neither sacred nor divine, but the result of those who have deified what for the Ancients was only the result of “fantaisie,” “accident” and “negligence.”

ny dans les restes des Edifices des Anciens, ny parmy le grand nombre des Architectes qui ont traité des proportions des Ordres, que deux Edifices ny deux Auteurs qui se soient accordez & suyvy les mesmes regles » (ii-iii). Such diversity of opinions, he argues, shows that architectural theorists have built their authority on a shaky foundation. Further, if architectural beauty should be “réglée” by the imitation of nature, that is, by replicating the proportions of the human body in those of buildings, as the Vitruvian system aims, then architecture is far from achieving this goal “Car il est certain que le chapiteau, qui est la teste du corps, que toute la colonne represente, n’a point la proportion qu’une teste doit avoir à l’égard d’un corps” (ix). Thus, Perrault concludes again, architectural beauty “qu’on croit voir dans la proportion, dans la disposition, & dans l’arrangement des parties d’une colonne” is founded not in the imitation of nature, reason, or “bon sens,” but in “accoutumance” (x).

As he departs from this “accoutumance” in his own view of the Orders, Perrault appropriates the Ancients’ simile of the Orders with human bodies, strips it of its gendered stereotypes, and rewrites it with a vocabulary that evokes class categories rather than those of gender:

Les Anciens ont cru avec raison que les regles des proportions qui font la beauté des Edifices, ont esté prises sur les proportions du corps humain, & que de mesme que la nature a formé les corps propres au travail avec une taille massive, & qu’elle en a donné une plus legere à ceux qui doivent avoir de l’adresse & de l’agilité ; il y a aussi des regles differentes dans l’art de bastir pour les diverses intentions que l’on a de rendre un Bastiment plus massif ou plus delicat. (Preface, i).

As Alberti did before him, Perrault divides the bodies that the Ancients regarded as the basis of beauty into two new categories: “les corps propres au travail,” the bodies of the workers who carry heavy loads, and those “plus legere[s],” the bodies of the people (perhaps aristocrats and upper bourgeois) whose contributions to society require “adresse” and “agilité” (rather than “delicatesse”)—qualities that are both physical and mental. Rather than

discussing the appearance of bodies, he focuses on their “diverses intentions” or *functions*, thus precluding further references to the shape of female and male bodies.

Still, this reference to human bodies and their functions does not ground Perrault’s rules for the proportions. In fact, he writes these rules exclusively in terms of modules and minutes, that is, mathematical units of spatial measurement, a new kind of regulation. Except for this brief reference, nowhere in the entire text does he mention the “matronly,” the “maiden” body, the footsteps of man, or the laborers and aristocrats for that matter. This pure mathematical language, possibly influenced by Cartesian thought and his own background in science, strips the architectural discourse, for the first time in the history of architectural theory, of the gendered hierarchies implicated in the anthropocentric notions of his predecessors. In other words, not only does Perrault propose architecture as an object of mathematical measurement rather than a representation of the human body, but, in so doing, he also frees the discourse from its gender bias.⁵⁶

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Castles and Palaces of Women: Highlighting Strategies of Power through Architecture

⁵⁶ See Alberto Pérez-Gómez’s Introduction to his edition of Claude Perrault’s *Ordonnance* (1993). Pérez-Gómez explains that Descartes’s views were well-known to the Perrault’s brothers, although it was Charles, who, in addition to writing Descartes’ biography in *Les Hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle* (Paris: Antoine Dezallier, 1696), criticized, in his *Parallèle*, Descartes’s attempt to reconcile philosophy and theology. This criticism stemmed from the influence of the new scientific method, which advocated the Galilean conception of the universe, and which, by the last third of the seventeenth century, had been accepted by many philosophers and scientists. “The new science,” Pérez-Gómez reminds us, “aimed to substitute for the felt reality of the living world (...) a perfectly intelligible world determined exclusively by its geometrical and quantitative properties” (9). Galileo subverted traditional worldviews by describing “in mathematical language the relations among the diverse elements of natural phenomena,” and as a result, replaced “mysterious *physis*” with an idealized, geometrical nature,” thus diminishing the importance of the visible reality and subordinating it “to a world of abstract relations and equations” (9).

As I have shown in the Introduction, much remains to be done to unearth early modern women's contributions to the architectural landscape in France.⁵⁷ But the task of examining the ways in which women may have applied (or not) the norms prescribed by treatise writers is no less overdue. For, when it comes to gender constructs, Helen Hills reminds us in her introduction to *Gender and the Politics of Architecture in Early Modern Europe* (2003), the early modern period has been recognized as “decisive for our understanding of gender and sexuality, as Nathalie Zemon Davis, Joan Kelly, Michel Foucault, Thomas Lacqueur, Guido Ruggiero and many others have shown” (3). And, since the built environment is a fundamental aspect of human experience in the world, it is puzzling, at best, to find so few studies on the symbolic import of architecture in the construction of gendered identities and relationships in early modern France.

Not only were women of means responsible for many important architectural projects undertaken in France between 1500 and 1660—thus significantly contributing to the evolution of architectural forms and structures in this period—, but, like their male counterparts, they also used these commissions to construct their identities strategically, solidify their social status and legitimacy, and represent and affirm the power that some of

⁵⁷See my discussion on female patronage of architecture in the Introduction, especially note 27 on early modern French architectural history's privileging male contributions and diminishing or effacing the role of women in the architectural landscape, and note 28 on some new recent works that remove women from oblivion. Some of the ideas I discuss in this section overlap with the findings of Sigrid Ruby on Diane de Poitiers, and of Sheila ffolliott, Caroline zum Kolk and Laurent Odde on Catherine de Médicis, whose articles were published as I was completing my research. On Diane de Poitiers, see Ruby's "Diane de Poitiers: veuve et favorite," which offers a perspective similar to mine, and on Catherine de Médicis, see ffolliott's "La reine mécène idéale de la Renaissance: Catherine de Médicis définie par elle-même ou définie par les autres?" and Odde's "Les coulisses du pouvoir: châteaux, jardins et fêtes, quelques aspects du mécénat (transgressif) de Catherine de Médicis" in *Patronnes et mécènes de France à la Renaissance*. Ed. Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier. Saint-Etienne : Université de Saint-Etienne, 2007 (381-399 ; 455-466 ; and 481-510, respectively).

them held in the political landscape.⁵⁸ In so doing, they often used spaces, materials and shapes in ways that challenged established feminine/masculine dichotomies, thus resulting in the subversion of these distinctions. My analysis of the architectural strategies of the main gate of Anet for Diane de Poitiers, the Tuileries for Catherine de Médicis, and the Luxembourg palace for Marie de Médicis is integrally related to the situation of these three women and the gender ideology that affected their life, in particular, the controversies over the power that women should wield—whether or not they should inherit, occupy and transmit positions of power, specifically, royal power.⁵⁹ Thus, each of them in different circumstances had to deal with prejudices against women in power. In architectural terms, these struggles often translated into representational strategies that appropriated gendered norms to construct and/or affirm their symbolic power. In what follows, I examine these strategies of empowerment in the works of Diane de Poitiers, Catherine de Médicis, and Marie de Médicis, in their use not only of the Orders but also in spaces such as gardens and interiors.⁶⁰

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⁵⁸ Since, in most cases, few records remain that document conscious intentions to use architecture for such elaborate, symbolic purposes, I rely on what Onians so clearly explains as the internalization of a visual (and I would add, bodily) experience of architecture that was shared by patrons and architects alike. As Onians argues, “[s]ince their experience of and response to architecture was basically the same as that of patrons and users, [architects] could adjust their designs relying on this shared visual experience. Knowing in themselves how people normally responded to the design and placing of particular forms, they could also anticipate likely responses to changes in those features.” (3-4). In other words, constructs, such as “feminine” and “masculine” shapes, and their malleable associations with superiority or inferiority, must have been internalized, first by architects who knew of the treatises and thus reproduced them in their projects, and then by patrons and users who dwelled in them and developed preferences accordingly.

⁵⁹ See my discussion on this controversy and its connection to Salic Law and the *querelle des femmes* in the Introduction, especially note 15

⁶⁰ My focus on women’s projects seems to imply that women built “differently” from men. Clearly, however, a similar study should be done on the buildings male patrons commissioned to establish whether or not there was such a gender difference.

As the widow to Louis de Brézé, seigneur d'Anet and seneschal of Normandy, and as the favorite to Henri II after her husband's death in 1531, Diane de Poitiers (1499-1566) held an ambiguous position. Not only was she Henri II's friend and lover, but she also served as a political advisor whose insights, in many instances, rivaled those of the king's male advisors, such as the Connétable Anne de Montmorency. To build a socially respectable yet commanding identity, de Poitiers developed a two-fold strategy in her commissions: while she promoted the image of the devoted widow and associated her name to that of the chaste goddess Diana, she also displayed the marks of her position of power as the king's female companion.

Diane de Poitiers began emphasizing her status as a widow in 1531 when she commissioned the tomb for her husband in the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Rouen.⁶¹ Then, in 1547, the year in which Jean Martin published his translation of Vitruvius, she commissioned Philibert Delorme to build the chateau d'Anet (Fig. 5 Appendix A).⁶² Du Cerceau's drawing is corroborated in a nineteenth-century monograph by Pierre Roussel describing the castle as a quadrilateral structure built around a main square courtyard where Diane de Poitiers juxtaposed and/or replaced the symbolic artifacts representing her husband's memory, her

⁶¹ Sigrid Ruby's "Diane de Poitiers: Veuve et favorite" holds similar views on de Poitiers's representational strategies at Anet. In this section I discuss some of our common findings and develop further thoughts on the gendered implications of de Poitiers's strategies. For Brézé's tomb at Rouen, Ruby observes that de Poitiers's representational choices—using the colors of widowhood (black and white), having a statue of herself as a "pleurante" along with that of the Virgin Mary next to her husband's tomb, and engraving words that inscribed her spousal loyalty and devotion—underline "the piety and chastity of the faithful widow as well as her high rank" (385). As we both demonstrate, these choices are complicated at Anet since they cohabitate with the marks of her status as the king's favorite.

⁶² All that remains of Anet is the main gate to the structure, one pavilion, a chapel and the frontispiece or portico leading to the interior of the palace itself. The hemicycle by Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571) enclosing a nude female and which originally was a part of the gate has been removed and transferred to the Louvre (Fig. 6 Appendix A.) The frontispiece has been transferred to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

widowhood and chastity with those that pointed to her closeness to the king (27). These artifacts, which covered the entire castle, its monumental gate and the fountain in the courtyard, included references to Louis de Brézé and her widowhood, such as several sarcophagi and an equestrian statue located in a hemicycle inside a portico leading to the palace;⁶³ emblems such as the crescent moon, the bow and the arrow representing the huntress goddess Diana; and initials that stood either for the king, the favorite, or both (Roussel 27, Ruby 391-7).

In fact, the entire structure embodied several architectural transitions and representational goals. On the one hand, as Ruby observes, the remnants of a medieval architecture of defense—a moat, a “pont-levis” and the long narrow windows or wall openings known as “meurtrières” that served to attack the enemy—cohabitated with the more “modern” elements used in the “portail” or main gate, such as the Doric columns and the iconographic references to the goddess Diana (388). On the other hand, the references to Brézé that served to reaffirm her status as a widow mingled with two additional representational devices: iconography in homage to the king (391), and an appropriation of the (masculine) triumphal arch to represent female status and power (388). The iconography of the king is ambiguous: it signifies the loyalty of a subject to her king while marking the nature of their relationship. Their initials, D and H, intertwined, and engraved throughout the castle’s walls, doors, windows, and roofs, point to their particular closeness (Fig. 8.) The emblems also signal this ambiguity, since the bow and arrow, the stag and the crescent

⁶³ This portico is in fact a three-storied frontispiece that functioned as the main door to the castle’s interior. It stood directly in front of the main gate, on the other side of the courtyard. Its façade displays the three Orders superimposed on top of one another: the Doric on the ground, the Ionic on the first floor, and the Corinthian on top. The result is an over-bearing structure evoking the entrance to a church or temple—perhaps a temple Diane built to herself (Fig. 7 of Appendix A).

moon—carved on the castle’s structure—stand both as attributes of the goddess Diana that Diane de Poitiers exploited, and as emblems of the king: his symbol (the crescent), his pastime of hunting, and his animal symbol (the stag) (393). Further, the arrangement of Anet’s interior spaces reinforces the ambiguity since, as Ruby remarks, it corresponds to a function of the castle and its representational spaces as both a royal building and the residence of a noblewoman (397).

In addition to the observations made in Ruby’s analysis, these architectural choices resonate with the Derridean concerns of postmodern architectural theorists⁶⁴ in so far as they challenge the divides between structure and ornament, construction and representation, and, I would add, definitions of the masculine and the feminine. In what follows I examine the ways in which the functional and symbolic meanings implied in these architectural choices blur and/or subvert established gendered distinctions.

For instance, the triumphal arch enclosing the main entrance or “portail” constitutes both a structure and an ornamental piece to create the image of closeness to the king (fig. 9). Four imposing Doric columns lend their masculinity to the front side as they flank the main door, itself covered with the bow, arrow, crescents, and the initial “D” of de Poitiers’s first name.⁶⁵ On top of these columns stand two adjacent balconies whose balustrades are again decorated with crescents, flowers and animals, and Diane and Henri’s initials (Roussel 30). The whole is then crowned by another structure on top of which stands a bronze statue of a

⁶⁴ As discussed in the introductory section of this chapter, where I quote Elisabeth Grosz and Mary McLeod’s observations on post-modern architectural theories.

⁶⁵ Roussel describes the door as follows: « les deux panneaux du haut sont ornés d’attributs de chasse et de pêche, arcs, flèches, piques et carquois. Le chiffre de Diane est au bas de chaque côté du panneau. Au-dessous, dans un autre petit panneau sculpté, une palme et une branche d’olivier se croisent dans un delta. Dans l’un des deux battants de cette porte se trouve taillée une petite porte, dont le marteau est un croissant » (30).

stag surrounded by hounds and facing the inner courtyard. On the one hand, its triumphal arch is a representational structure that traditionally commemorates men's military glory, since its hemicycles are often used to enclose a male equestrian statue. De Poitiers's political rival, Anne de Montmorency, for instance, built a similar structure at his home in Ecouen (Ruby 388-9). That she appropriated this tradition to represent female power exposes her complex role as the king's lover and friend as well as his political advisor.

On the other hand, this complexity is reinforced by the door itself, which evokes the goddess Diana, the favorite (Diane), the king (Henri), their close relationship, and the entrance to an idyllic retreat for male pleasure. Adorned with the king's and the goddess's attributes, this gate spells the fusion between Henri and the three Dianas (the widow, the lover, and the goddess). Structurally, it functions as an entrance to the palace, and symbolically, as the opening for (and into) a body—an action that is designed to happen through a smaller door within one of its “battants” or door leaves. To enter the castle through this smaller opening, the (male)⁶⁶ visitor must strike the crescent-shaped knocker (“cogner le marteau”), thus metaphorically enacting the entrance of the male into the woman's body. In other words, while the entire opening is meant to associate Diane de Poitiers with an elevated figure of chastity and to link her politically to the king, the smaller hole could be interpreted as a spatial (and bodily) opening whose key is owned/struck by the male visitor/lover.

To reinforce these symbolic associations between body and space, woman and female deity, favorite and king, and the heterosexual dynamics this conveys, the gate structure displays above its door a hemicycle enclosing the bronze statue of a nude female leaning on

⁶⁶ Given the fact that Henri II provided his own architect and workers, as well as generous funds, I assume that the castle is meant as a meeting place for him and his lover Diane.

one arm and holding a stag with the other (Fig. 6 Appendix A).⁶⁷ As the visitor looks up from the door to this hemicycle and to what stands above it, the structure becomes ambiguous and hints at the fragility of established gender hierarchies. Far from replicating the ancient renderings of the austere maiden huntress in which Diana is depicted, bow and arrows hanging from her shoulder as she walks in search of game, the nude female in the hemicycle leans leisurely—almost voluptuously—surrounded by game and hounds, and looking down on those who enter through the door beneath her. In other words, this woman in bronze evokes—but deviates from—the chaste goddess; thus she maintains some of her attributes (game and hounds) and the symbolic associations established on the door beneath. Yet, her position above the door hints at the power she displays in relation to the male visitor she gazes at as he enters through the door beneath her, thus suggesting an inversion in the hierarchy inherent in traditional heterosexual dynamics. At the same time, as the visitor keeps looking up from the woman in the hemicycle, the stag she embraces relates to the other stag that stands on top of the entire structure, flanked by hounds, in a position that oddly contrasts with that of the woman since it faces the opposite direction, towards the inner courtyard of the palace (Figs. 5, 9, 10 and 11 Appendix A). While the bronze material chosen for the nude female and the stag reinforces the visual and hierarchical link between them, their contrasting positions can be seen as signaling the shifting power dynamics of such an arrangement. Vertically, this shift of power begins with the female nude gazing down at the male visitor beneath her, continues with the harmonious image of the figures as she lovingly embraces the stag sitting between her arms, and ends with the stag standing above them and

⁶⁷ As Ruby argues, in contrast to the male equestrian statues traditionally placed in hemicycles on top of doors within structures shaped as triumphal arches, the naked woman here underscores the status of de Poitiers as the king's favorite (389). This hemicycle, sculpted by Cellini, is now displayed at the Louvre (Fig. 6 of Appendix A).

topping the entire structure, thus representing the supreme crown and power of the male. Horizontally, the visual effect, again, shifts from the woman's gaze at the visitor before he enters the structure to the stag that looks at him once he has entered the courtyard. Moreover, while the stag gazes at the courtyard, he also faces the equestrian statue of Brézé in the portico in front of him, as if both males were eternally vying for the favors of the "maîtresse des lieux" and reminding us that she is both widow and lover.

In addition, the choice of a stag (signaled by the antlers), instead of a hind, the animal attributed to the goddess, reverses the same-sex environment of the deity (originally accompanied by a "biche" or hind and surrounded by numerous female nymphs) to a heterosexual binary visually reinforced by the stag's physical location on top. Yet, this entire heterosexual dynamic, which apparently conveys male supremacy, also evokes its own fragility, for the stag on top, surrounded as he is by the hounds, reminds us of Acteon, the wretched man who, having seen Diana taking her bath, is transformed by the goddess into a stag and dies, mercilessly torn into pieces by his own hounds.⁶⁸ Thus, the figure of the stag functions as a mark of ambiguity: while representing a strong king who is either amorously held in the arms of his mistress in the hemicycle of pleasures, or on top of a physical structure that establishes his supremacy, it also hints at its/his own fragility within a female-dominated realm.

⁶⁸ In his analysis of the symbolic import of Acteon and Diana, Ruby emphasizes the "relation chaste entre le souverain et sa maîtresse" that such iconography conveyed during the Renaissance (395). Yet, one cannot ignore the tragic end of Acteon as a possibility that lurks over the couple. Similarly, Ruby argues that Diane intended to emphasize the "chaste" nature of her relationship to the king by engraving, under the female bronze in the hemicycle, an inscription that read: "La vaste demeure de la vénérable Diane est consacrée à Phébus, à qui Diane rapporte tout ce qu'elle en a reçu" (390). Although this reference to the goddess and her brother (Apollo) Phébus does serve to elevate de Poitiers symbolically to the rank of sister to the king, it does not evoke chastity, as Ruby suggests, as much as it hints at a veiled attempt to equalize de Poitiers and the king—an attempt that is of course limited by the impossibility of a woman ever to become a king.

In sum, rather than create a distinct boundary between masculine might and feminine delicacy that would maintain the notion of female submission to male power, de Poitiers constructs at Anet an environment in which dichotomies blur, leading to what one might call the uncertainty of gender boundaries. It is not clear whether the gate represents homage to the king, female chastity or heterosexual hierarchies where either the male or female dominate, or if it stands for all of those and none at once.

* * *

As the female who remained the longest at the center of French royal power, ruling the country for thirty years between the death of her husband in 1559 and her own in 1589, Catherine de Medicis had a significant impact on the architectural landscape of early modern France. Her letters, “états de comptes,” and other documents reveal that she was responsible for commissioning the construction, enlargement, renovation, maintenance, and beautification of over seventeen major projects. They include reparations of the abbey of Corbie and of two towers on the Mont Saint-Michel, the commission of the Valois mausoleum at Saint-Denis, new fortifications at the chateau of Amboise, maintenance works at the chateau of Saint-Germain en Laye, additional structures and parks at the chateau of Vincennes, renovations at Blois, constructions of a house, park, garden and canal at Hières, near Toulon, a country house or “cassine” near her chateau at Saint-Maur-des-fossés, construction of the castles of Charleval and Saint-Maur, renovations on the chateau of Montceaux-en-Brie, the enlargement of Chenonceau, renovations and enlargements of the

Louvre and Fontainebleau, and, of course, the magnificent Tuileries, its gardens, and her Hôtel de la Reine in Paris (Coope; zum Kolk, 474-480; Odde, 481-510).

Yet, Catherine's patronage stands out less for the sheer number of her commissions than for the extent of her involvement with them. As the letters examined by Caroline zum Kolk (2007) demonstrate, she paid meticulous attention to the works she commissioned, from ordering the planting of two or three thousands elm trees at Vincennes and detailing what kind of renovations in which rooms at Blois should be completed, to instructing Philibert Delorme exactly how the statue of Henri II in the Valois mausoleum ought to display the traditional attributes of victorious kings (zum Kolk, 475-7). For the Tuileries palace, Catherine even sketched the design and provided the dimensions.⁶⁹ The Queen's involvement, Delorme remarks, produced many magnificent buildings « au grand prouffit, utilité, & emolument du bien publique (...) quel plus grand bien peult on trouver, ou quelle charité & pitié plus grande peult on exercer, que de faire en bastissant gagner une myriade de pauvres gens, qui autrement iroient mendier leur pain?" (Epistre). Defying the norms that confined a queen's architectural patronage to honoring her deceased husband, Catherine embraced architectural patronage not only for political purposes, as Sheila ffoliott and Laurent Odde have demonstrated (2007), but also for socio-economic reasons. In fact, not

⁶⁹As Delorme's Epitre attests : « Madame, ie voy de iour en iour l'accroissement du grandissime plaisir que vostre maiesté prend à l'Architecture, & comme de plus en plus vostre bon esprit s'y manifeste & reluit, quand vous-mesme prenez la peine de protraire & esquicher les bastiments qu'il vous plaist commander estre faicts, sans y omettre les mesures des longueurs & largeurs, avec le departiment des logis, qui veritablement ne sont vulgaires & petits, ains fort excellents & plus que admirables : comme entre plusieurs est celuy du Palais que vous faictes bastir de neuf à Paris pres la porte neufve, le Louvre maison du Roy. Lequel Palays ie conduis, de vostre grace, suivant les dispositions, mesures, & commandements qu'il vous plaist m'en faire » (ã ij). Later, he adds : « La maiesté de la Royne mere, à Paris, laquelle pour son gentil esprit, & entendement tresadmirable accompagné d'une grande prudence & sagesse, a vouldy prendre la peine, avec un singulier plaisir, d'ordonner le departiment de sondict palais, pour les logis & lieux des salles, antichambres, chambres, cabinetz, & galleries, & me donner les mesures des longueurs & largeurs, lesquelles ie mets en execution en son dit palais, suivant la volonté de sa maiesté » (I, viii, 20). Thus Delorme attests to Catherine's commitment to this particular architectural project.

only did she ignore traditional prescriptions for ideal female patronage—which, according to Nicolas Houel (1520-1584) were those of effacing herself and building in homage to a deceased husband—but, as I show in what follows, her architectural choices also resulted in blurring gendered distinctions that differentiated masculine palaces and structures, from feminine gardens and ornaments.⁷⁰

Before its destruction in 1871, the Tuileries palace was an enormous quadrilateral structure 188 meters long and 118 meters wide (Fig. 12 Appendix A). According to Laurent Odde (2007), the palace Catherine initially imagined would have competed in size with the Escorial in Spain, and would have stood as a symbol that would allow the Valois dynasty to rival Spain's Habsburgs monarchy (495).⁷¹ The front and back “corps-de-logis” consisted of a doubled range of apartments enclosing a large central courtyard, with four smaller courts on each side, separated from each other by arcades, open galleries and alleys. Its gardens were designed and executed by Bernard Palissy (1510-1589) and Pierre le Nôtre (grandfather of Versailles garden designer André Le Nôtre), both of whom worked under the supervision of Marie-Catherine de Pierrevive, one of Catherine's closest friends and advisors (Odde 504-5).⁷²

⁷⁰ See Sheila Ffolliott's “Women in the Garden of Allegory: Catherine de Médicis and the Locus of Female Rule,” (2001) for an analysis of the Tuileries gardens as gendered spaces of power. As I show in my Conclusion to this dissertation, one must be cautious with such interpretations.

⁷¹ I discovered Laurent Odde's essay as I was drafting this section. “Les coulisses du pouvoir: châteaux, jardins et fêtes; quelques aspects du mécénat (transgressif) de Catherine de Médicis” in *Patronnes et mécènes de France à la Renaissance* (481-510) draws from his dissertation on Catherine de Médicis, which he defended in 2008 in the Art History Department at The Graduate Center, New York. This essay examines the ways in which Catherine's patronage represented royal power at Chenonceau, the Tuileries, and a structure known as a « cassine », near Fontainebleau.

⁷² Marie-Catherine de Pierrevive also had Italian origins. She married the Florentine Antonio Gondi and with him bought the du Perron estate, near Lyon, in 1521. She became a member of Catherine's court through her circle of Italian artists. Laurent Odde recounts that, as Catherine made use of the (financial) services of the Gondi family, she became close to Marie-Catherine and appointed her “surintendante de la maison des enfants royaux” in 1551 (489).

The facades displayed the Ionic order on the ground floor topped by the Corinthian on the first floor (Fig. 13 Appendix A). When Delorme claimed that he had chosen the Ionic order because it was appropriate for ladies and goddesses, and also because of its novelty in France, he forgot that he had used the Order decades earlier, at Anet, on the three-storied frontispiece of the castle, superimposed on the Doric order and topped by the Corinthian (Fig. 7 Appendix A). The difference with Anet is that at the Tuileries the Ionic columns, arranged in pairs, cover the entire façade, and the masculine Doric order is remarkably absent. The novelty of this Ionic order is that, following Catherine's instructions, its column is made of "plusieurs pieces" (Delorme 221), with the folds of the shaft interrupted by horizontal rings covered with flowers in the upper and lower ends and with geometrical shapes in the middle section of the shaft (Fig. 14 Appendix A). This was Delorme's new "French" modification of the Orders, consisting of a column made of several pieces of stone rather than one whole shaft.⁷³

According to the Vitruvian tradition, which identifies the Ionic and the Corinthian, ornaments and delicacy with the feminine, and the Doric, bareness and straight lines with the masculine, this choice of the Ionic and Corinthian orders would need to be read as "feminine." As such, their display in a woman's royal palace and in a structural disposition in which the Ionic gives support to the Corinthian evokes the power of the "matrons" who,

⁷³ Delorme applied this modification to the Doric order as well (Delorme 220). In his analysis, Laurent Odde argues that the rings evoke the "viril ordre Toscan associé aux origines de la reine", but it seems to me that, far from a reminder of the most plain and bare of all the Orders, this ornamentation is aligned with what Delorme himself prescribes when he proposes "deux autres sortes de colonnes Doriques": « à l'une vous n'y mettez que des quareaux, si vous voulez, pour cacher les commissures qui seront entre les strieures (...) ou bien si vous les voulez plus riches, vous y colloquerez des plattes bendes, accompagnées de feuilles, ou d'autres sorte d'ornements: comme vous le voyez à des plinthes quarez, avec quelque petit astragale & petites feuilles par dehors canelées » (220). Thus, as I argued in my earlier discussions of Delorme, ornamental functions and utilitarian purposes blend to provide a new Order. Delorme also emphasizes that Catherine was personally involved in choosing the adornments for these columns (221).

dispensing with the “manly” might of the Doric, stand firmly on their ground, and, with their own strength, symbolically elevate younger maidens to a higher position. This “feminine” aspect of the form and structure of the palace is reinforced by the profusion of ornaments Catherine incrustated in its walls:

d’abundant elle a voulu aussi me commander faire faire plusieurs incrustations de diverses sortes de marbre, de bronze doré, & pierres minerales, comme marchasites incrustées sus les pierres de ce pais, qui sont tresbelles, tant aux faces du palais & par le dedans que par le dehors, ainsi qu’il se peult voir, & avec tel artifice, qu’il n’y a celui qui ayt quelque iugement qui ne trouve les œuvres de ceste tresbõne & magnanime Princesse, tresadmirables & dignes de sa grandeur : voire trop plus grandes (s’il plaist à Dieu liy donner la grace de parachever) que Roy ne Prince en ayent encores faict faire en ce Royaume, comme un chacun de ceux qui en sont capables le pourra juger, voyant le commencement dudict palais (Delorme I, viii, 20).

Thus, instead of plain and bare walls flanked by virile Doric orders, the palace displayed walls encrusted with stones and gems of multiple colors and materials, including marble in diverse colors—either black, white, brown or red—interspersed with the golden hues of bronze and marcasite⁷⁴—all of it in an intricate and colorful design or “artifice” that lent the palace a beauty that surpassed anything that Delorme had seen so far in royal palaces commissioned by men.

The incrusting of adornments on walls challenged the gendered distinctions in the Vitruvian tradition whereby structure was to adornment as the masculine was to the feminine. This binary is blurred in the design of walls that stand both as structural pieces and as ornaments to the palace. Similarly, Catherine’s choices defy the dichotomy established by art historians such as Sheila Ffolliott, who have defined spaces as either “male” or “female.” For, if the garden is a “female space of power,” whereas the palace represents the “real –or

⁷⁴ The marcasite is a crystal whose metallic luster and brass-yellow hue makes it look like gold.

male—locus of power,” as ffoliott claims (1992, 249), thus perpetuating a well-known essentialist binary, then Catherine’s Jardins des Tuileries dramatically challenge this dichotomy. In fact, the distinction between palace and garden, erected on the male/female and nature/culture binaries, does not pertain here. For the garden, as Chandra Mukerji has shown in her analysis of Versailles (1997), far from being a site of free-flowing nature, is the result of carefully manipulated materials serving a man-made design and purpose. At best, it may be argued that the gendered dichotomy of “nature” and “culture” does appear in the garden, as nature—the trees, flowers, earth, etc—is subjected to the domination of culture—man’s design and cultivation. But in the case of the Tuileries, it turns out that nature is designed and cultivated for a woman’s purposes.

As the illustrations suggest, these gardens were neither small nor designed in “feminine” shapes such as curves and flowers. Quite the contrary: its “parterres” were patchworks of clearly and orderly aligned boxes filled with geometrically organized verdure.⁷⁵ In other words, they contained greenness and nature in squares, triangles and neatly disposed dots—a design that brings to mind Louis XIV’s gardens at Versailles a hundred years later.

⁷⁵ Garden historian F. Hamilton Hazlehurst (1980) describes the Tuileries gardens as follows: “Marked by a pronounced regularity in design, the garden is an almost perfect rectangle except for its western extremity, which is cut on an angle because there was a marshy declivity toward the southwest border. Although the principal axis focuses on the central pavilion of the building and extends to the semicircular terminal motif housing the famous Echo, the garden is essentially a *hortus conclusus*, or enclosed garden. Separated from the palace proper, it is bounded by walls on all sides, and seems to have had only a small portal permitting access from the palace (...) A number of walks run parallel to the central *allée*, and these in turn are regularly bisected at right angles to divide the whole garden into a series of rectangular plots. Parterres fill those areas nearest the palace beyond the eastern peripheral wall. From the vantage point of the building, the details of their geometric designs would have been pleasingly legible” (167). Hazlehurst’s reference to a “*hortus conclusus*”, which, in Renaissance terms, represented the Virgin Mary’s body, does evoke ffoliott’s point of the garden as an allegorical site of the female body. Yet, the use of the marian allegory as a foundation for a broader female/male dichotomy limiting Catherine’s deployment of power to the garden seems problematic to me.

Similarly, the Tuileries, a palace built for the Queen, following her designs and instructions, and under the supervision of Pierrevive, was far from a site that promoted male power. The structure represented the power of the matronly or motherly figure.

Consequently, both palace and gardens, seen as a whole, can be interpreted as producing an effect of gender ambiguity as they challenged gendered dichotomies of what ought to be, according to critics, female or male space as well as feminine and masculine architectural forms.

* * *

On October 6, 1611, a year after the assassination of her husband, Henri IV, Marie de Médicis (1573-1642) wrote a letter to Christina of Lorraine⁷⁶ asking for the floor-plans, elevations, and perspectives of the Palazzo Pitti in which she had been raised, so that she could use the palace as a model for a home of her own in Paris. The apparent motivation for this initiative was that, according to Geraldine Johnson (1997), as the queen mother, “she would eventually have to give up her apartments at the Louvre to her young son’s future wife” (135). Yet, a close look at the formal choices Marie made in what later became the Palais du Luxembourg, today’s French Senate, reveals that the palace also served to construct a public identity of strength and stability for the Queen. Johnson aptly observes that Marie’s art collection and architectural commissions during her first years in France, from 1600 to

⁷⁶ Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Christina of Lorraine (1565-1637) was Catherine’s grand-daughter through Claude de Valois. She married Marie’s paternal uncle, Ferdinando I de Medici.

1610, were linked to her role as wife to the king and mother to his children (139).⁷⁷ In fact, her earliest architectural project, the chateau of Montceaux-en-Brie, had been a gift from Henri to celebrate the birth of their first son in 1601—a gift that helped her fend off the threat that Henri’s illegitimate children posed to her as the “royal consort” (129-130). Marie publicly confirmed her legitimacy when she was crowned queen of France in 1610. Once crowned and immediately after Henri’s death, though, her concern for legitimacy—which was contested and combated by those who opposed any female regent—shifted to efforts to exude steadiness, power, and authority.⁷⁸

In architectural terms, this concern translated into commissioning Salomon de Brosse (1571-1626)⁷⁹ to design what Marie called the Palais de Médicis, and which, after her final exile in 1631, began to be known as the Palais de Luxembourg. She also hired the Flemish painter Rubens to execute a series of epic paintings in her honor that she used to cover the walls of a long gallery on the first floor of the west wing leading to her royal apartments at the Luxembourg (Coope 126; Johnson 139). Again, as with de Poitiers at Anet and Catherine at the Tuileries, Marie’s choices complicate gendered dichotomies for she used what were

⁷⁷ Throughout her life, Johnson observes, Marie also commissioned projects to serve Catholic convents, such as the “new buildings for the Carmelites (1603), the Discalced Carmelites (1613), the Discalced Augustinians (1617), the Daughters of the Calvary (1625), and the nuns of Saint Elizabeth (1628)” (134).

⁷⁸ Throughout her regency, Marie had difficulties asserting her authority and faced opposition from the princes of the blood. The dominant view was that she should not let the king rule on his own, but in 1617, Louis XIII exiled her to Blois and kept her imprisoned until she escaped in 1619. She then led a rebellious faction against her son. In 1621 she reconciled with him and returned to the court.

⁷⁹ With the exception of the Parlement de Bretagne (built in 1618 and now used as the Palais de Justice of Rennes), Salomon de Brosse’s major projects were all for women patrons: the château of Verneuil, completed by Henriette d’Entragues, Henri IV’s favorite, the château of Coulommiers-en-Brie (1612-15), built for Catherine de Gonzaga, duchesse de Longueville; the château of Blérancourt, commissioned in 1612 by Charlotte de Vieuxpont, wife of Benard Poitiers; and, also for Marie de Médicis, the château of Montceaux-en-Brie from 1601 to 1608, and the Aqueduct of Arcueil in 1624. According to historians, his designs influenced the “classic” turn of French architecture developed by François Mansart (Coope).

traditionally known as “feminine” and “masculine” forms to challenge the norms of ideal female architectural patronage.

To begin with, Marie’s letter to Christina of Lorraine did not adhere to the ideals of queenly patronage to build in homage to a deceased husband and to show self-effacement. Instead, it reveals Marie’s intention to build a home for herself alone and, in so doing, to replicate the largest palace of its kind in Europe, the Pitti Palace⁸⁰:

Ma tante. Estant en volonté de faire bastir et accomoder une maison à Paris pour me loger et voulant en quelque chose me regler sur la forme et le modelle du Palais de Piti (lequel j’ay tousiours estimé pour l’ordre de son Architecture et grandes commoditez qui y sont). Je vous fais celle cy pour vous dire que j’auray à singulier plaisir que vous m’en faciez faire le plan en son entier avec les eslevations tant du costé de devant ledict Palais qu’au derriere d’icelluy du costé des terrasses, vous priant de me les envoyer à la premiere occasion, ensembles les mesures et proportions des courtz, terrasses, salles, chambres et autres stances (‘stanze’) de ladicte maison pour m’en ayder et servir en la structure et decoration de la mienne... (...) Ma tante vous me feres bien plaisir de m’envoyer le plan et les dessins du palais de Pitti dont ie me veux servir pour l’ordre et ornement de ma maison... Marie (Cited in Coope, 261.)

Here, Marie intends to imitate the Palazzo’s shape, dimensions, and the appearance of its facades, both for structural and ornamental purposes (Figs. 15 and 16 Appendix A).

According to architectural historians, such as Bloomfield and Hautecoeur (quoted in Rosalys Coope, 1972), the Luxembourg palace finally bore only a few elements from the Palazzo Pitti. This observation led them (and Coope) to mock Marie’s allegedly failed intention to recreate the Italian home (113). Yet Coope acknowledges the traits that remained:

The only part of the Palazzo Pitti relevant to the Luxembourg is the courtyard built by Ammanati during the period 1558-1570, which was surrounded on three sides by buildings three storeys in height (...) the rustication of the entire building was in itself a direct reference to the Pitti, and there are certain passages at the Luxembourg where de Brosse has sought to emulate the massive, vigorous and sculptural effects achieved

⁸⁰ Originally built in 1458, the Pitti Palace was bought by the Medici in 1549, and since then became the official home of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, who were Maria’s ancestors. Today it houses one of Florence’s largest public art galleries (Fig.15 Appendix A).

by Ammanati, with their possibilities for dramatic manipulation of light and shadows (...) The manner in which de Brosse carries the rustication over the pilasters and columns of his Doric order also derives from Ammanati (...) Some of de Brosse's windows and arched openings are surrounded by a rusticated frame which is derived directly from Ammanati, and is perhaps one of the most striking motifs of the Pitti courtyard. The manner in which de Brosse carries the rustication over the pilasters and columns of his Doric order also derives from Ammanati (113-4).

As indicated in Coope's references to the use of the Doric order and that of the "massive, vigorous and sculptural effects," Marie did succeed in her intention to imitate the Palazzo, as she kept the fundamental traits that were symbolically necessary to eliminate from her public identity signs of "feminine" weakness or instability (see illustrations 15 and 16). These traits—the palace's enormous size and height, the courtyard, and the rustication⁸¹ of the walls of the entire building—combined with the use of the Doric and Tuscan orders on double sets of pilasters on the ground floors of the structure transmitted a sense of monumentality, sobriety, massive weight, and solidity. The Doric and Tuscan orders lent "masculinity" to the palace, the monumental height and mass conveyed an effect of "grandeur," while the rusticated walls added a textured severity to the whole. These choices contributed to Marie's success in her attempt, not only to imitate, but also to convey an effect of might.

Marie reinforced this "manly" structural effect with a representational strategy that communicated, at the symbolic level, a sense of female power. For, in 1622, soon after her reconciliation with Louis XIII, and upon the completion of the west wing of the palace where her apartments were to be located, Marie hired Rubens to execute the famous cycle with herself as its main heroic subject. As Deborah Marrow (1982) has shown, Marie had a clear

⁸¹ See note 47 in this chapter, where I discuss the meaning of rustication according to Serlio, and its connection to gendered images of strength and refinement. The rustication of walls, contrary to smooth and plain walls, consists in the masonry of square blocks separated from each other by deep V-shaped edges visually highlighting the blocks' squared shapes, heavy weight and severely straight lines (Figs. 15 and 16 Appendix A.)

responsibility in the choice of these subjects. And she arranged the cycle on the walls of the long gallery as follows (Fig. 17 Appendix A):

The three portraits were on the entrance wall: the portrait of the Queen was over the fireplace, flanked by those of her parents. On the opposite (north) wall hung the *Death of Henri IV and the Proclamation of the Regency*. On the west wall, beginning at the southern end, were the Queen's *Destiny, Birth, and Education*; the *Presentation of the Portrait, Proxy Marriage, Debarkation at Marseilles, Entry into Lyons, Birth of the Dauphin, Consignment of the Regency, and Coronation of Maria*. On the east wall, continuing from the northern end, were the *Council of the Gods, Triumph at Juliers, Exchange of the Princesses, Felicity of the Regency, Coming of Age of Louis XIII, Escape from Blois, Treaty of Angouleme, Conclusion of the Peace, Full Reconciliation*, and, *The Triumph of the Truth*. The three paintings around the northern end (the *Coronation, Death of Henri and Proclamation of the Regency*, and the *Council of the Gods*) were more than twice as wide as the other paintings, while the five canvases around the southern end (the three portraits, *Destiny*, and *Truth*) were much narrower (31).

This arrangement of the epic paintings merits close attention for it constructs, in its overall spatial composition, a narrative that reinforces the public identity built through the paintings' subjects. First, the entrance wall, far from highlighting her late husband or her son king, valorizes an autonomous Queen as her portrait (entitled "Marie de Médicis en reine triomphante") is placed over the fireplace, which is visually the central and most important location in a room. Since she is flanked by full-size portraits of her parents (rather than her husband and sons), this wall's composition reinforces the Queen's autonomy: instead of her role as a wife and mother, it evokes her parental ties and foreign origins as the daughter of Francesco I de Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and Johanna von Habsburg, Archduchess of Austria. As the three of them stand across from the *Death of Henri IV and the Proclamation of the Regency*, which hangs on the opposite wall, it is as if they were watching the most important event(s) in Maria's life, which was her accession to the royal power of France upon the death of her husband. The importance of these events is highlighted by the

dimension of this canvas and that of the neighboring *The Coronation of Maria* and *The Council of the Gods*, the three of which are more than twice as large as the other paintings.

The cycle's subjects and their spatial arrangement construct a chronological narrative that begins on the west wall adjacent to the portraits of Marie and her parents, and refers to Marie's destiny, birth, education, marriage alliance, arrival in France, fulfillment of her duty to provide an heir (which was the chief reason why Henri annulled his marriage to Marguerite de Valois and married Marie), the bestowal of the Regency and her coronation as queen, followed by Henri's death and an evocation of the gods in their "council," as they protect her regency and help her triumph at the battle at Juliers in 1610. Then she marries her daughters to the kings of Spain and England, and provides "felicity" to France until Louis XIII comes of age and she is sent to Blois, escapes, and reconciles with the king in 1621. The narrative concludes when "Truth" triumphs and mother and son are fully reconciled.⁸²

In this chronological sequence of the main events in her life, Marie is consistently represented with imagery that is at once powerful and female-dominated. She appears most of the time at the center and on the foreground, surrounded by prominent female allegorical figures, including the goddesses Minerva, Juno, and Bellona, an ancient Roman goddess of war depicted wearing a helmet, armed with a sword and/or a spear, and holding a torch—a goddess that, in the Roman tradition, had been taken variously as Mars's sister, wife, and daughter. Men, on the other hand, except for three paintings—*Proxy Marriage*, *Consignment of the Regency*, and *The Treaty of Angoulême*—are systematically depicted in a dark corner or in the background, half effaced, and/or in lessened positions, attitudes and poses. In addition, in many of these female-dominated paintings, Marie is closely associated to

⁸² But not forever: in 1631, Louis XIII exiled her for good with the assistance of Richelieu. She died in Cologne in 1642.

Bellona. In *Presentation of the Portrait*, the deity is shown whispering in Henri's ear as he stands looking lovingly at Marie's portrait; in *The Death of Henri IV and the Proclamation of the Regency*, she kneels in front of Marie and hands her the globe; in *The Council of the Gods*, she appears at the center just about to strike someone with her spear; in *The Felicity of the Regency*, she stands near the Queen as if advising her; in *Coming of Age of Louis XIII*, she stands energetically leading the ship in which Marie hands over the affairs of the state to her son; and in *Escape from Blois*, she holds Marie's arm and leads her out of prison. In sum, this female embodiment of military strength acts as a powerful legitimization of Marie's role as queen consort of the king, regent of the kingdom, and commander-in-chief. To reinforce this narrative, Marie is depicted as Bellona in *Marie de Médicis en reine triomphante*, and in military attire resembling Bellona's in *Triumph at Julliers*, where she wears an exuberantly feathered helmet, and proudly sits on a tall white stallion while female allegorical figures bestow on her the symbols of victory.

In sum, at the Luxembourg palace, structural elements such as the virile Doric and Tuscan orders, heavily rusticated walls, and a massively large and tall structure, serve to build and represent solidity, stability and strength while Ruben's larger-than-life canvasses representing a heroic Queen and emphasizing female-bodied figures construct an imagery of female legitimacy and power. As the structure embodies strength and stability, its decoration ascribes this strength to Marie.

Because Marie's regency had to confront oppositions from Condé, and later, re-establish herself after her exile at Blois, these architectural choices at the Luxembourg acted as an effort to valorize her regency. In the following chapters, I examine how the desire for female rule and authority permeates the works of Marie de Médicis's grand-daughter, Anne-

Marie-Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier, both in her architectural projects and in her written endeavors.

* * *

CHAPTER II

Exile, Castle and Self: Loss and Reconstruction at Saint-Fargeau

On a cold winter night of late 1652, a royal carriage arrived at the abandoned medieval fortress of Saint-Fargeau, a little known town in the center of Burgundy, France (Fig. 1 of Appendix B). Its main occupant, Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier, who had lived her entire life until that day as the head of her own household at the Tuileries palace built by Catherine de Médicis, had just been exiled by Louis XIV for her participation in the Fronde.⁸³ At her arrival at Saint-Fargeau, however, the fortress stands in stark contrast with the magnificent palace in which she was raised. In her *Mémoires*, Montpensier creates an analogy between the state of her life and that of the castle:

Nous arrivâmes à Saint-Fargeau à deux heures de nuit, il fallut mettre pied à terre, le pont étant rompu. J'entrai dans une vieille maison où il n'y avoit ni porte ni fenêtres, et de l'herbe jusqu'aux genoux dans la cour : j'en eus une grande horreur. L'on me mena dans une vilaine chambre, où il y avoit un poteau au milieu. La peur, l'horreur et le chagrin me saisirent à tel point que je me mis à pleurer : je me trouvois bien malheureuse, étant hors de la cour, de n'avoir pas une plus belle demeure que celle-là (II, 227-8).

In the darkness of the night, the fortress's bleakness and chaos stands as a metaphor for the collapse of Montpensier's life. The broken bridge evokes the shattered ties with the court. The lack of windows and doors, the overgrown grass in the courtyard, the dankness of the bedroom, and the overall dilapidation of the entire structure compose an image of separation, abandonment, misfortune, and ruination that mirrors the state in which she finds herself.

To be sure, the ruined castle elicits Montpensier's fear, horror and sorrow, but the image does not haunt her long. In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (2000), Edward

⁸³ On Mademoiselle de Montpensier's participation in the Fronde, see Chapter III.

Said describes exiles as “cut off from their roots, their lands, their past (...) [they] feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people” (177). Although Montpensier had been allowed to choose one of her estates for her exile, this is a place she has never seen before. Until this day, the “roots” of her daily life had been the spaces of official power—namely, the palaces of Tuileries, Luxembourg, Louvre, and the many royal chateaux, such as Fontainebleau, which she visited while accompanying the court in her youth, or such as Chambord and Blois, in which she dwelled when visiting her father. Banished from Paris and her home at the Tuileries, Montpensier is also cut off from the court, which is, in Norbert Elias’s words, “both the first household of the extended royal family, and the central organ of the entire state administration” (1983, 1). In other words, she has been severed from the royal family and the narrative that strings it together, and left on the margin of the supreme organ of power in France.

Like the exiles Said describes, Montpensier responds to the “urgent need to reconstitute (her) broken life” and fends off the haunting sense of loss and ruin embodied in the fortress of Saint-Fargeau. Away as she is from the court, she begins a project of reconstructing what I would term her royal self—that is, her identity as a member of the royal family. For, as she has been dislodged from the center of the courtly rituals, etiquette, and all the symbolic elements that make up her identity, once at Saint-Fargeau, much of her life will be taken up, in Said’s terms, with “compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule” (181). Montpensier creates this “new world” through the deployment of two main strategies. First, she renovates the castle, turning Saint-Fargeau into a royal château that is no longer terrifying and where she can hold a court of her own, complete with a

reconstituted royal family (II, 283); a stratified population living with her and depending on her; the management of financial and estate holdings (II, 365-6); and *divertissements* around which to build a social life within her chateau, including hunting and breeding horses and dogs (II, 288; 297), hosting comedians, musicians and men of letters (II, 249-250, 294, 380, 422; III, 2), entertaining noble visitors (II, 356-7), and maintaining a literary circle (II, 259, 356-7). Second, she weaves together a narrative that establishes her royal self in what was to become the lengthiest memoirs written by a woman in seventeenth-century France. This narrative includes a detailed description of her early years at court, a lively account of her participation in the Fronde and her subsequent exile, as well as a dramatic rendering of her conflictive relationship with her father. And as she writes these memoirs and reconstructs herself within the lines of her text, she builds her royal identity through the architectural choices she implements at Saint-Fargeau. This dual strategy aims to align her both with the higher strata of people—the royal family—to which she belongs and with the monarchy's ideology of rank.

At the same time, however, a gradual change emerges in the way Montpensier views herself regarding her father and the court. While her exile underscores the increasing estrangement to which the king first and her father later subjected her, it also becomes a “new world to rule,” the space—both real and imaginary—that exiles create to compensate for their “disorienting loss.” Indeed, after she rebuilds Saint-Fargeau and names it her “chez moi,” the older home in the Tuileries palace of Paris is no longer home. Thus, when she sees the city from afar in one of her later trips, she claims: “Je regardais [Paris] sans aucune envie et comme la personne du monde la plus détachée de toute chose” (II, 455), and : “Je vis Paris depuis les côtes de Verrières jusques à Ruel, sans nulle peine de n’y pouvoir aller; et je me

savois le meilleur gré du monde d'être si maîtresse de moi-même" (II, 459). Having overcome the pain of separation and banishment, she is now proud of herself for the indifference she feels towards the city in which she had lived until recently as a member of the royal clan and for the strength of will that led to her detachment. In fact, when, upon her eventual return to the court in 1657, Louis XIV offers her the choice to join him and the court on their next trip outside Paris, she prefers to go and take possession of her estate of Champigny and of her principality of Dombes, where she receives the honors and revenues due to her (III, 338-344). Eventually, she no longer takes for granted the "home" of obligations and duties, ideas and values inculcated in her youth, begins to question the benefits of marriage for a woman, and advocates another way of life outside of marriage. In what follows, I examine Montpensier's self-construction strategies in the writing of her memoirs and the renovation of Saint-Fargeau, as they reflect her gradual emancipation from paternal authority and development of a sense of agency and autonomy.

* * *

The Writing Project

Written at three intervals in her lifetime, Mlle de Montpensier's memoirs consist of three major sections that cover different periods of her life.⁸⁴ The first and largest section,

⁸⁴ First published in 1718, Montpensier's memoirs were reprinted as follows: Paris, 1728; Amsterdam, 1729, Amsterdam, 1730; Anvers, 1730; Amsterdam, 1736; The Hague, 1741; Paris and London, 1746; Amsterdam, 1766; Maastricht, 1776; and Paris, 1806, 1823, and 1838 (Pitts, 255-6). According to Vincent Pitts (2000), these editions altered the autograph manuscript and are thus unreliable. In 1858-59, Adolphe Chéruel provided a new edition, based on the autograph manuscript. This version has been reprinted several times and has prevailed above all others for scholarly purposes (256-7). It is from this edition that I draw all citations in this dissertation.

which she wrote between 1653 and 1660, contains over 1,300 pages and covers the years since her birth in 1627, her early years at court and the multiple marriage proposals she received, her participation in the Fronde, her subsequent exile at Saint-Fargeau, and the disputes she had with her father over her finances. It ends with the last conversation she had with him, on May 15, 1659, before his death on February 2, 1660 (III, 366). The second section, which she began at the age of fifty, seventeen years later, while living at her chateau of Eu, in 1677, covers the death of her father, Louis XIV's wedding with the Infanta of Spain at St-Jean de Luz, Montpensier's second exile at Eu, from 1662 to 1664, for refusing to marry the king of Portugal, and her relationship with the Comte de Lauzun, including her attempt to marry him, Louis's rescission of his previous consent to their marriage, Lauzun's subsequent imprisonment at Pignerol and the many years until 1676, in which she tried to get his freedom. It ends with Lauzun's attempt to escape and her letter to the king begging him to forgive Lauzun (IV, 381). The third section, written in 1689-1690, when she is 62, has less than two hundred pages, and resumes her narrative from 1676, focusing on Lauzun's return to the court and his behavior towards her. It ends with her throwing him out of her house and returning to a quarrel she sustained with one of her half-sisters over the Luxembourg palace, which they both had inherited from Gaston.

Montpensier's writing project can be situated within two major textual corpuses. The first of these is the body of life-writing by several *Frondeurs*, such as the Cardinal de Retz (1613-1679), the Duc de la Rochefoucauld (1613-1680), Madame de la Gueule (1613-1676), the Duchesse de Longueville (1619-1679), and the Duchesse de Nemours (1625-1707), who composed their memoirs with the purpose of justifying themselves in the aftermath of the

defeat of the noble/nobiliary revolt against the monarchy in the Fronde (Fumaroli 1971). Like them, Montpensier follows what Emmanuèle Lesne (1996) has identified as the “commonplaces” of memoirs of this period, including: writing during exile or retirement from the world; claiming an exemplary ambition; referring to the good “originals” or models before them; pointing to the pleasure of writing or of remembering; displaying a commitment to sincerity; mentioning self-censorship; assigning a “destinataire”; and evaluating their own styles (Lesne, 225). In keeping with these “commonplaces,” Montpensier begins writing while she is in exile; asserts the pleasure of remembering her life (I, 1-2); cites Marguerite de Valois’s memoirs as her model (II, 248); emphasizes her truthfulness (I, 1); sets out the limits of what she will do by promising to write what she has seen and experienced instead of repeating official history (I, 2; 74-5; 95; IV, 327);⁸⁵ suggests, though not overtly, that the friends who had encouraged her to write are her addressees (I, 1-2); and, finally, evaluates the quality of her style (I, 248).

Like these memoir-writers, Montpensier recounts the actions in the civil war of the Fronde that give her a political and military prominence she had never enjoyed before:

Quand je songeai le soir, et toutes les fois que j’y songe encore, que j’avois sauvé cette armée, j’avoue que ce m’étoit une grande satisfaction et au même temps un grand étonnement de penser que j’avois fait aussi rouler les canons du roi d’Espagne dans Paris, et passer les drapeaux rouges avec les croix de Saint-André. La joie que je sentois d’avoir rendu un service au parti si considérable et d’avoir fait en cette rencontre une chose si peu ordinaire, et qui n’est peut-être jamais arrivée à personne de ma condition, m’empêcha d’y faire les réflexions qui se peuvent faire maintenant là-dessus et qui auroient pu troubler [ma joie] (II, 113).

The contrast between the stunning and extraordinary military actions she performed in Paris in 1652 and the rarity with which individuals of her “condition,” meaning princesses of the

⁸⁵ For an analysis of Montpensier’s account of history, see Faith Beasley’s “From Military to Literary Frondeuse: Montpensier’s Feminization of History” in *Revising Memory Women’s Fiction and Memoirs in Seventeenth-Century France*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

blood, have accomplished heroic actions—such as saving the Frondeurs’ army, shooting the Bastille’s cannons, and brandishing the flag of her party—emphasizes the uniqueness of Montpensier’s role in the Fronde.⁸⁶ Yet, though here she claims to be the first woman to have performed such great feats—obviating the role of, among others, the Duchesse de Longueville, the sister of Prince de Condé—at another point she compares herself to Joan of Arc, placing the compliment in the mouth of her aunt, the Queen of England.⁸⁷

Still, while building a heroic self is an important aspect of Montpensier’s memoirs, her writing project extends beyond the events of the Fronde and serves as a means of constructing herself at different stages of her life, some of which manifest clear changes from former views of herself in relation to her male relatives. Further, as she wrote during her early, middle and late years, her writing project is different from that of memoir-writers, such as Saint-Simon, who wrote at the end of their lives, in a gesture that Bernard Beugnot (1996) has identified as the nostalgic gaze on a golden or mythical past (77). By contrast, not only does Montpensier begin her memoirs at the onset of her exile, but, at times, as she reflects on

⁸⁶ On Montpensier’s participation in the Fronde, Saint-Simon writes: “tous les mémoires de guerres civiles et les siens propres l’ont trop fait connoître pour qu’il soit nécessaire d’y rien ajouter ici. Le Roi ne lui avait jamais pardonné la journée de Saint-Antoine, et je l’ai oui lui reprocher une fois, à son souper, en plaisantant, mais un peu fortement, d’avoir fait tirer le canon de la Bastilles sur ses troupes. Elle fut un peu embarrassée, mais elle ne s’en tira pas trop mal” (*Mémoires*, 51). For contemporary documentations and representations of Montpensier’s role at Orléans, see Micheline Cuénin’s “Une Amazone impure” (1995) which discusses the manifestos “Nouvelles extraordinaires de ce qui s’est passé tant à Blois qu’à Gergeau et ès environs, et l’entrée de Mademoiselle dans la ville d’Orléans” A Paris, chez Claude le Roy, au Mont Saint-Hilaire (B.M. Orléans, s.d. H 5761) and “Harangue faite à Mademoiselle par Messieurs d’Orléans à son arrive.” A Paris, chez Claude le Roy, au Mont Saint-Hilaire (B.M. Orléans, 8 H 5760.)

⁸⁷ Montpensier writes : « Lorsque la reine d’Angleterre sût que j’étois entrée à Orléans, elle dit qu’elle ne s’étonnoit pas que j’eusse sauvé Orléans des mains de ses ennemis, comme avoit fait autrefois la Pucelle d’Orléans » (II, 60).

the events she narrates, both written self and writing self seem to converge on the same page.⁸⁸

The second corpus to which Montpensier's memoirs belong is the body of life writings by women, such as Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615), Marie Le Jars de Gournay (1565-1645), Marie Mancini (1639-1715), Hortense Mancini (1646-1699), and Henriette-Julie de Castelnaut, comtesse de Murat (1670-1716), all of whom, except for de Gournay, wrote during exile. Indeed, despite traditional perceptions of memoirs as a genre developed by men in Europe, women, too, contributed a large part of its corpus.⁸⁹ These women writers share the same motivation for picking up the pen, which is a desire to redress the distorted representation of them in pseudo-memoirs written by others. Marie de Gournay wrote an *Apologie pour celle qui écrit* (1622), an autobiographical account that reads as a juridical self-defense in the face of the calumnies against her.⁹⁰ It sets the tone and goal of the memoirs written by later women of the seventeenth century: Marguerite de Valois (1628) tells her story to correct Brantôme's misrepresentation of certain events of her life (46-7), and the Mancini sisters (1677 and 1675) and Madame de Murat (1697) are similarly compelled to write to counteract the slander spread against them.

⁸⁸ For instance, the use of adverbs of time (*alors* vs. *aujourd'hui*) and of verbal tenses (imperfect vs. present) give a sense of shifting back and forth in time in the same passage. See Montpensier's *Mémoires* I, 1-2 and II, 248, where she explains how she began writing her memoirs, and I, 81-2, 89, and 100-1, where she reflects in hindsight on past events.

⁸⁹ As Domna C. Stanton (1987) observes, "in many cases, [European women] were the first ones to write autobiographies at all" including Julian of Norwich's *Showing of God's Love* (England, c.1300); *The Book of Margery Kempe* (England, 1432); and Dona Leonor Lopez de Cordoba's "written documents" (Spain, 15th century), "the country's first autobiography and first work by a known woman writer" (6). To Stanton's list, one might add Santa Teresa de Avila's *Libro de su vida* (1562-65) and Mary Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle's *The True Relation of my Birth and Breeding* (1656).

⁹⁰ For a recent edition and English translation of de Gournay's works, see her *Apology for the Woman Writing and Other Works*. Richard Hillman and Colette Quesnel, eds. The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Series, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

As they decide to provide their own versions of their lives, these women writers transgress a symbolic order that, as Sidonie Smith has observed, repressed female speech, since it either “condemned [woman] to public silence or profoundly contaminated her relationship to the pen as an instrument of power” (7). When Hortense Mancini, for instance, reckons that “la gloire d’une femme consiste à ne point faire parler d’elle” (32), and yet proceeds to write her life, especially the details of her escape from marital oppression, she transgresses “patriarchal definitions of female nature” that maintained women outside the public sphere (Smith, 7-8). Further, as Nancy K. Miller (1988) observes, even as they aim to justify the self, especially when their lives have deviated from such societal traditions as the institution of marriage, their writings reveal that “the real fault lies with society and its laws” (50). When women write to justify an “unorthodox life,” they reinscribe what Miller has coined as “the original violation” to gendered norms and “reviolate the masculine turf” in their texts, which then become “a defense and illustration, at once, a treatise on overcoming received notions of femininity” (50). Further, as Domna C. Stanton (1987) has argued, the writing act gives “the female ‘I’ the substance that had been denied to her” in a phallogentric system that has defined “her as the object, the inessential other to the same male subject” (14). Even when this female self is “textually constructed through the relation to mother and father, mate and children,” and, consequently, “dramatize[s] the fundamental alterity and non-presence of the subject,” (15) women’s life-writing projects also expose tensions and conflicts between the “conventional role of wife, mother or daughter, and another unconventional self that had ambition or a vocation” (13).⁹¹

⁹¹ However, a relational self is also true of male subjects, as Nancy K. Miller (1994) has demonstrated.

Montpensier's initial motivation differs from that of de Gournay, Valois, the Mancini sisters and Murat in the sense that, though word of her exile obviously had spread, there is no misrepresentation already made that she needs to dispel. Instead, she claims, she writes for the sheer pleasure of remembering her life.⁹² Yet, as a woman, she shares the status of "fundamental alterity" within a patriarchal system, and in writing her memoirs, she also counteracts the symbolic erasure and social death her exile was meant to signify. Like them, she constitutes in her writing a "female subject," built in opposition to her father (who then becomes her *other*), aligned with female figures she enlists as her models, and geared towards increasing her agency, autonomy, and power.

Montpensier decides to write her memoirs as a result of her first literary project, a novel she began before her exile entitled *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny Marquise de Fouquerolles* (1653). This satirical, multi-generic work consists, among other pieces, of a "Vie de Mme de Fouquerolles" and a "Manifeste de Mademoiselle" directed against a certain Madame de Fouquerolles, a former friend of Montpensier's.⁹³ These texts, shaped as autobiographical narratives, help Montpensier discover that memoirs can be a tool to defend and justify the self while exposing others. She then decides to write her own:

Comme la *Vie de madame de Fouquerolles* fut imprimée, je trouvai que cette occupation m'avoit divertie. J'avois lu les mémoires de la reine Marguerite ; tout cela, joint à la proposition que la comtesse de Fiesque, madame de Frontenac et son mari me firent de faire des mémoires, me fit résoudre à commencer ceux-ci. Préfontaine me dit aussi que si cela me plaisoit, j'en devois faire. J'écrivis en peu de

⁹² As I discuss below, Montpensier experiences her memories "avec douceur," and announces the reading of her memoirs as "pas ennuyeuse" (I, 1-2). Also, in the introduction to the second section of her memoirs, she comments that re-reading the first section written seventeen years earlier makes her decide to pick up the pen again: "depuis que je suis ici, m'étant amusée à les lire, l'envie d'y travailler m'a repris (III, 370) and "pour m'amuser, quand je serai vieille, comme j'espère et souhaite le devenir afin de me faire souvenir de ma jeunesse: c'est une espèce de plaisir" (IV, 83-4). Thus writing her memoirs is not only an act of recollection of her past, but a conversation with the future self she envisions.

⁹³ See a detailed study of this text in Chapter IV.

temps depuis le commencement jusques à l'Hôtel-de-Ville ; et comme j'écris fort mal, je donnois à Préfontaine, à mesure que j'écrivois, à mettre au net (II, 248).⁹⁴

Thus, the main reason for writing the memoirs is not self-justification, she maintains; instead, she adopts the stance of aristocratic *divertissement* (to please oneself and to please others) as her primary aim. In addition, Montpensier's model is not a male writer, not even Saint-Augustine, whose *Confessions* had recently been translated into French by Arnauld d'Andilly (1650) and were a fundamental reference for seventeenth-century memoirs-writers (Fumaroli 27)—but Marguerite de Valois.⁹⁵ In fact, Montpensier has many points in common with this queen: not only was Marguerite the first wife of her grandfather Henri IV, but like Montpensier, she had significant real estate holdings, witnessed violent conflicts, was betrayed by her male relatives, was sent to live in exile, and wrote her memoirs during this exile. Marguerite also built a home of her own in Paris, the hotel de la Reine Marguerite, facing the Grande Gallerie of the Louvre and rivaling with the court, where she led a salon and hosted musicians and comedians (Ballon 160; Dumolin 165; Goode, 2000). Like Marguerite, who claimed to write her memoirs in “une après-dinée” (*Mémoires*, 47), Montpensier maintains that she composed a substantial part of her memoirs “en peu de temps” (I, 248)—a trope that aristocrat writers deployed to avoid displaying a pedantic

⁹⁴ Gilonne d'Harcourt, Comtesse de Fiesque, and Anne de la Grange-Trianon, comtesse de Frontenac were Montpensier's ladies-in-waiting. Louis de Préfontaine was her secretary.

⁹⁵ While Fumaroli claims that Saint-Augustine's *Confessions* were the “livre de chevet pour les mondains et surtout pour les dames” (27), it does not seem to have been part of Montpensier's mandatory reading. She never mentions him, and instead refers to her preference for Sainte Thérèse d'Avila's *Vie*, especially during her youth: “Je n'avois de satisfaction qu'à lire la vie de Sainte-Thérèse” (I, 153). Montpensier's preference for Sainte Thérèse as her spiritual model (III, 71-5) found material expression at Saint-Fargeau, where Montpensier had a statue of her sculpted and installed in its chapel (Fig. 19 in Appendix B). Montpensier does not state the reasons why she hails Sainte Thérèse. Yet, some relevant facts about the nun includes founding and building convents in Spain, and writing her autobiography (1567) and two spiritual texts, *Way of Perfection* (1567) and *Interior Castles* (1577), both of which argue for reaching the perfect state of union with God. In a sense, Sainte Thérèse's teaching of self-perfection resonates with the agency implied in self-construction projects.

bourgeois obsession with careful authorship. Montpensier's remark that she writes poorly and has to give her drafts to her secretary, Préfontaine, to rewrite in orderly and neat lettering, highlights her reluctance to be associated with the likes of scribes and clerks, and thus serves as a reminder of her elevated rank, since it casts an opposition between the "négligé"—and practically illegible—but "natural" handwriting of nobles and the "soigné," meticulously drawn lettering of the bourgeois.⁹⁶

Like Marguerite, who exposed the flaws and the betrayal of her brother, Henri III (1551-1589), Montpensier reveals the imperfections of her male relations—be they her father, her king, or her lover. Going even further, she resists their authority and overcomes the consequences of such resistance by turning exile, loss and grief into opportunities for self-reconstruction. As she does so, the writing self of her memoirs emerges as a subject built in opposition to—and above—those male "others," thereby inverting traditional gender hierarchies that place a male self above and against a female other. This inversion in gender hierarchy occurs three times in the memoirs: in the first section, where Montpensier constructs herself mostly through an antagonistic relationship with the father; in the second section, where she seeks to elevate Lauzun—also a male other—from his inferior status to a level that equals hers; and in the last section, where the male other who has failed her returns to his initial lower level. As Lauzun becomes a repetition of Gaston, the antagonistic end of her memoirs takes the female subject back to its initial standing against and above a male

⁹⁶ This can be observed in countless manuscripts of official letters of the period, where the careful calligraphy of the body of the letter (obviously written by a secretary) contrasts sharply with illegible aristocratic signatures. It seems as if illegibility were a mark of the aristocratic disdain for the scribing profession, and as if the more illegible the handwriting, the higher the rank of the person who wrote (Figs. 2 and 3 of Appendix B, photographs of Montpensier's handwriting and signature). Wendy Gibson (1989) also remarks that "a certain orthographic negligence, [aristocratic] women were assured, was becoming in persons of quality, strict accuracy being the hallmark of the professional author, not to say the pedant" and refers to Saint-Evremond's letter to the duchesse de Mazarin: "il n'est pas de la dignité d'une personne si considérable de bien orthographier. Il faut laisser cela aux auteurs" (37).

other. Meanwhile, Montpensier also constructs herself in terms of Louis XIV, a relationship that evolves from aspiring to marry him (I, 38; 42-3), to shooting canons at his troops (II, 111), to casting him as the only one above her, as he promises to act as her father upon Gaston's death (III, 424).⁹⁷

While she builds herself within the lines of a text, Montpensier also fashions her public identity through the visual and spatial choices she makes in the three castles she commissions at different points in her life. These choices reflect a trajectory that runs along similar lines to her evolving views in her memoirs: Saint-Fargeau, a ruined medieval fortress that she transformed into a courtly chateau, stands for the years of exile and self-reconstruction; Eu, a chateau she bought and enlarged shortly after her exile, corresponds to the period of autonomy she sought and enjoyed from 1657 through 1671; and Choisy-le-roi, a magnificent palace she built from scratch, after choosing its exact location and design, stands for the later years in her life when selecting a territory, landscaping it and erecting a chateau was tantamount to picking a husband of her own choice, elevating him through gifts of titles and estates, and casting him in the text as an ideal mate.⁹⁸ In what follows, I examine the ways in which these architectural and writing strategies of self-construction eventually led her to an increased sense of for autonomy and power.

* * *

⁹⁷ Yet, even as she accepts Louis XIV as her surrogate father, she does not entirely submit to his authority, since in 1662 she refused to accede to his orders to marry the king of Portugal. Thus, accepting him as the “only one” above her has perhaps more to do with emphasizing her rank as very close to the king himself than with settling for a subordinate position.

⁹⁸ This Chapter II examines these three stages. While this chapter discusses the reconstruction project at Saint-Fargeau, Chapter III focuses on Montpensier's perspectives on marriage, as they evolved from seeing it as the means to becoming queen, to a social obligation she would rather avoid, to the path for love.

Saint-Fargeau and the Reconstruction Project

Montpensier's reconstruction project begins with the choice of an appropriate location for her exile in 1653. After being evicted from the Tuileries by Louis XIV and abandoned by her father, she considers her options and decides that, of all her possessions, Saint-Fargeau seems the most strategically located:

[L]a conclusion fut que je (...) m'en irois à Saint-Fargeau; que j'avois regardé avec soin sa situation; que j'avois reconnu qu'elle étoit proche de toutes choses; qu'elle n'étoit qu'à trois journées de Paris pour en avoir des nouvelles, et à pareille distance de Blois, pour sauver les apparences de ce côté-là. Car je savois assez dès ce temps-là à quoi m'en tenir, et qu'en quatre jours tout au plus l'on alloit et venoit de Saint-Fargeau à Stenay, qui étoit un lieu où apparemment M. le Prince passeroit les hivers ; ainsi que j'étois proche du monde, de mes amis et de ceux qui devoient l'être, et pourtant dans le plus grand désert du monde, parce que, Saint-Fargeau étant un lieu peu connu, l'on croiroit que j'étois dans un autre monde (II, 223).

The strategy of finding a place that would serve both the need to appear in conformity with the king's orders and that of maintaining a bearable proximity implies a dichotomy between appearance and reality. While Montpensier wants Saint-Fargeau to be near all things and the "monde," practically equidistant from the three towns where her main male relations reside—Paris (the king), Blois (her father), and Stenay (Condé)—it can also be thought of as "le plus grand désert du monde," "un autre monde," or perhaps "l'autre monde," the realm of the dead, the banished, the excluded and the forgotten.⁹⁹ It appropriately fits the description

⁹⁹ In Chapter IV, I explore in detail this notion of "autre monde" in the novel she had just written before her memoirs, *Histoire de Jeanne d'Herbigny Lambert Marquise de Fouquerolles*, which includes a section entitled *L'entrée d'Eve, Reine de la Lune en la ville, capitale de son Etat*, which resonates with some elements from Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyage dans la lune* (1657) and with many (travel, utopian and dystopian) narratives of the period about "other," "new," and "upside down" worlds.

of the “désert”¹⁰⁰ to which she has been banished, and, as a result, it sends to the crown the signal that she accepts her social and political death. In that sense, the space of the “désert” equates and corresponds to the self in exile. Yet, as it is relatively “proche du monde,” it also carries the geographical promise of keeping the roads and ties open to the life at court she has known so far. In other words, proximity summons the image of an umbilical cord tying her to the space from which she has just been rejected and from which she refuses to sever herself completely. In addition, Montpensier’s view of Saint-Fargeau as an “autre monde” suggests not only the feared mystery of difference but also the possibility of renewal. As a result, exile at Saint-Fargeau, far from meaning a total withdrawal or death, points to the possibility of a return of the self from death to life, that is, the remake and rebirth of the subject through language and space.

The ‘monde/désert’ dichotomy evokes that other opposition which dominated early modern moralistic discourse: that of the court/retreat, where retreat, as the positive side of *désert*, denotes a voluntary withdrawal from the court and its worldly extensions, and is usually associated with the pursuit of an ideal *repos* or spiritual peace (Stanton, 1975; Beugnot, 1996). In this retreat, individuals seek a refuge from the “agitation, inquiétude et trouble” (Stanton 81) of the “monde,” as well as “freedom from the conflicts, desires and emotions that disquiet the mind” and, through “reason and will (...) find inner harmony and lasting tranquility” (83). The ideal of *repos* had positive connotations for Montaigne and Mme de Lafayette, as well as for those who, in the aftermath of the Fronde, questioned the value of worldly activity (86). But it also elicited skeptical reactions from those *mondains* who saw it as a state where the lack of *divertissement* generated *ennui*. Referring to these

¹⁰⁰ In *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, “Désert” is a “lieu inhabité, qui n’est guère fréquenté” (s.v. “Désert.”)

mondains, Pascal observed that solitude and the contemplative life confront man with his own condition—including his mortality, among other things—and this confrontation, rather than bringing *repos*, stirs “agitation and anxiety in him.” (Stanton 92). As a result, he attempts to bury “the suspicion of his *misère* through *divertissement*” (92). In its positive acceptance, on the other hand, *repos* is hailed both as the biblical/religious implication of ultimate peace and as an ideal that can be reached through “knowledge of the self and of the human condition,” as Mme de Lafayette demonstrated in the quest of her heroine, the Princess of Clèves (93).

Retreat also evokes a mythical space populated by what Beugnot identifies as dreams of a golden age in which “l’homme aurait été à la fois proche des êtres et des choses et réconcilié avec lui-même” (89). Synonymous to negative terms such as “cloître,” “désert,” “disgrâce,” “exil,” “and “solitude,” it also implies “contemplation,” “félicité,” “heur,” “repos,” loisir,” “rêverie,” “sommeil,” and “tranquillité” (16). As Beugnot demonstrates, all these terms point to a *topos* in philosophical, literary, moralistic, and religious discourses of the period.

In that spirit, Montpensier takes control of her exile and turns her “désert” or place of desolation and symbolic death into a ‘retraite’ where she intends to reconstruct herself at leisure, through writing.¹⁰¹ As she comes to terms with living in Saint-Fargeau, she introduces her memoirs as follows:

J’ai autrefois eu grande peine à concevoir de quoi l’esprit d’une personne,
accoutumée à la cour et née pour [y] être avec le rang que ma naissance m’y donne,

¹⁰¹Montpensier emphasizes how little “ennui” she felt when she began writing her memoirs: “Nous menions une vie assez douce et exempte d’ennui; je suis la personne qui m’ennuie le moins, m’occupant toujours, et me divertissant même à rêver. Je ne me n’ennuie que quand je suis avec des gens qui ne me plaisent pas, ou que je suis contrainte. Comme la *Vie de madame de Fouquerolles* fut imprimée, je trouvai que cette occupation m’avoit divertie (I, 248).

se pouvoit entretenir, lorsqu'elle se trouve réduite à demeurer à la campagne; car il m'avoit toujours semblé que rien ne pouvoit divertir dans un éloignement forcé, et que d'être hors de la cour, c'étoit aux grands être en pleine solitude; malgré le nombre de leurs domestiques et la compagnie de ceux qui les visitent. Cependant, depuis que je suis retirée chez moi, j'éprouve avec douceur que le souvenir de tout ce qui s'est passé dans la vie occupe assez agréablement, pour ne pas compter le temps de la retraite pour un des moins agréables que l'on passe. Outre que c'est un état très-propre à se le représenter dans son ordre, l'on y trouve le loisir nécessaire pour le mettre par écrit, de sorte que la facilité que je sens à me ressouvenir de tout ce que j'ai vu et même de ce qui m'est arrivé, me fait prendre aujourd'hui, à la prière de quelques personnes que j'aime, une peine à laquelle je n'aurois jamais cru pouvoir me résoudre. Je rapporterai donc ici tout ce que j'ai pu remarquer depuis mon enfance jusqu'à cette heure, sans y observer pourtant d'autre ordre que celui des temps, le plus exactement qu'il me sera possible. J'espère de l'heureuse mémoire que Dieu m'a donnée, qu'il ne m'échappera guère de choses de celles que j'ai sues; et ma curiosité naturelle m'en a fait découvrir d'assez particulières, pour me pouvoir promettre que la lecture n'en sera pas ennuyeuse (I, 1-2)

This introduction, whose first two sentences present a subject structured by the opposition between past and present conceptions of exile, questions the notion of exile as a site of death. “Autrefois” Montpensier thought that the banishment of those of her rank reduced them to live in the state of solitude that leads not only to boredom but also to the angst described by Pascal. In the second sentence, however, the unpleasant enforcement of solitude is now cast as a voluntary retreat, as if she had freely chosen to “[me] retire[r] chez moi.” The site of banishment has thus become a desirable home, a “chez moi,” meaning “my home,” that is, both a place of her own that is distinct and independent from the court, and “my inside,” one that is personal, intimate and exclusive. The prepositional phrase—which, at the time, also meant “dans mes terres”—suggests that Saint-Fargeau, as it surrounds and encloses her spatially, contains her on the outside as much as she contains it symbolically within herself. As a result, Saint-Fargeau no longer acts merely as a mirror to the self but becomes part of a spatial metonymy in which castle and self signify one another.

Contrary to her prior aristocratic and *mondain* prejudices, Montpensier finds in this now pleasant retreat the “douceur” of the memories and the leisure, or time and space, to remember and contemplate her life and “se le représenter dans son ordre (...) par écrit.” The mention of her birth, along with the term “peine,” in reference to the act of writing inscribes her within the privileged side of binaried social hierarchies, which is that of *otium* or ‘loisir’ vs. ‘travail,’ whereby the former is assigned since antiquity as the entitlement of a creative elite while the latter remains the task of the many. Thus, to make her effort acceptable within this framework, it must therefore be characterized as induced by the encouragement of others and by the pleasure of contemplation that stems both from memory (the pleasure of memories) and from self-reading (“lecture...pas ennuyeuse.”) As she uses writing her memoirs as an antidote to the specters of *ennui* and death, she promises to account for all she has witnessed and experienced since childhood and to bring out in the open, to speak publicly of what was particular to her, “le plus exactement qu’il me sera possible.” The emphasis here lies on the faithfulness to the chronological order of events and the truthfulness of her memory and writing.

Having chosen the location for her exile, the second step in Montpensier’s reconstruction project is to assess the condition of her property. Saint-Fargeau is an elongated pentagonal fortress, originally built in the thirteenth century in pink bricks, and made up by four *corps-de-logis* or rectangular structures linked together by six large towers. (Fig. 4 of Appendix B.) At Montpensier’s arrival in October 1652, the fortress looks old,¹⁰² not only for

¹⁰²As quoted earlier, Montpensier saw « une vieille maison où il n’y avoit ni porte ni fenêtres, et de l’herbe jusqu’aux genoux dans la cour : j’en eus une grande horreur. L’on me mena dans une vilaine chambre, où il y avoit un poteau au milieu. La peur, l’horreur et le chagrin me saisirent à tel point que je me mis à pleurer : je me trouvois bien malheureuse, étant hors de la cour, de n’avoir pas une plus belle demeure que celle-là » (II, 227-8).

its state of decay and disrepair, but also because of its medieval design as a defensive (rather than courtly) structure: thick and plain walls, conic roofs of red tiles, small and narrow windows and doors, dark and bare apartments. Upon overcoming her initial distress, Montpensier considers whether the castle can at least function as an effective shelter:

Le lendemain La Guérinière, qui étoit allé à Saint-Fargeau, revint et me dit que ma maison étoit bonne et forte, que l'on ne m'y pouvoit point surprendre; que, s'il entroit des gens par une porte, je pouvois me sauver par l'autre, et même que, n'étant que peu de gens, l'on arrêteroit ceux qui me voudroient arrêter. Cela me plut fort (...) Enfin, au bout de ces trois jours, un beau matin, je m'en allai à Saint-Fargeau ; l'on me mena dans un appartement que je n'avois pas vu, que je trouvai plus commode (...) Cet appartement étoit fait d'une partie d'une galerie retranchée, sur qui est l'épaisseur d'une muraille. Dès ce même jour je voulus changer les cheminées et les portes, y faire une alcôve; je m'informai s'il n'y avoit point d'architecte dans le pays (...) Je fis donc commencer à ajuster les dedans de l'appartement où j'étois, et pour cela il le fallut quitter ; je m'en allai loger au grenier au-dessus (II, 229-230).

Thus, according to her maître d'hôtel La Guerinière, the structure is solid ("bonne et forte"), protective ("l'on ne m'y pouvoit point surprendre"), aptly designed ("s'il entroit des gens par une porte, je pouvois me sauver par l'autre"), and defensive ("on arrêteroit ceux qui me voudroient arrêter"). The defensive structure is reinforced by the main gate between the tours de Bars and Toucy whose narrowness allows the entrance of only a few men at a time—a military strategy aimed at protecting the castle from intruders. All these features address her need to defend herself and to escape easily should the king decide to send his guards to arrest her.¹⁰³ Therefore, solidity, defense, protection, and shelter are the initial features of Saint-

¹⁰³When leaving Paris, Montpensier still feared being arrested by the king : « Je poursuivis mon chemin vers Saint-Fargeau. Comme j'en fus à deux lieues, il vint un de mes valets de chambre pour me dire qu'à Châtillon, qui n'est qu'à huit lieues, sur le chemin de Paris, ils avoient trouvé, en y passant, un exempt des gardes du roi avec six gardes, qui disoient n'y séjourner que parce leurs chevaux étoient boiteux ; ce qui n'étoit pas, à ce que leur dit l'hôte. Cet exempt s'enquit fort d'eux quand j'arriverois, et si je pouvois prendre un autre chemin. Cela m' alarma ; il me dit encore que tous les environs de Saint-Fargeau étoient pleins de gens de guerre, qui faisoient payer les tailles. Les gens effrayés se font toujours des fantômes pour les combattre ; je dis : 'Assurément c'est pour moi que ces troupes sont là et ce n'est point pour la taille' (...) J'étois assez en inquiétude ; Préfontaine, qui a l'esprit ferme et résolu, me rassuroit, et La Guérinière de même. L'on dit que j'ai [l'esprit] assez ferme sur toutes choses, mais j'avoue qu'en cette rencontre j'avois l'esprit si préoccupé que l'on me vouloit arrêter, et j'en

Fargeau that appeal to her. To reinforce protection, she chooses an apartment enclosed by a thick wall, replaces all openings (doors and fireplaces) and creates an alcove for herself.

The adjustment of the interior (“ajuster les dedans”) of this apartment with the creation of an alcove evokes the image of the nest—an image that is reinforced by her temporary lodging in the attic, “le grenier au dessus,” also an enclosed space. Following Gaston Bachelard’s observation, in his *Poetics of Space* ([1957] 1964), that the attic is a space for solitude and retreat, a site at once small and large, warm and cool, always comforting (27), one could read Montpensier’s lodging in the attic not only as an exile within exile, as she still lacks a more magnificent home in which to dwell according to her rank, but also as a nest for herself within the castle, for it is during this time that she commissions the initial works of renovation and that she begins her memoirs-writing. As references to the self and to the fortress keep converging, allusions to the castle increasingly resemble metaphors for the self.

To Bachelard, the attic is also the space of “rationality,” (34) and this contradiction—or rather, dual significance—points to Montpensier’s attic as both a nesting space and a platform from which to devote herself to intellectual work while surveying day and night the progress of her renovations:

Je travaillois depuis le matin jusques au soir à mon ouvrage, et je ne sortois de ma chambre que pour aller dîner en bas, et à la messe. Cet hiver-là étant assez vilain pour ne pouvoir s’aller promener, dès qu’il faisoit un moment de beau temps, j’allois à cheval, et, quand il geloit trop, me promener à pied, voir mes ouvriers. Je fis d’abord faire un mail ; il y avoit des arbres plantés, mais il y avoit tant de ronces et de trous que l’on n’eût pas jamais su croire que l’on eût pu faire une allée. Mais à force de faire couper les broussailles et porter de la terre, l’on trouva une belle allée ; mais ne la jugeant pas assez longue pour faire un mail, je la fis allonger de cent pas en terrasse. Ce qui fait un fort bel effet : car de cette terrasse l’on voit le château, un faubourg, des bois, des vignes, une prairie où passe une rivière, qui est l’été un étang ; ce paysage n’est pas mal agréable. Saint-Fargeau étoit un lieu sauvage, que l’on n’y

avois une telle crainte, que j’en étois hors de moi » (II, 226-7). Thus, the prospect of being arrested and imprisoned compounded the sense of estrangement, loss and distress brought on by her exile.

trouvoit pas des herbes à mettre au pot, lorsque j’y arrivai. Pendant que je travaillois à mon ouvrage, je faisais lire ; et ce fut en ce temps que je commençai à aimer la lecture, que j’ai toujours fort aimée depuis. En rangeant mes cassettes et papiers, je me souvins de la *Vie de madame de Fouquerolles*, que Préfontaine avoit à moi. Il me la rendit, et je l’achevai ; et, comme j’avois fort envie de dire quelque chose de tout ce qui s’étoit passé, je trouvai invention d’en mettre quelque petite chose. (II, 242-3).

Since “ouvrage” indistinctly denotes needlework, art and architectural work, and any scientific and literary work,¹⁰⁴ among other meanings, it is unclear, on a first reading, to which of these meanings Montpensier is referring. To be sure, ‘ouvrage’ is both the work of the ‘ouvrier,’ or manual laborer, and the work of the artist—the work of the hand and the work of the mind. When designating some kind of needlework, it evokes the image of the woman in her tower, weaving and sewing together her life and fate. It certainly bodies forth centuries of association of woman and her *quenouille*. As Francesca C. Sautman observes in *La Religion du Quotidien: Rites et Croyances Populaires de la fin du Moyen Age* (1995), “filer est l’occupation de toute femme, qu’elle soit paysanne ou duchesse (...) A toute heure du jour, ainsi qu’à la veillée, les mains des femmes, si elles ne sont pas autrement occupées, filent. La quenouille devient l’emblème, la représentation de la femme” (38-9). This representation, Sautman adds, also becomes metonymical of the female genital (39) and is often imbued with references to negative magic powers (39-41). Most relevant to my purpose, *quenouille* is also associated with the act of production/creation: “Filer signifie donc aussi produire, créer, donner naissance à un être humain (...) C’est enfin à Aphrodite qu’échoit le fuseau; fileuse montée sur un char tiré par des oies, elle préfigure déjà peut-être les fées tissant les nuages et Ma Mère l’Oye, la fileuse-conteuse” (42).¹⁰⁵ However, since

¹⁰⁴ Furetière, s.v. “ouvrage.”

¹⁰⁵ The association with “filer” also points to Athena/Minerva. As a metonymy for woman, the distaff engendered expressions such as “tomber en quenouille” when a lineage is “traced through the female line, with no male heir.” Foucart, Antoine Duval, Jean, Madeleine Jeay, Kathleen E. Garay *The Distaff Gospels: A First*

Montpensier states that this is the moment when she decides to write her memoirs (II, 248), it is fair to assume that this *ouvrage* can be both the writing of her memoirs and the needlework that she does while she has someone read to her.

Both of Montpensier's architectural and literary *ouvrage* evoke a desire for creation and for order: while landscaping turns wilderness into civilization and is parallel to the reconstruction of the castle, writing gives meaningful shape to her life and articulates her sense of self. Here, both nature and self become objects of the reconstructive work. The "terrace"—a platform from which she can visually dominate her territory as it allows her to see the castle, the town, the woods, the vineries, a meadow and a stream—mirrors the memoirs as a field in which her life is cast firm in the orderly substance of language.

* * *

The Metaphor of the Maternal

As Montpensier incubates the self in the attic and finishes trimming excesses and filling holes both in her text and in the garden, her writing shapes history in her own terms and provides "une allée"—a path—on which to inscribe her journey, from her birth at the Tuileries to what may be cast as a second birth at Saint-Fargeau:

Modern English Edition of Les Evangiles Des Quenouilles. Broadview Press, 2006, note 3, pp. 65. The reference also points to Arnold van Gennep for a discussion of *quenouille* as a tool to mock "effeminate men and cuckolds" (65). In the sixteenth century, Catherine des Roches (1550-1587), reappropriates the term when, in her poem *A ma quenouille*, (Stanton, *The Defiant Muse*, 70), she revalorizes the distaff as her "amie" and asks her the right to write, thus, as Francesca C. Sautman has observed, giving to the distaff the authority to grant such a right (personal communication, December 5, 2006). There is little indication that the association of distaff with women changed in the seventeenth-century.

Le commencement du malheur de ma maison arriva peu après ma naissance, puisqu'elle fut suivie de la mort de ma mère; ce qui a bien diminué de la bonne fortune que le rang que je tiens me devoit faire attendre. Les grands biens que ma mère a laissés à sa mort, et dont je suis seule héritière, pouvoient bien, dans l'opinion de la plupart du monde, me consoler de l'avoir perdue. Pour moi, qui conçois aujourd'hui de quel avantage m'auroient été ses soins dans mon éducation, et son crédit, joint à sa tendresse, dans mon établissement, je ne saurois assez regretter sa perte (I, 2-3).

In the now safe house of Saint-Fargeau, Montpensier contemplates the misfortune of the Bourbon-Montpensier house, of which she is the last descendant and sole heiress. As Montpensier did when she first arrived at Saint-Fargeau and assessed its condition, this paragraph (in the second and third pages of the memoirs) reads as an appraisal of her life as a misfortune, a diminishment, a loss and a regret—in other words, a negative assessment. It dismisses the great wealth she inherited from her mother and emphasizes the good fortune, advantage and social status she would have gained, had her mother not died in childbirth. As the loss of the mother marks the beginning of Montpensier's memoirs, it also announces her other shortages: maternal love, care, and a finely arranged marriage. In contrast to the decay she finds at Saint-Fargeau, Montpensier's personal losses seem fundamental and irreversible. After all, and despite its medieval and bleak appearance, Saint-Fargeau is a “maison...bonne et forte,” with a sound and solid structure, well-designed, protective and defensive. By contrast, those who are meant to protect her either are dead or have betrayed her. As Montpensier puts it, this misfortune arrived at her birth and seems to have stayed permanently, the steady commander of a life over which she has no control. No resolution, no reparations, no hopes are ever given, but the bitter realization today, in the blatant loneliness of exile, of all the losses her mother's death entails.

The passage also underscores the multiplicity of meanings of the term *maison*. Like its English counterpart “house,” *maison* denotes at once a physical structure, a family

household, a genealogical lineage.¹⁰⁶ Symbolically, as Bachelard has argued, the “*maison natale*” or house in which one was born evokes the maternal space (57), and by extension, both an “*oniric*” and a material paradise (25-6). As such, “house” carries the promise or illusion of a return to the maternal space and a realization of unconscious desires—the fulfillment of which, I would add, materializes when its inhabitants make it their own, choose, whenever possible, its external appearance, and clean, organize and ornament its interior space.¹⁰⁷

In the seventeenth-century, in addition to denoting a physical structure, “*maison*” also referred to someone’s household, not only the family but all the members the staff. In the paragraph that immediately follows the death of her mother, Montpensier recounts that soon after, “*on fit ma maison, et l’on me donna un équipage bien plus grand que n’en ait jamais eu aucune fille de France, même pas une de mes tantes, les reines d’Espagne et d’Angleterre et la duchesse de Savoie*” (I, 3).¹⁰⁸ Here, the meaning of house, in its link to “*équipage*,” refers both to servants and expenses. The comparison of her household with that of European

¹⁰⁶ “Signifie aussi le ménage, les personnes qui composent une famille, qui habitent une maison; et le revenue don’t elle subsiste. Il n’a que luy et deux valets pour toute maison (...) En ce sens, on dit, la Maison du Roy, ou des Princes, pour dire, tous les Officiers. On a fait l’estat de la Maison de Monseigneur le Dauphin” (Furetière, s.v. *Maison*). Also, in the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, “*Maison*” is alternately “logis, bastiment fait pour y loger, pour y habiter (...) tous ceux qui sont d’une mesme famille (...) les officiers de bouche & de chambre, de garde-robe &c. (...) Race. Il ne se dit guere que des races nobles & illustres (...) On appelle aussi *La Maison Royale*, tous les Princes du Sang” (s.v. “*Maison*”).

¹⁰⁷ The desire for order and cleanliness does not negate the possibility of maintaining and dwelling in spaces of chaos as a manifestation of unconscious desires and needs.

¹⁰⁸ Over seventy persons constituted her staff. “Nearly forty senior staff members, including a personal physician, a surgeon, and an apothecary” (Pitts, 6); a chaplain, two almoners, an intendant, a treasurer and two assistants; “a governess and an undergoverness who themselves were entitled to a page, two lackeys, two chambermaids, and a valet of their own”; “pages, valets, squires, and ushers”; “coaches, a coachman and a postillion”; “detachments of the Swiss and French Guards, who were entitled to a daily ration of bread and wine” (6). Pitts adds: “The total staff (...) consumed a vast amount of food and drink, prepared by the household’s own cooks and bakers; there was also a constant need for candles to light the vast rooms of the palace, straw for the horses, and linen for the table, bedchambers, and persons of the house. In 1630, a typical year, the cost of all this grandeur came to nearly 83,000 livres” (6).

queens compounds the losses made at birth as it casts her as equal (or even above) other queens and, in this way, points to the position she aspired to hold. The implication is that due to exile she lost an “equipage” that was tantamount to a material paradise.

When Montpensier lived at the Tuileries, from her birth until her eviction in 1653, she was connected to the Louvre by a gallery that had been built to link both palaces: « Ma mère accoucha au Louvre; je fus logée aux Tuileries, qui y tiennent par la grande galerie, qui étoit le passage ordinaire par où on me portoit chez Leurs Majestés, et par où elles se donnoient aussi la peine assez souvent de me venir voir » (I, 4). Thus, the Tuileries’s relation to the Louvre—both close and away, separated from, while still connected to, the court—was similar to the geographical relation she recreated at Saint-Fargeau vis-à-vis Paris. In that sense, Saint-Fargeau reproduces the lost maternal and “oniric” space as it is both “proche” and “loin du monde.” In fact, her immediate landscaping of a “terrace” and an “allée” at Saint-Fargeau (see *supra* quote, cited from II, 242-3) signals this desire to reproduce the maternal space for they both evoke the gardens of the Tuileries, the Cours-la-reine built by Marie de Médicis¹⁰⁹ and the Parterre de Mademoiselle that lay on the other side of the Tuileries, between the palace and the Louvre (Fig. 12 Appendix B), all three of which she used as social rendez-vous during her daily walks. As a child and young woman, Montpensier lived in a palace of her own, neither with her father (who, when not in exile,

¹⁰⁹ As William Goode (2000) reports, in 1616, Marie commissioned “an esplanade which, beginning at the southwestern edge of the Tuileries gardens, would replace for almost a mile along the Seine the old “chemin de Chaillot”, ending at the present-day Place de l’Alma. This area, which took the name Cours-la-Reine in honor of Marie, consisted of a wide central *allée* bordered by a row of elms and flanked on each side by a narrower *allée* also edged by a row of elms, the four rows of trees thus outlining the three lateral paths. A *rond-point* marked the midpoint of this roadway, a wall protected it from the river and a ditch from the marshes and fields that lay in the direction of the future Champs-Élysées, at each end a gate and gatekeeper controlled those who used it. Marie’s Cours, however, was aimed at riders rather than walkers, and riders in carriages in particular (...) The new Cours-la-Reine quickly became a favorite gathering place for the leisured class and remained so for a long time » (1125). The Cours had also been taken by troops during the Fronde (I, 87-9), and, upon Montpensier’s return from Orléans, it was there that she was greeted by all Parisians (II, 56).

lived at the Luxembourg), nor with the court at the Louvre. As a result, she was in effect always in exile—out of place—even as a child, and even when she spent much of her time with the royal family [1, 7]. The fact that at the end of the day she went to her own home signals both the separation of houses and her ambiguous and uncertain status as someone who is—but not entirely—a member of Anne’s family.

Many were Montpensier’s attempts to find a substitute mother in female figures. These included her *gouvernante*, Madame de Georges (I, 64-5), who, she claims, loved her more than her own children (I, 64-5) and would not have left her even to become the *dauphin’s* governess (I, 85), but died when Montpensier was only fifteen (I, 64,5); her second *gouvernante*, Madame de Fiesque, against whom Montpensier rebelled for trying to exert excessive control over her at the age of sixteen, when she was no longer a child (I, 67; 72); her maternal grand-mother, Madame de Guise (1585-1656), for whom she initially felt “une amitié si forte (...) que je ne me pouvois passer de [la] voir tous les jours” (I, 72), but later distanced herself, calling her “ma grand’maman de loin; elle n’est pas reine” (I, 6); her stepmother, Marguerite de Lorraine (1615-1672), whom she initially tried to please (I, 89) but towards whom she later manifested contempt for not holding the rank and wealth her mother had (II, 55); and Anne d’Autriche, whom she called “ma *petite maman*,” (I, 8) and for whom she felt “tellement d’inclination, aussi bien que de devoir auprès d’elle que je la suivais partout; je me privois des promenades (...) pour lui tenir compagnie (...) la forte amitié que j’avois pour elle m’en faisoit tout souffrir” (I, 82-3), but whose neglect in establishing her marriage becomes the source of Montpensier’s disappointment with her and

the cause of a confrontation that led her to participate in the Fronde against Anne (I, 196).¹¹⁰

All these “mothers” fall short of the ideal model that only Marie de Médicis fully represents:

La reine, ma grand’mère, Marie de Médicis, m’aimoit extrêmement, et témoignoit, à ce que j’ai ouï dire, beaucoup plus de tendresse pour moi qu’elle n’avoit jamais fait pour ses propres enfants; et comme Monsieur en avoit toujours été le plus chéri, cette considération, jointe à l’estime et à l’affection qu’elle avoit eues pour ma mère, fait qu’on ne doit pas s’étonner de l’amitié qu’elle avoit pour moi. Néanmoins j’ai malheureusement été privée d’en recevoir les effets par la disgrâce qui la fit sortir de France, parce que j’étois encore si jeune alors, que je ne me souviens pas seulement de l’avoir vue. Ce fut une perte qui ne me fut pas moins importante que celle que je fis à ma naissance, puisque je devois, selon toutes les apparences, rencontrer en cette grande reine ce que j’avois perdu par la mort de ma mère » (I, 4-5).

Not only is Marie the sole person who, as Montpensier’s grandmother, could have met her emotional needs, but as the queen of France, she could have ensured her social establishment as she did with her own daughters, all of whom she married to kings and sovereigns of Europe. As Montpensier places herself above Marie’s own children as preferred object of maternal affection, she casts herself in competition with all “fils” or “fille de France”—including her father, Gaston d’Orléans, her uncle, Louis XIII, and her aunts Elizabeth (1602-1644), Henrietta Maria (1609-1669), and Christine Marie (1606-1663), respectively queens of Spain and England, and Duchesse de Savoie.

¹¹⁰ See next chapter for detailed study on the issue of Montpensier’s marriage. In addition to these maternal figures, other women of high rank served as models for Montpensier. These include: her aunt Jeanne-Baptiste de Bourbon (1608-1670), natural daughter of Henri IV and Charlotte des Essarts, who became Comtesse de Romorantin, Abesse de Fontevault, and “chef d’ordre, avec pareil pouvoir et juridiction sur les couvents d’hommes de l’ordre de Fontevault que sur ceux des filles et ne reconnoît aucune puissance ecclésiastique que celle du Pape” (I, 28) and whom she finds as having great merit for ruling the abbaye so well (III, 178); her first cousin, the Infanta Isabelle-Claire-Eugénie d’Autriche, daughter of Philippe II and Elisabeth de France (and thus sister of Anne d’Autriche), who ruled the Spanish Netherlands together with her husband the Archiduc Albert (I, 213); and her distant cousin, through the Montpensier line, Madame de la Tremouille (1601-1665) who was “une des plus illustres dames de ce siècle” (III, 178). Even the Infanta of Spain is hailed, at one point, as the only female that equals or surpasses her in a competition to marry Louis XIV, as Montpensier claims that “J’étais le meilleur parti [pour le roi] de tous ceux que l’on lui pouvoit donner, hors l’Infante d’Espagne” (I, 316).

As Montpensier reconstructs a maternal space in Saint-Fargeau, she points to Marie not only as the mother she seeks to emulate but also as a model of female architectural patronage. No longer living in—and writing from—the attic, she can now admire the beauty of her palace and reflect on the joy she felt as she dwelled in her new home:

Ma chambre est assez jolie, et un cabinet au bout et une garde robe, et un petit cabinet où il n'y a de place que pour moi. Après avoir été huit mois dans un grenier, je me trouvois logée comme dans un palais enchanté. J'ajustai le cabinet avec force tableaux et miroirs ; enfin j'étois ravie et croyois avoir fait la plus belle chose du monde. Je montrois mon appartement à tous ceux qui me venoient voir avec autant de complaisance pour mon œuvre qu'auroit pu le faire la reine, ma grand'mère, lorsqu'elle montrait son Luxembourg (II, 283-4).

In this rich passage, the reference to Marie de Médicis as her “grand'mère” and the comparison of Saint-Fargeau to the Luxembourg and of herself to Marie points to Montpensier's desire to imitate the queen for her architectural accomplishment, and more profoundly, a daughter's desire to imitate her mother. It establishes a relational equation between, on the one hand, Marie de Médicis (the queen and surrogate mother) and the Luxembourg (the ideal palace), and, on the other hand, herself (the grand-daughter and aspiring queen) and Saint-Fargeau (the magically reproduced palace). As such, it sets the architectural standard to which Montpensier aspires and serves as a strategy to elevate herself and Saint-Fargeau to the compared objects—a queen and her magnificent palace. At the same time, both Marie and Montpensier emerge as makers, creators, constructors, and mothers of the castle and self they build and nurture.

Montpensier's use of the term “oeuvre,” more than the previously used “ouvrage,” points to this creative and constructive aspect of Montpensier's and Marie's work and signals the way in which, rather than the passive dwellers of a given home, they become the agents

of its construction.¹¹¹ Like the queen, who showed her Luxembourg with great pleasure, Montpensier is thrilled to show her enchanted palace as both (her palace and herself) emerge from the “force miroirs et tableaux” she has hung on the walls of the most private and intimate space, the “cabinet” or study. It is not clear whom the paintings represent, but it would be safe to assume that she would place portraits of herself in this smaller and private room.¹¹² As to the mirrors, they adorn, reproduce, and amplify the walls of the study. Further, Beugnot reminds us, mirrors function as tools for self-knowledge (18), and as such, they help turn her retreat into a space that, instead of despair, loneliness and sadness, promotes the comfort of self-discovery. In this sense, one could conclude that the castle—with its mirrors, its portraits and all formal imprints reflecting royalty, as I show below—builds her as much as she does the castle.

The passage—with its reference to the maternal figure and the enclosed spaces—creates a metaphor of birth that is first evoked by the eight months Montpensier spends in the attic, close to the time a baby spends in the maternal womb, followed by the moment in which she leaves the attic. As these references summon the image of birth, they evoke the instant of separation in space, from the inside to the outside, from the maternal space to the outer world, from the dark “grenier” to the “palais enchanté.” The metaphor also works to

¹¹¹ La Furetière’s first acception is “être qui est produit par un agent.”

¹¹² In her recent study on Montpensier’s portraits, Elise Goodman (2008) mentions a portrait by “an anonymous seventeenth-century painter (...) [that] attests to Montpensier’s pride in her role of architect of Saint-Fargeau. She stands in full-length in a room that looks out to the *corps-de-logis* (main portion of the front of the building), which is dotted with two of the six towers of her chateau. At the same time, she calls our attention to the architectural plan of the building that lies on her desk. That she was the inventor of this plan and its concrete realization proceeds from the inkstand on the desk, a sign of her creativity. This portrait still hangs at Saint-Fargeau” (104). Unfortunately, as I have verified with M. Guyot, current owner of the chateau, in a visit to the castle in July 2007 and in a personal communication dated September 10, 2008, this portrait has been altered, making it impossible to attribute it solely to a seventeenth-century painter. A close look at the painting reveals that only what lies within the “médaillon” around Montpensier’s face and chest belongs to the period, while the background and views on the courtyard of Saint-Fargeau are a nineteenth-century restoration (Fig. 6 Appendix B).

describe the changes made both in the castle and in herself during that time, as she pieces together her memoirs, while completing her apartment with a bedroom, a study, a wardrobe and a smaller study “où il n’y a de la place que pour moi.” That the apartment had such a small and private study reinforces the theme of the retreat and exile of the self: according to the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, a “cabinet” is a “lieu de retraite pour y travailler ou converser en particulier, ou pour y serrer des papiers, des livres, ou quelque autre chose, selon la profession ou l’humeur de la personne qui y habite (s.v. “Cabinet.”) In addition, for Furetière, the ‘cabinet’ is also a “lieu retiré où l’on tient le plus précieux” (s.v. “Cabinet.”) As Mark Girouard (2000) observes, the *cabinet* was used by both men and women, although “more often” by women who used it not only to study or write, but also to “enjoy intimate conversations with a few people, or just one person—or alternatively [to] indulge in the pleasures of creative fantasy” (117). By this “creative fantasy,” Girouard refers to the association of *cabinets* with *rêver* or daydreaming that recurs in Madeleine de Scudéry’s prescription, in *Clélie*, that one should use a *cabinet* when one is upset by a love-affair; conduct private interviews; keep pictures that have an emotional association; and write poetry (118). In other words, the *cabinet* can serve business, personal, and creative purposes.¹¹³ Thus, the design of such a room in Montpensier’s new apartment points to a

¹¹³ In line with Scudéry’s prescription, Elisabeth Goldsmith (1988) observes that “the ‘cabinet’ was an enclosure that came to be seen as a place of escape not only from official history but from all forms of public interaction, an escape to a more authentic encounter of the individual with inner life” (4-5). She adds that the *cabinet* was also perceived as “predominantly female” (4), a claim that resonates with the fact that learned and privileged women did, indeed, make use of the *cabinet*, from Marie de Gournay, who kept her books in it (Harth 19), to Catherine de Médicis, who conducted many of her state affairs in a *cabinet* at Chenonceau, to Marie de Médicis, who, at her Luxembourg palace, had both a “Cabinet Doré” filled with canvases portraying the Medici family (Blunt 125) and a Cabinet des Muses with ten paintings of Apollo and the Nine of Muses she commissioned (Marrow 29). Girouard’s history of the *cabinet* (111-127) also associates the *cabinet* mostly with women when he discusses its evolution from the *estude* that appears in the fourteenth century as a space for an individual’s private work and storage of books, manuscripts and valuables, an example of which is shown in a manuscript illustration of Christine de Pizan at work in her *estude* (112), to the still-existing mid-century *cabinet* designed by Francois Mansart in the chateau of Maisons, featuring a rounded room with mirror-lined

desire for privacy and focus on herself that only a *cabinet* can provide. It is in this *cabinet* that she can conduct her business, write her memoirs, and even take refuge from the tribulations that resulted from the conflicted relationship with her father.

In a nearby room, which Montpensier describes as “une gallerie devant ma chambre,” she hangs almost thirty portraits of her royal relations:

Il y avoit une antichambre, ou j’avois toujours mangé, une gallerie devant ma chambre, où je fis mettre des portraits de mes plus proches, du feu roi, mon grand-père, et de la reine, ma grand-mère ; du roi et de la reine d’Espagne, du roi d’Angleterre et de la reine, sa femme ; du roi, de la reine, de Son Altesse royale et de ma mère et ma belle-mère, et de Monsieur ; du roi d’Angleterre et du duc d’York, de M. le Prince et de madame la Princesse, et de M. de Montpensier, qui étoit en la plus belle place, quoiqu’il ne fut pas le plus grand seigneur : c’est le maître du logis ; et j’ai éprouvé que, s’il ne m’en avoit pas laissé, je n’en aurois point. Madame de Guise y est avec ses enfants, M. le prince de Joinville, le duc de Joyeuse, le chevalier de Guise et mademoiselle de Guise. Madame de Savoie m’envoya le sien, celui de son mari, de son fils et de ses trois filles, dont l’aînée a épousé le prince Maurice de Savoie, son oncle, l’autre l’électeur de Bavière, et madame la princesse Marguerite. Il y a encore des places, et j’ai encore assez de cousins germains pour les remplir (II, 283).

As Montpensier builds with brick and mortar the house in which she now lives, she inscribes with ink on paper the house or lineage to which she belongs. She does so by mentioning each of the royal relations whose portraits she hangs in her gallery, including those of her paternal grandparents Henri IV and Marie de Médicis; Philip IV (1605-1665) of Spain and her aunt Elizabeth (1602-1644), whom he married in 1615; Charles I (1600-1649) of England and her aunt Henrietta Maria (1609-1669), whom he married in 1625; her uncle Louis XIII (1601-1643) and his wife Anne d’Autriche (1601-1666); her father Gaston d’Orléans and her

walls (199). Girouard draws from Scudéry’s prescriptions and descriptions of the *cabinet* to make a link between this space and the so-called *précieuses* (119-120). Still, this strong association of the *cabinet* with women should be nuanced with the recognition that men used the cabinet with the same purposes: to keep valuables, to maintain private conversations with intimates only, to take care of personal business. And although other critics, such as Mark Wigley, whose reading of Alberti’s treatment of the “cabinet” in *De Re Aedificatoria* (1450) leads him to conclude that it was an inherently male space (347-8), I would suggest that overstated claims about the gendering of the *cabinet* should be read with caution and discussed within specific historical and cultural contexts.

mother Marie de Bourbon-Montpensier, his second wife, Marguerite de Lorraine (1615-1672), and Phillipe d'Orléans (1640-1701), brother to Louis XIV; her cousins Charles II (1630-1685) of England and his brother James II, Duke of York (and later King James VII) (1633-1701); her distant cousin Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé (1621-1686) and his wife Claire-Clémence de Maillé Brézé, niece of the Cardinal Richelieu. M. de Montpensier, her maternal grandfather and the last owner of Saint-Fargeau, was Henri de Bourbon, Duc de Montpensier (1573-1608). In 1597, he married Henriette Catherine de Joyeuse (1585-1656) who, after his death, married Charles, Duc de Guise, in 1611, and was thereafter known as Madame de Guise. From this second marriage Henriette Catherine had seven children, although Montpensier only hangs the portraits of four of them. Finally, Montpensier includes her aunt Madame de Savoie, Christine Marie (1606-1663), also daughter to Henri IV and Marie de Médicis, who married Victor Amadeus, Duc de Savoie in 1619. The mentioned children are Charles Emmanuel II (1634-1675), who eventually married Montpensier's half-sister, Françoise Madeleine d'Orléans (1648-1664); Louise Christine (1629-1692), who married her own uncle, Maurice de Savoie; Adelaïde Henrietta (1636-1676), who married Ferdinand Maria of Wittelsbach, Elector of Bavaria; and Marguerite Yolande (1635-1663), who married the Duc of Parme.

These portraits reconstitute her family in a space whose shape and function as a gallery evoke a former gallery, at the Tuileries, that connected Montpensier's home with that of the royal family at the Louvre (Fig. 9 Appendix B). At the same time, this space also imitates Marie de Médicis's gallery at the Luxembourg, since its portraits function as a public affirmation of Montpensier's royal identity. As such, they are a visual display of her rank and of a lineage made up of kings and queens of Europe, who are all her grandparents,

aunts, uncles and cousins. In this sense, these portraits serve as mirrors in which she can see her royal selfhood. Yet, there are two conspicuous absences in this gallery—Louis XIV and her four half-sisters through her father’s second marriage. Instead of placing the portrait of the king “dans la plus belle place,” Montpensier reserves this honor to her maternal grandfather, M. de Montpensier, a choice that compounds the absence of Louis’s portrait. As she places the patriarch of her maternal family on top of the fireplace, she erects a household *other* than that of the court—thus evoking the “other world” she had referred to earlier, founded by a master of the house without whom she would have neither existed nor found shelter and protection.

The royal lineage drawn in this gallery of portraits resembles the genealogy Montpensier traces out of the history of ownership of the chateau, a collection of estate documents that she unearths from one of its treasure chests:

Il est bon de dire comme [Saint-Fargeau] m’est venue ; car de Jacques Cœur à moi il y a quelque chemin. Comme il fut disgracié, on décréta son bien : Antoine de Chabannes, grand maître de France, l’acheta. Depuis, au règne de Louis XI, où il fut disgracié, l’on voulut lui imputer qu’il s’étoit prévalu de sa faveur et de la disgrâce de Jacques Cœur pour avoir son bien à bon marché. Il l’acheta une seconde fois, ne voulant pas qu’il lui fut reproché d’avoir le bien d’un homme disgracié pour rien ; et de ce que je dis, j’en suis fort informée, car j’en ai trouvé les contrats dans le trésor de Saint-Fargeau ; ce qui m’a bien réjouie ; car j’aurois été en fort grand scrupule d’avoir du bien d’autrui, et même il me déplairoit fort s’il y en avoit parmi le mien qui vînt de confiscation ; mais, Dieu merci, je n’ai pas ce déplaisir ; car tout ce que je possède est venu par de bonnes voies. Et j’en aurois encore davantage si l’on me rendoit tout ce que l’on a à moi.¹¹⁴

Ce grand maître de Chabannes eut de Marie de Nanteuil un fils, nommé Jean de Chabannes, comte de Dammartin, qui épousa Suzanne de Bourbon, comtesse de Roussillon ; et Antoinette de Chabannes, leur fille, épousa René d’Anjou, marquis de

¹¹⁴ The reference to the estates Montpensier would have had should she get back what has been taken away from her is an allusion to the estate of Champigny, which she also inherited from her mother, and which Richelieu forced Gaston to exchange for his Vaux-le-Vicomte while she was still a minor. As I show below, Montpensier eventually sued Richelieu’s successor and recovered her estate. The references to the disgraced minister and the concern about owning property that comes from “de bonnes voies” is also an allusion to those ministers, who like Richelieu, increased their wealth through confiscation and other forms of coercion.

Mézières ; leur fils s'appela Nicolas d'Anjou, qui eut, de Gabrielle de Mareuil, Renée d'Anjou, femme de Francois de Bourbon, duc de Montpensier, père et mère de mon grand-père. Voilà à quoi le séjour de Saint-Fargeau m'a servi ; car il m'a appris ma généalogie (II, 309).

Montpensier gives an account of the sequence of marriages, births, deaths, acquisitions and renovations carried out on the chateau from its founding down to herself. That she ends this narrative of ownership with the term “ma généalogie”—that is, the history of my ancestors down to myself—shows the link between estate histories and family kinships, since properties were usually passed on from one generation to the next, rather than purchased. At the same time, here is an explicit recognition of the value of Saint-Fargeau in the process of self-reconstruction. As she discovers in the castle's coffer the source of a property that came to her “par de bonnes voies,” not only does she point to a concern that her estate come from clean and good sources, but she also emphasizes her own legitimate ancestry. In addition, this genealogy shows the elevation of the castle's ownership, as it passes from the hands of Jacques Coeur (1395-1456), a bourgeois who worked for Charles VII, to those of Antoine de Chabannes Comte de Danmartin (1408-1488), to René d'Anjou, Marquis de Mézières, to Francois de Bourbon, duc de Montpensier (1542-1592). In most cases, social rise occurs through the marriage of a daughter, Antoinette de Chabannes and Renée d'Anjou, and, eventually, Montpensier's mother, Marie de Bourbon-Montpensier, who married Gaston d'Orléans. Again, castle and self converge, this time not only in terms of spatial and bodily experience but also in terms of lineage and genealogies.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Montpensier emphasizes the importance of genealogies for people of her rank when she adds: “Ces généalogies m'ont fort divertie, et même je fis venir une fois à Saint-Fargeau le sieur d'Hosier pour me dresser des quartiers que je voulois faire mettre dans la salle; et pendant le séjour qu'il fit à Saint-Fargeau, après qu'il m'eût fait connoître que j'étois de la plus grande et de la plus illustre maison du monde (ce qui est assez agréable à savoir à une personne de mon humeur), il me fit les alliances de quantité de grandes maisons du royaume ; ce qui seroit assez nécessaire que les personnes relevées en qualité au-dessus des autres sussent pour y mettre la différence qu'il y devoit avoir, et qui n'y est pas par l'ignorance que l'on en a » (II, 309-310). As

* * *

A Royal Chateau for a Royal Self

Once settled in her new apartment, Montpensier decides to undertake major architectural renovations of the castle that she now considers profoundly hers: «je retournerai à mon Saint-Fargeau, où je fis bâtir pour de bon (...) Je fis venir de Paris un architecte nommé Le Vau. Ce bâtiment a duré jusqu'à ce que j'en sois partie ; et je l'ai laissé en état d'y loger » (II, 309). Written in hindsight after her exile has ended, some time after 1657, the possessive adjective « mon » signals the recently forged closeness between self and castle. The architect she hires is not Louis Le Vau (1612-1670), Louis XIV's *architecte du roi*, who designed Versailles, the Chateau de Vincennes, du Raincy, the Collège des Quatre-Nations (now Institut de France), Vaux-le-Vicomte (along with André le Nôtre and Charles Le Brun), and parts of the Louvre (along with Claude Perrault), but his lesser-known and younger brother, Francois Le Vau (1613 or 1623-1676).¹¹⁶ Both brothers had worked together on the interior redesign of the Hotel Sully and the hotel of the Abbé de la Rivière on the Place Royale in

the frequent references to rank and social status make clear, Montpensier's sense of self is grounded on establishing herself at the top of the social hierarchy.

¹¹⁶ Son of the royal architect Louis I le Vau, François le Vau appears as "architecte des bâtiments du roi" as early as 1643. In 1662-1664, working on orders from Colbert, François le Vau made designs that preceded what would later become the *colonnade* of the great (east) façade of the Louvre as well as other sections of this palace. Other works of importance include the chateau de Lignières in 1656 for Jérôme de Nouveau, surintendant general des postes, and the chateau of Bercy, in 1658 for Charles Henri de Malon, premier president du Parlement; Place Royale (des Vosges) and a series of row houses on the Ile Saint-Louis. In 1662-1663 he began working for Colbert as supervisor of the building of bridges and roads, and in 1678, he became a founding member of the Royal Academy of Architecture. For more details on his life and works, as well as images of his designs, see Robert W. Berger's *The Palace of the Sun: The Louvre of Louis XIV* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press 1993, pp. 13-20 and related notes).

Paris (Claude Mignot 97). Although Francois le Vau was already an established architect, it is not clear why Montpensier hired him instead of his brother or a more renowned architect. Still, the choice might point to her desire to have more control over the architectural choices to be made at Saint-Fargeau since a lesser-known architect might be more willing to execute her preferences and experiment with forms.

Montpensier prepares to build “pour de bon” and make structural changes to the property, and, in doing so, she reproduces the gendered hierarchies the dwelling of the newly built space will imply. As Helen Hills (2003) has observed, “it is above all in the built environment (...) that gendered relationships are produced, reproduced and written into the body” (8). Gender constructions are evident not only in architectural discourse on, say, the Orders, as I showed in the first chapter of this dissertation, but also in architectural space itself as it “reinforces the taxonomic principles underlying all the arbitrary provisions of a culture.” Hills continues: “this is particularly evident in early modern architectural practice, with its emphasis on social hierarchy as spatially performed through etiquette, processional ritual, and the conjuring of vistas and enfilades to evoke the distance conferred by power” (8-9). Thus, while Saint-Fargeau’s medieval structure as a defensive and protective fortress served Montpensier’s needs at the beginning of her exile, once she is secure, her next strategy is to transform its structure as best she can so that spaces and forms can now serve to highlight her status as someone of the highest rank—a royal princess, first cousin to the king.

According to Claude Mignot, the changes Le Vau made on the fortress include the addition of a new inner façade wrapping four of the five walls facing the courtyard (97). Still existing today, the additional façade creates spacious and well lit galleries in front of the old structure that allow for circulation from one tower to another (Figs. 4 through 9 in Appendix

B). On these walls, large rectangular and traceried windows with balustrades allow plenty of light into the galleries and apartments. The result is an enlarged space in which to dwell and move about without constraints—a space that speaks what Alice T. Friedman (1989) has identified as “the language of power” (36), a language that reflects the status and wealth of its patrons, and which here is signaled by the abundance of light coming from large windows (Fig. 10 in Appendix B). The design of Montpensier’s apartments transforms the interior space of the former medieval fortress into a princely apartment similar to those found in royal palaces, such as the Tuileries and Chambord, the fairy-like chateau built by Francois I in the Loire valley during the early sixteenth century (Figs. 11 and 12 of Appendix B). Here, rooms are no longer dark, dank and hidden, but rather, they recreate stratified spaces into which occupants are allowed according to their ranks and privileges.

The façade is made of walls in the same rose bricks as the towers, alternated with white marble stones. Contrary to much of the architecture of the period, this facade does not display the Orders. Instead, it is structured in the form of large symmetrical arcades, separated from each other by square pillars whose masonry alternates pink and white stones. Above each arcade and separated by additional square windows, the pink facades display Montpensier’s arms and initials (AMLO) and the royal emblem of *fleur-de-lys* representing the house of the Bourbons on white marble stones (Figs. 10 and 13 of Appendix B). The contrast of colors and materials, as well as Montpensier’s emblems, lend an overall visual appeal and magnificence that evoke the royal self she has been simultaneously reconstructing in her memoirs. And as her arms, initials and emblems lie engraved on the façade’s walls, thus writing on the bricks and mortar of the chateau the substance of who she is, self and castle converge once again, this time through actual inscriptions on the walls.

The second major change Le Vau executed for Montpensier is the opening of a large entrance leading to a round open vestibule or hall at the corner of two adjacent walls, at the center of the courtyard (Fig.14 in Appendix B), across from the castle's main entrance. The vestibule is accessed through a large semi-circular "perron" or large, rounded, external stairway leading up to the entrance. Both the open entrance, which is divided in three arcades, and this wide stairway allow for more magnificent moves in and out of the entrance, rather than unglamorously squeezing through its formerly narrow medieval openings.¹¹⁷ The result reinforces the effect of royal grandeur offered by the redesigned galleries and apartments since it provides a staged platform in which to perform majestic entrances and exits, as she moves about, followed and watched by the members of her court.

To the left, the vestibule gave access to the main apartments, to the right to a newly built vast "salle de garde" and straight ahead, to a renovated chapel, also built by Le Vau. Topped by a low dome surmounted by a "lanternon" or lantern—a rounded structure with arched windows (Fig. 16 in Appendix B)—, the chapel's circular interior is entirely made of marble stone, including its floors, which display a checkered black and white design. Montpensier had Le Vau cover its walls with bare pilasters topped by the volutes of the Ionic order (Fig. 17 in Appendix B). This modification of the Ionic order, turning the originally round and fluted column into square and bare pilasters, might be seen as emblematic of the inversions of gender hierarchies that keep recurring in Montpensier's memoirs.¹¹⁸ As I showed in the previous chapter, Vitruvian architectural discourse of the period prior to

¹¹⁷ For a contrast with medieval doors, see in Fig. 19, Appendix B, a photograph of the "Porte Jacques Coeur" built in the castle's basement, in the 15th century. Low and narrow, doors like these have been responsible for the death of a king in France, as was the case of Charles VIII (1470-1498), husband to Anne de Bretagne (1477-1514), who died after hitting his head with the top of a similar door at Amboise.

¹¹⁸ And in her novels, as I show in Chapter IV.

Perrault established that the Ionic fluted columns topped by volutes signify matronly femininity, while bare shafts stand for the alleged strength and orderliness of the male body. Here, bare shafts, reinforced by the severe square lines of pilasters, replace the fluted lines. Yet, the top of each pilaster exhibits the volutes that designate the female head. As a result, this shift creates an inversion of traditional gender hierarchies whereby body is associated with femininity and mind with masculinity.

In fact, Montpensier's chapel could be interpreted as a visual allegory in which female heads reign over male bodies. It corresponds to instances of gender hierarchy inversion that occur in the memoirs, as Montpensier represents herself above and against male others, when she emphasizes qualities of her own that are traditionally masculine (such as military courage and heroism) or recounts actions she has performed normally reserved for men (such as picking a spouse of her own liking and elevating him through gifts of estate titles). The confections of castle and self reinforce the impact of this architectural gender inversion.

Finally, Montpensier made changes to the roof of the fortress that emphasize its noble—royal—status. First, she changed its old red tiles, a “peasant” material, to dark blue slates, a more “noble” and urban material that contrasts with the pink walls of the façade, thus increasing its overall visual appeal. Second, on these roofs she added small round and oval windows known as “oeil-de-boeuf, as well as lanterns on top of the conic roofs of the towers. While the “oeil-de-boeuf” is used in royal chateaux throughout the seventeenth century and beyond, the lanterns replicate those on top of the main dome of the Tuileries and of several of the towers of Chambord (Fig. 18 in Appendix B).¹¹⁹ These changes on the roof drastically modified the external appearance of the castle, and, as they evoked images of

¹¹⁹ In fact, visual references to Chambord evoke one of the few happy moments between Montpensier and her father, when she was ten years old, visiting him at Chambord, as I show below.

royalty through references to Francois I's and Catherine de Médicis's architectural choices, they served to elevate the otherwise modest fortress into a more royal chateau. Further, when seen in combination with the castle's newly added round shapes—as rendered by the semi-circular staircase, the dome on the chapel, the circular interior of the chapel, the “oeufs-de-boeuf” and the roundness of the arcades of the façades—these new lanterns on the roof also contribute to lending “feminine” shape to the otherwise “masculine” lines of the fortress.

In sum, Montpensier's new apartments, the “salle de garde,” the majestic stairway, the roofs, the facades with large windows and balustrades, and the walls engraved numerous times with the *fleurs-de-lys*, her arms and initials—all contribute to create the magnificence of a royal palace suited for a princess of her rank. As she writes, « ce bâtiment m'a donné beaucoup de divertissement, et ceux qui le verront le trouveront assez magnifique et digne de moi » (II, 309).

Not only did Montpensier build a castle “worthy of her,” she turned it into a chateau where she could recreate a court of her own. In her study of Montpensier's exile, Juliette Cherbuliez (2005) observes that “Montpensier constructed a court-in-exile to replace the society from which she had been banished (...) [and reproduce] the very kinds of sociability that Louis XIV's cultural machine would attempt to foreclose” (50). Cherbuliez casts Montpensier's strategy as a political act framed within a general attempt by the post-Fronde nobility to exercise, through the “culture of *divertissement*” a form of “control over their society in many venues and on many levels of political significance” (50). To be sure, these *divertissements* do serve to assert an identity, though, in my view, their scope is politically limited.

Montpensier's court was neither a "social formation that denies support to the regicentric aristocratic culture of Louis XIV," as Juliette Cherbuliez asserts in an earlier study (2000, 130), nor simply a *salon*, as Faith Beasley (2006, 29) claims, and which Carolyn Lougee describes as "merely an extension of the institutionalized court which since the early sixteenth century had accorded royal women positions of leadership in matters of taste and pleasure" (5). Far from just hosting regularly scheduled social gatherings each week with the purpose of sharing intellectual and literary ideas and works, like the ones held by the Marquise de Rambouillet in her *Chambre Bleue*, Mlle de Scudéry and Madame de Sablé, among others, Montpensier established a veritable court in which the holding of a literary circle was just one amongst the many *divertissements* she employed to maintain an active social life.

To be sure, the creation of a court of Montpensier's own involved the reproduction of what Norbert Elias describes as the typical court of the *Ancien Régime*, that is, "both the first household of the extended royal family, and the central organ of the entire state administration" (1), where:

hundreds and often thousands of people were bound together in one place by peculiar restraints which they and outsiders applied to each other and to themselves, as servants, advisers and companions of kings who believed they ruled their countries with absolute power and on whose will the fate of all these people, their rank, their financial support, their rise and fall, depended within certain limits. A more or less fixed hierarchy, a precise etiquette bounded them together (35).

Certainly, Montpensier's court does not include hundreds or thousands of people: its scale is much smaller than that of a king. Still, it consists of many of the elements of a princely—if not royal—court. First, when her household was established at the Tuileries, it was always centered around Montpensier as its head and organized in a stratified community involving over seventy servants, advisors, and companions, each living in their own place in the

household, both physically and socially, knowing to whom they should report, whose lives depended to a great extent on her state.¹²⁰ There she received many visitors, whose gathering she referred to as “ma cour.”¹²¹ Once at Saint-Fargeau, she partially reconstitutes this household, entertains visitors, and maintains her position as its dominant figure—and a female one at that, since no father, no husband, no brother, and no king live with her or ever visit her. Second, she is the chief manager of her household finances and of her not insignificant estate holdings—an estate that includes two principalities, one “dauphinat,” three dukedoms, one marquisates, one “comté” or county, three “vicomtés” or viscounties, one barony, and two other “seigneuries” or lesser domains (Vatout 324-5). Fourth, she reconstitutes symbolically the royal clan and household to which she belongs both in her memoirs and in her gallery of portraits, and replaces the king’s portrait with that of the master of her house, M. de Montpensier, creating a parallel household, a parallel dynasty that, although founded by a male, has been transmitted to her through her mother. This parallel court or “new world,” to evoke Edward Said’s term, is dominated by female figures, such as Marguerite de Valois and Marie de Médicis, who act as predecessors and models, and point to Montpensier’s own aspiration to become queen. The display of representational devices, such as portraits of her family and her emblems, assert her rank as twice a Bourbon, through her mother, Marie de Bourbon-Montpensier, and her paternal grandfather, Henri IV, and a member of the royal family.

Further, like a court, which has revenues and engages in a display of power, Montpensier collects income from taxes (II, 339, 368), from the creation of “charges” or

¹²⁰ See note 108 where I quote Vincent Pitts’s description of Montpensier’s household (6).

¹²¹ At Saint-Fargeau, those who visit her “faisoit une cour fort agréable” (II, 356); even at Forges, where she goes to take her medicinal baths while still in exile, her court “étoit toujours fort grosse” (II, 450).

governmental positions (III, 344), from the sale of wood (II, 367), and from the recovery of losses incurred during her minority (II, 359, 368). In addition, her subjects in the sovereign principality of Dombes parade in front of her the military honors due her as their sovereign in a display that she fears the king might hear about and feel threatened.¹²² Moreover, she also funds a hospital for charity at Saint-Fargeau—a social action that she continues throughout her life with the construction and permanent funding of the “collège de Trévoux,” in Dombes, and of several hospitals, hospices, and schools for orphan girls and boys in the comté d’Eu.¹²³

In the reconstructed chateau of Saint-Fargeau, Montpensier performs as a royal princess surrounded by nobles who visit and join her in *divertissements* such as hunting (II, 297) and walks in the nearby woods and in the “allées” and “terrace” she has recently made; comedy and musical performances (II, 294, 380, 422) in a theater she has built inside the chateau;¹²⁴ and the creation of a literary circle. As in any royal court, Montpensier’s creates a

¹²² Upon Montpensier’s visit to Dombes, in November 1657, shortly after her return from exile, “je trouvai à la porte de la ville le lieutenant général avec les consuls qui me harangua à genoux et m’apporta les clefs de la ville. Je fus droit à l’église, qui est assez belle, où je reçus encore une harangue par le doyen; puis on chanta le *Te Deum*; on tira le canon; toute la malice fit force salves (...) Ma cour fut grosse des officiers du parlement et de quelque noblesse (...) Le lendemain je fus à la messe à l’église; puis je dinai en public pour me montrer à mes sujets. Je reçus force harangues de toutes les villes et les présents de celle de Trévoux (...) Le parlement vint me haranguer en robes rouges; car je n’avois pas voulu qu’ils y vinsent à Lyon [où Montpensier était avec la cour du roi avant de passer par Dombes] de cette sorte, de peur qu’il ne s’y trouvât quelqu’un de la cour chez moi, et que l’on ne me fit la guerre que j’étois bien aise de me voir haranguée comme la reine et que l’on mit un genou en terre devant moi. Ils le mirent à Trévoux, comme font tous les parlements à leurs souverains, et je leur dis de se lever (...) En Dombes on y prioit Dieu que pour moi et point pour le roi (...) Je fis sortir force prisonniers; je donnai des grâces (...) J’avais créé un président, des conseillers et d’autres officiers en mon parlement » (III, 338-343). The account clearly emphasizes Montpensier’s performance of herself as royalty and a sovereign head of state.

¹²³ Montpensier built the hospital of Saint-Fargeau in 1657, the hospital and orphanage of Sainte-Anne, at Eu, in 1675; the hospice the Trévoux, in Dombes, in 1686; and the collège de Thoissey, near Trévoux, in 1680 (Mayer 112). See also note 24 in the Introduction regarding her construction of charity buildings such as hospitals, hospices, and schools for girls.

¹²⁴ Montpensier writes: « je ne songeai qu’à faire accommoder un théâtre en diligence. Il y a à Saint-Fargeau une grande salle qui est un lieu fort propre pour cela; j’écoulois la comédie avec plus de plaisir que je n’avois

gendered hierarchy, with herself as head of a social group that included duchesses, countesses and marquises, who either lived with her or came to visit for extended periods of time:

J'étois dans mon château de Saint-Fargeau, où, après avoir donné ordre à mes affaires (ce que je faisais deux fois par semaine pour l'ordinaire), je ne songeais qu'à me divertir. Madame la comtesse de Maure et mademoiselle de Vandy me vinrent voir en revenant de Bourbon; ce me fut une visite très agréable, étant des personnes de beaucoup d'esprit et de mérite, que j'estime fort. Mesdames de Monglat, Lavardin et de Sévigné y vinrent exprès de Paris; la première y avoit été déjà deux fois; madame de Sully y vint pendant qu'elles y étoient, et M. [le comte] et madame la comtesse de Béthune (...) Tout cela faisoit une cour fort agréable. Il y avoit aussi M. de Matha, qui commençoit à être amoureux de madame de Frontenac; son mari, Saujon et d'autres gens. Nous allions nous promener dans les plus jolies maisons des environs de Saint-Fargeau, où l'on me donnoit des collations; j'en donnois dans de beaux endroits des bois avec mes violons; enfin on tâchoit à se divertir (II, 356-57).¹²⁵

As some of these visitors stayed or were joined by others, they also created a literary circle with Montpensier: "Le soir, j'étois dans mon cabinet que je faisais écrire des vers et des

jamais fait. Le théâtre étoit bien éclairé et bien décoré ; la compagnie à la vérité n'étoit pas grande, mais il y avoit des femmes assez bien faites » (II, 249-50).

¹²⁵ According to Chéruef, the Comtesse de Maure was Anne Doni d'Attichy, who began her life at court as lady-in-waiting of Marie de Médicis until she married the comte de Maure in 1637, also uncle of Madame de Montespan, future mistress to Louis XIV, and her sister, Madame de Thianges, who was also a member of Montpensier's circle. She often visited the hotel de Rambouillet and maintained ties with writers and other people of letters (II, 356, note 2). Mademoiselle de Vandy belonged to Maure's circle, and had a reputation of outstanding wit, beauty and virtue (II, 356-7, note 3). Madame de Lavardin was Marguerite de Rostaing, a widow since 1644 of Henri de Beaumanoir, marquis de Lavardin (II, 357, note 3). Madame de Montglat, formerly mademoiselle de Chiverni, was part of Montpensier's circle since their childhood (I, 63-4) and was married to the marquis de Monglat, son of Montpensier's first governess, the Marquise de Saint-Georges (I, 3). Madame de Sully was Charlotte Séguier, daughter of Louis XIII's chancellor and wife of Maximilien de Béthune, duc de Sully, and was also an old acquaintance of Montpensier (I, 94, note 2). Frontenac was Montpensier's lady-in-waiting and lived with her at Saint-Fargeau. The Comte de Béthune was son of Gaston's "gouverneur" Philippe de Béthune, comte de Selles, who had excelled in his service to Henri IV. Having also participated in the Fronde (II, 107), he had a significant role in Montpensier's life, acting several times as arbiter in her conflict with her father (IV, 660). M. de Matha was a nobleman who had been in the service of Condé and who, after the Fronde's defeat, retired in his estate of Saint-Amand, nearby Saint-Fargeau. He visited Montpensier several times, accompanied by his wife and sister (II, 294; 326; 357). In a letter to Madame de Lafayette dated July 24, 1657, Mme de Sévigné mentions a similar visit « La veille de mon départ pour Livry, j'allai voir Mademoiselle, qui me fit les plus grandes caresses du monde. Je lui fis vos compliments, et elle les reçut for bien ; du moins ne me parut-il pas qu'elle eût rien sur le cœur. J'étais allée avec Mlle de Rambouillet, Mme de Valençay et Mme de Lavardin. Présentement elle s'en va à la cour, et cet hiver, elle sera si aise qu'elle fera bonne chère a tout le monde.» The allusion to Montpensier's absence of resentment towards Lafayette is that this "friend" had failed to visit her during her exile and feared Montpensier's disdain.

chansons dans un livre (...) Il y avait dans mon cabinet Mme de Thianges, Mlle de Vandy, celui qui écrivoit, Segrais, et un conseiller de Dombes” (III, 2).¹²⁶ The first of such literary pleasures was continuing the novel she had begun before her exile, entitled *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d’Herbigny Marquise de Fouquerolles* (1653), and which she describes as completed in collaboration with her ladies-in-waiting and her secretary Préfontaine.¹²⁷ The second production, a collection of *nouvelles* known as *Les Nouvelles Françaises ou les Divertissements de la Princesse Aurélie* (1656), has been alternately attributed to Montpensier or to her secretary Jean Regnauld Segrais.¹²⁸ However, in contrast to the references she makes of her other writings in the memoirs, Montpensier does not mention the *Nouvelles* as one of her creations.¹²⁹ Yet, while the extent of Montpensier’s role in its composition cannot be ascertained for sure, the facts that it was printed while both Segrais and she were still at Saint-Fargeau and that its introduction begins with references to her, her circle of friends, and the “châteaux des Six Tours,” which was Saint-Fargeau, lead to the conclusion that she must have been at least aware of it and given her permission for its composition. Therefore, this text can be read as the product of her patronage of a literary

¹²⁶ Jean Regnault de Segrais (1624-1701) who, at the time, was Montpensier’s secretary, was a writer and poet. He became a member of the Académie Française in 1662 while still in her service, but Montpensier dismissed him in 1671 for his involvement in the Lauzun’s affair (III, 541-43). He then became part of Mme de Lafayette’s literary circle.

¹²⁷ See a detailed study of this text in Chapter IV.

¹²⁸ See Juliette Cherbuliez’s *The Place of Exile* (2006), pp. 67-80. In addition, Joan Dejean, in *Tender Geographies* (1991), attributes its authorship to Montpensier (52), and points to the *Nouvelles*’s prologue, in which the narrator claims to be writing down the stories he heard directly from Montpensier: “Je fus fort attentif à son discours et, quelque temps après, j’écrivis cette histoire le plus conformément que je pus à ce que j’eus l’honneur de lui entendre dire” (Segrais 23). In this sense, Segrais would have acted as a simple cleric.

¹²⁹ As with her reference to *Vie de madame de Fouquerolles* cited above, Montpensier also discusses her writing of *Gallerie de Portraits* (1659) (III, 181, 187), *Relation de l’isle imaginaire* (1659) (III, 340-2), *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie* (1659) (III, 380), and the letters she exchanged with Mme de Motteville (1660-1661) (III, 452-4). No reference is made about her possible collaboration with Segrais in writing these *Nouvelles*.

artist—a patronage that, along with the hosting of comedians and musicians, intended to reinforce her construction of a court.

In this sense, the *Nouvelles* do, indeed, mirror Montpensier's aims of self-construction. Their introduction begins with her portrait as "[une] grande Princesse," "[une] illustre heroine" whose courage is "aussi relevé que sa naissance et son esprit est aussi étendu que l'un et l'autre;" continues with other praises (9), and makes references to her royal ancestry. Imitating the structure of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, which is cited in its introduction as their model and the work of Montpensier's great-great-grand-mother (22-3), the *Nouvelles*'s female narrators explain their creative act as a reaction to the foreignness of the characters and settings of novels of the period, such as *Astrée*, *Polexandre*, and *Le Grand Cyrus* (20-1) and then proceed to tell six *nouvelles*—a number that mirrors the structure of both the *Heptameron* and of the six towers of the chateau of Saint-Fargeau.¹³⁰

The reference to Marguerite de Navarre, rather than to a male writer, not only points to the female lineage that characterizes Montpensier's efforts of self-construction, as she did in her allusion to Marguerite de Valois, but also emphasizes the pleasure of writing during her retreat at Saint-Fargeau:

Ce sont des contes de ma grand'mère, dit Aurélie, riant de l'application qu'elle faisait d'une chose qui se dit si vulgairement; car j'ai ouï dire qu'elle était mère de Jeanne d'Albret, et je suis obligée d'en prendre le parti pour cette raison. Je vous avoue aussi que je trouve qu'ils avaient assez de plaisir en leur solitude et je crois que, si la reine de Navarre ne se fût point lassée d'écrire ou que le pont ne se fût point refait, ils raconteraient encore leurs histoires. Je pense même que nous ne ferions pas mal, si nous faisions comme eux (22-23).

¹³⁰ In addition, soon after her exile, Montpensier maintained this literary circle through a series of literary portraits that she exchanged with friends and others. In Chapter IV, I discuss in detail the self-portrait she wrote at Champigny in November 1657.

The reference to these two female ancestors completes the reconstitution of Montpensier's royal family, and adds legitimacy to her literary endeavors.¹³¹ At the same time, it underscores the site of solitude as a space that promotes the pleasure of creation. This point is suggested again after the narrator makes flattering portraits of Montpensier and her female friends. He asks: "Y a-t-il apparence qu'on se pût ennuyer avec une si agréable compagnie?" This is followed by an account of how they thought of nothing but "se divertir": "Les bals, la comédie, les promenades, les belles conversations et la lecture, avec la bonne chère qu'on y faisait, fournissaient à chacun de quoi contenter son humeur et faisaient trouver à tout le monde cette sorte de vie si douce si plaisante que les ballets de la Cour et les passe-temps de Paris n'en rendaient à personne l'éloignement ennuyeux" (15). The remark, as it opposes Saint-Fargeau's *divertissements* to the court's mere "passe-temps," mirrors Montpensier's strategy in the introduction to her memoirs, when she had cast her writing project as motivated by the aristocratic intention of pleasing herself and those who had encouraged her to write. Since it sets Saint-Fargeau in opposition to the royal court, it elevates Montpensier's own court and reinforces the image of her space of exile as representing anything but *désert* or social death.

* * *

From Paternal Oppression to Female Autonomy

¹³¹ Jeanne d'Albret (1528-1572), daughter of Marguerite de Navarre and mother of the future Henri IV, was queen of Navarre, like her mother, and also wrote her memoirs.

Between 1653 and 1657, Montpensier rebuilds Saint-Fargeau, reassembles her family and a court of her own, and aligns herself with female figures such as Marguerite de Valois and Marie de Médicis. At the same time, she casts herself in opposition to her father. Indeed, despite Saint-Fargeau's pink bricks, life was not all rosy for Montpensier and many were the days that she spent "enfermée dans [s]on cabinet à pleurer" (II, 295 and 363) as a result of her conflictive relationship with him. In fact, beyond her participation in the Fronde, this relationship emerges as one of the main plots of the first section of Montpensier's memoirs—a section that she stops drafting shortly after Gaston's death in February 1660. Initially, however, references to their relationship highlight Montpensier's joy to see her father, for instance, as when she was ten years old and visited him at Chambord:

Monsieur vint au-devant de moi jusqu'à Chambord, qui est à trois lieues de Blois; c'est un château qui lui appartient, bâti par Francois Ier d'une manière fort extraordinaire, au milieu d'un parc de huit ou neuf lieues de tour, sans autre cour qu'un espace qui règne autour d'une partie du logis, qui fait une figure ronde. Une des plus curieuses et des plus remarquables choses de la maison est le degré, fait d'une manière qu'une personne peut monter et une autre descendre sans qu'elles se rencontrent, bien qu'elles se voient ; à quoi Monsieur prit plaisir de se jouer d'abord avec moi. Il étoit au haut de l'escalier lorsque j'arrivai ; il descendit quand je montai, et rioit bien fort de me voir courir, dans la pensée que j'avois de l'attraper. J'étois bien aise du plaisir qu'il prenoit, et je le fus encore davantage quand je l'eus joint (I, 17-18).

As Montpensier climbs and Gaston descends the stairs, the game foretells a relationship in which, as she grows into adulthood and he declines in age and favor at court, they grow apart and are never reconciled. In the staircase game, however, they reunite in the father-daughter bond she longed for but never realized in her lifetime.

Eventually, Montpensier discusses their quarrels as they ensued their defeat at the Fronde and her subsequent attempt to recover the financial losses he incurred with her estate while she was a minor. In so doing, she casts him as an individual who lacks morality and

courage and fashions herself as the dutiful and obedient daughter who, after the indifference, abandonment and betrayal of a cowardly and greedy father, decides to break the mold of the patriarchal daughter and to expose him in all the splendor of his flaws.

These flaws are first apparent in her account of Gaston's betrayal of Cinq-Mars (1620-1642) a man who had collaborated with him in an earlier revolt against Richelieu, and whose execution, upon Gaston's denunciation (I, 54), did not seem to affect Gaston (I, 63). They reappear again in her narrative of the Fronde events, where her father is shown as a coward, irresolute and calculating man (I, 346; II, 91). Except for one letter in which Gaston praises her for taking the city of Orléans and showing herself to be the worthy granddaughter of Henri IV, he seems never to recognize his daughter's contributions to their cause, and, even after her action at the Bastille, when everyone, including Condé, praise her for saving them, he remains cold and distant. Montpensier's remark—"j'attribuai cela au repentir qu'il devoit avoir que j'eusse fait ce qu'il devoit faire" (II, 112)—reinforces the relational dynamic she established from the onset of the memoirs,¹³² a dynamic in which she frequently compares her character and heroism to his lacks and deficiencies—casting herself as brave, heroic and aware of her duty to the state, while he emerges as timid, weak and irresolute. One instance is Montpensier's version of his response to the defeat of the Frondeurs, a response that displays his betrayal and lack of integrity regarding his allies and his daughter:

J'entrai dans le cabinet de Madame, ou je trouvai Monsieur, à qui je demandai s'il avoit ordre de s'en aller. Il me dit qu'il n'avoit que faire de m'en rendre compte. Je lui dis: "Quoi! Vous abandonnez M. le Prince et M. de Lorraine!" Il me répliqua encore la même chose. Je le suppliai de me dire si je serois chassée; il me dit qu'il ne se mêloit point de ce qui me regardoit; que je m'étois si mal gouvernée avec la cour, qu'il déclaroit qu'il ne se mêleroit point de ce qui me regardoit, puisque je n'avois point cru ses conseils.

¹³² See above quote referring to Marie de Médicis in this chapter, cited from Montpensier's *Mémoires*, I, 4-5, where she casts herself in competition with her children for maternal affection.

Je pris la liberté de lui dire: “Quand j’ai été à Orléans, ç’a été par votre ordre; je ne l’ai pas par écrit, parce que vous me le commandâtes vous-même; mais j’en ai [de vos ordres par écrit] pour toutes les choses qui y étoient à faire, et même des lettres de Votre Altesse royale plus obligeantes qu’il ne m’appartenoit, où elle me témoigne des sentiments de bonté et de tendresse, qui ne m’eussent pas fait croire que Votre Altesse royale en dût user comme elle en use présentement. –Et l’affaire de Saint-Antoine, me dit-il, ne croyez-vous pas, Mademoiselle, qu’elle vous a bien nui à la cour? Vous avez été si aise de faire l’héroïne, et que l’on vous ait dit que vous l’étiez de notre parti, que vous l’aviez sauvé deux fois, que, quoi qu’il vous arrive, vous vous en consolerez, quand vous vous souviendrez de toutes les louanges que l’on vous a données” (II, 196).

In Montpensier’s version, Gaston’s refusal to give a valid and legitimate reason to his daughter for abandoning the Fronde’s cause may stem from contempt for her or from an unwillingness to admit what he has done—namely, as he foresaw their inevitable defeat, and, in the process, betray the Frondeurs, his daughter and the principles that had initially motivated him to participate in the revolt against Mazarin. As he reproaches her for not heeding his advice—that is, to act as cautiously as he and thus leave room for a possible reconciliation with the crown—he exposes his own calculations for self-preservation. That she has to bring up the letters he wrote to her as evidence that she acted according to his orders when she was at Orléans highlights the position of self-defense in which she has been thrown—a position she will be bound to maintain, as I show below, throughout her exile as their relationship worsens over financial issues. His disparagement of Montpensier’s military rescue of Condé, which he mocks as her wanting to “play the heroine,” resonates as the bitter response of the man who failed to do what he should have done. In contrast, Montpensier represents herself as grand and heroic:

J’étois dans un grand étonnement de le voir en telle humeur. Je lui répartis: “Je ne crois pas vous avoir plus mal servi à la porte Saint-Antoine qu’à Orléans. J’ai fait l’une et l’autre de ces deux choses si reprochables par votre ordre; et, si c’étoit encore à recommencer, je le ferois, puisque c’étoit mon devoir de vous obéir et de vous servir. Si vous êtes malheureux, il est juste que j’aie ma part à votre mauvaise fortune; et, quand je ne vous aurois pas servi, je ne lairrais pas d’y avoir participé.

C'est pourquoi, il vaut mieux, à ma fantaisie, avoir fait ce que j'ai fait, que de pâtir pour rien. Je ne sais ce que c'est que d'être héroïne: je suis née d'une naissance à ne jamais rien faire que de grandeur et de hauteur en tout ce que je me mêlerai [de faire], et l'on appellera cela comme l'on voudra; pour moi, j'appelle cela suivre mon inclination et suivre mon chemin; je suis née à n'en prendre d'autre" (II, 196-7).

Montpensier's adamant response emphasizes the gap between his petty temperament and her indignation at his behavior and casts her heroism not as a trait that she chooses to perform—or play at being—to feed her vanity, but as an urge that comes “naturally” to her, not only as the daughter who obeys her father but also for what is expected of someone of her rank. The evocation of her birth is a subtle reminder of his failure to live up to the expectations of his rank.¹³³

In a society in which daughters depend on fathers for protection among other things, Gaston commits the ultimate paternal betrayal, which is to deny Montpensier his protection and support in order to save himself. He compounds his betrayal by refusing to lodge her at the Luxembourg for fear of being associated with her in the eyes of the crown and accused of giving shelter to those who, unlike him, have not yet worked out a path for reconciliation (II, 198). This confrontation inaugurates the decline of their relationship as they begin to quarrel over her finances.

When Montpensier reaches the age of 25 and becomes of legal age, she decides to recover her estate of Champigny, which Gaston, who had been in charge of her estate during her minority, had been forced by Richelieu to trade for his Vaux-le-Vicomte. Since the laws do not allow him to dispose of her possessions—he can neither sell nor trade them—the

¹³³ The contrast between the two reemerges again, upon her return to the court, when she attempts to have her people reconciled with the court and expresses her concern to be likened to her father in his disloyalty towards his former allies. If she does not persist enough to obtain their pardon from the king, she argues, “le monde croira que je suis comme mon père, qui en toutes occasions, sacrifioit ceux qui l’avoient bien servi. Pour moi, je n’en userai jamais ainsi” (III, 49).

maneuver into which Richelieu had coerced him has no legal support and Montpensier initiates a lawsuit against Richelieu's successors to reclaim her property. Meanwhile, Gaston, who is apparently in need of money for his other four daughters (II, 282), decides to have her compensate him for managing her estate during her minority [II, 350]. Soon his request becomes a threat to take by force all her wealth and give her back only what pleases him should she fail to give him "voluntarily" everything he demands (II, 295). To make matters worse, Gaston's secretary, Nicolas Goulas, who had been in charge of Montpensier's accounts during her minority and apparently profited from it, accuses Montpensier's secretaries, Préfontaine and Nau, of having used her to sue Richelieu—a lawsuit that was about to expose Goulas's illicit maneuvers [II, 360-2]. Instead of taking his daughter's side, Gaston sends her a letter ordering her to fire both secretaries (II, 360-4). Gaston's letter, which Montpensier describes as "bien différente de celle qu'il m'écrivit à Orléans (...) il avoit besoin de moi en ce temps-là, et à cette heure je lui suis inutile" (II, 360)—reinforces Montpensier's previous account of Gaston's abandonment and betrayal and compounds his image as opportunistic, self-interested and lacking in affection and care for his daughter.

Firing her secretaries is apparently not enough, however, to appease Gaston's wrath and he refuses to see her and to receive her letters, even after he reconciles with the court in 1656 (II, 376, 385, 392, 396). After many quarrels, disputes, and tears, Montpensier concludes that all he wants is her money (II, 392), and, upon the king's intervention (II, 391), decides to "buy" his forgiveness by paying the indemnity he demanded (III, 41-6). As she concludes, "Monsieur me fait acheter son amitié bien cher" (III, 42). None of that, however, suffices to bring her what she desires most profoundly, which is his affection and his

attention to the matter of her marriage. Even after her exile, as she mentions this issue and compares his neglect to the care he took in her sister's marriage, he reacts furiously:

Au lieu de prendre cela en bonne part en père qui auroit de l'amitié pour sa fille, il le prit comme un homme plein de haine contre moi, et en qui l'on avoit effacé du coeur tous les bons sentiments que je veux croire qu'il avoit naturellement pour moi, au moins qu'il devoit avoir pour moi. Nous nous séparâmes assez mal. Il s'en alla fort en colère et me laissa en larmes, avec beaucoup de douleur de me voir si maltraitée par un père de qui je ne devois attendre que de l'amitié par toutes sortes de raison (III, 278).

Gaston's anger, hate, and mistreatment contrast with the reasons why he should act otherwise—namely, the “natural” feelings he should have as Montpensier's father, her participation in a war led by him, and, most recently, the marks of filial obedience she displayed when firing her trusted secretaries and paying the indemnity he had extorted from her. His refusal to demonstrate paternal love, care and gratitude, exposes his lacks and casts him as someone who is clearly beneath her.

Back at Saint-Fargeau, Gaston's behavior leads Montpensier to a state of depression (II, 295, 339-40, 363-4), illness,¹³⁴ and isolation from those who, like Mme de Frontenac and Mme de Fiesque, she claims, have taken her father's side and act as his spies (II, 365). As in the initial days of her exile, she decides to concentrate on her work:

Le matin, dès que j'étois éveillée, pendant que je m'habillois, on lisoit jusqu'à la messe. Après dîner, je travaillois à mon ouvrage. On lisoit encore jusqu'à ce qu'on ne vit plus goutte. Aux flambeaux, j'allois me promener une demi-heure dans la galerie; puis je venois travailler jusqu'au souper, après lequel je me promenois encore avec le comte d'Escars, et parlois au commis de Préfontaine, que j'avois voulu qu'il me laissât, pour compter toutes les semaines avec mes ouvriers, et pour écrire dans mes terres et expédier ce qu'il falloit; de sorte que tous les jours il me rendoit compte de ce qu'il faisoit. Comme on écrivoit à Paris deux fois la semaine, ces jours-là je ne travaillois point; j'allois m'enfermer à écrire. Nous avons souvent remarqué,

¹³⁴ Montpensier recounts: “J’eus une fluxion horrible à la gorge et la fièvre, et il eut été assez difficile que je n’eusse pas eu quelque mal, m’étant fâchée, et encore dans la saison de l’automne, où j’avois toujours mal à la gorge depuis quelques années » (II, 364-5).

d'Escars¹³⁵ et moi, que pendant que je dinois ou soupois, j'avois quelquefois envie de pleurer; les larmes me venoient aux yeux (II, 365).

The description of Montpensier's daily routine reveals an emphasis on reading,¹³⁶ writing, supervising her construction workers, managing her estate with the help of a clerk left by her secretary Préfontaine, and taking walks either in the company of the comte d'Escars or in that of the family whose portraits she had hung in the gallery she visits at night. All these constructive activities alternate with that of "travailler," which could well be a piece of embroidery, if not her memoirs. She also treats her throat condition with the medicinal waters of Forges, a spa near Paris, where she spends several weeks and whose social environment and daily activities contribute to her recovery from depression and illness.¹³⁷ Eventually her routine strengthens her and, as Gaston keeps stripping her of those people who could help her manage her estate, she discovers that, instead of collapsing in despair, she is in fact capable of doing it herself:

[Monsieur] témoigna au comte de Béthune trouver mauvais que le commis de Préfontaine fût demeuré. Dès que je le sus, je le renvoyai et demeurai sans qui que ce soit qui me pût servir en manière de secrétaire. Je recevois toutes les lettres de tous les officiers de mes terres, de tous les fermiers ; j'y faisais réponse ; les expéditions, je les faisais faire par le premier que je trouvois ; je les dressois, et on les copioit ; j'écrivois à Paris pour toutes mes affaires à mes avocats. Il n'a pas tenu aux gens de

¹³⁵ First captain of the cavalry regiment of Gaston d'Orléans (II, 77).

¹³⁶ In a visit she made to the comte de Béthune, she refers to his collection of manuscripts, which she enjoyed reading: "Je pris grand plaisir à lire des lettres du roi, mon grand-père, et toutes les choses de ce temps-là" (II, 281).

¹³⁷ Montpensier writes: "La vie de Forges est assez douce, mais bien différente de celle que l'on mène ordinairement. On se lève à si heures au plus tard; on va à la fontaine; car pour moi, je n'aime pas à prendre mes eaux au logis. On se promène en les prenant; il y a beaucoup de monde; on parle aux uns, aux autres (...) Quand on a achevé de boire (...) on s'en va dans les jardins des Capucins (...) Après que l'on s'est promené on va à la messe; puis chacun va s'habiller, les habits du matin et ceux de l'après-midi étant fort différents (...) L'après-dînée, on me venoit voir; à trois heures j'allois à la comédie (...) A six heures on soupe; après souper, on va se promener aux Capucins, où on dit les litanies (...) puis à neuf heures chacun se retire. J'y fus fort visitée; M. de Longueville y vint, madame sa femme, et tout ce qu'il y a de personnes de qualité dans la province, beaucoup de dames de Rouen et de messieurs du parlement; de sorte que ma cour était toujours grosse. Les eaux me profitèrent beaucoup (II, 448-50).

Son Altesse royale que je n'aie été bien habile ; car ils m'ont mise en état de le devenir. Je connus bien en ce temps-là que Préfontaine avoit eu raison de vouloir que je susse mes affaires, et de me persécuter pour les voir lorsque je n'en avois point d'envie ; car, si je les eusse ignorés, elles auroient bien plus dépéri qu'elles n'ont fait (...) Qui m'auroit dit, du temps que j'étois à la cour, que j'aurois su combien coûte la brique, la chaux, le plâtre, les voitures, journées des ouvriers, enfin tous les détails d'un bâtiment, et que tous les samedis j'aurois arrêté leurs comptes ; cela m'auroit bien surpris ; et si (cependant) j'ai fait ce métier-là un an ou plus, que je n'avois personne à qui je m'en voulusse confier (II, 366-7).

Thus, just as Montpensier turned her exile into a retreat in which to reconstruct herself, she turns paternal oppression into an opportunity for autonomy. As she learns to deal with the nitty-gritty details of estate and business management, not only does she do something she had never expected to do before, but she even goes against what a certain M. le Boulz, a man she considered hiring to manage her estate, had argued: that women should not know a lot about their estates.¹³⁸ On the contrary, to validate her decision, she cites two other women who managed their estates themselves, the Infanta Isabelle-Claire-Eugénie, daughter of Phillip II and Archiduchess of the Netherlands, and a certain Duchess of Tuscany.¹³⁹ That she hails these two women as models highlights, once again, her preference for female figures rather than male. Soon, Montpensier shows signs of cunning in business and even increases her income (II, 367-8, and III, 179-184).

¹³⁸ Montpensier writes : "Il me dit: 'Vous savez trop de vos affaires; ce n'est pas le métier des dames de s'en mêler. Il faut que les personnes de votre qualité jouent, se divertissent et n'entendent jamais parler de leurs affaires. Pour moi, si j'avois eu l'honneur de me mêler des vôtres, je ne vous en aurois jamais parlé; et si vous m'en aviez demandé des nouvelles, j'aurois changé de discours.'" Cela ne me plut point du tout, et je conclus (...) que ce n'étoit pas mon fait, moi qui aime à commander aux gens qui dépendent de moi, et qui veux que l'on me rende compte de toutes choses (II, 382).

¹³⁹ « J'ai toujours oui dire que feu l'Infante Isabelle, souveraine de Flandres, voyoit toutes ses affaires, jusques aux plus petites, et une grande duchesse [de Toscane], de la maison de Lorraine, toute deux très-illustres par leur mérites et leurs vertus et capacités, aussi bien que par leur naissances, lesquelles je serai fort aise d'imiter » (II, 251). As mentioned earlier, rank was an important factor for Montpensier in her choice of women to imitate. These two women set a standard to which Montpensier can aspire.

As she reaches the end of her exile, Montpensier completes her reconstruction projects—of Saint-Fargeau as a magnificent courtly palace and of herself by internalizing female models of power and autonomy, such as Marie de Médicis and other princesses and female rulers in her family, and by turning her primary male model, Gaston, into the other against whom to fashion herself. Indeed, the final event recorded in the first section of her memoirs is the last conversation she had with Gaston, an aged man who claimed to be bored at court and to prefer living at Blois, where he had been exiled before (III, 367). He dies on February 2, 1660, less than a year after their last encounter, and with him, so does the plot of the first section of Montpensier's memoirs. It would take her seventeen years and a new male love to pick up the pen and write herself again.

* * *

CHAPTER III

Against or for Marriage?

The Quest for Female Autonomy and Power

“Qui dit femme, dit une chose dépendante,” wrote the seventeenth-century moralist Antoine Courtin (1685, 387). So said Arnolphe as well, the main character of Molière’s *Ecole des femmes* (1662), who warned Agnès, the bride he had been grooming for himself: “votre sexe n’est là que pour la dépendance: du côté de la barbe est la toute-puissance” (Act III, sc. 2). Like Arnolphe, Courtin iterates the then widespread conception that a girl, when not destined for the convent, should always be prepared for the bonds of marriage and thus transfer her dependency from the authority of the father to that of the husband.¹⁴⁰ And, since marriage in the upper bourgeoisie and nobility served to establish alliances between families and further their political, social, and financial ambitions, as Mme de Lafayette demonstrates in *La Princesse de Montpensier* (1662), little thought was given to the bride’s desires: her role was to obey dutifully the wishes of her family.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Although, many studies have been devoted to the question of marriage in early modern France, for this chapter I have drawn mostly from Wendy Gibson’s *Women in Seventeenth Century France* (1989) and Ian Maclean’s *Woman Triumphant* (1977). As McLean observes, “marriage was generally thought of not as the consummation of a relationship of intimacy, but as a social convenience where the suitability of partner was a minor consideration” (89).

¹⁴¹ Mme de Lafayette writes: « La fille unique du marquis de Mézières, héritière très considérable, et par ses grands biens, et par l’illustre maison d’Anjou dont elle était descendue, était promise au duc du Maine, cadet du Duc de Guise (...) La maison de Bourbon, qui ne pouvoit voir qu’avec envie l’élévation de celle de Guise, s’apercevant de l’avantage qu’elle recevrait de ce mariage, se résolut de le lui ôter et d’en profiter elle-même en faisant épouser cette héritière au jeune prince de Montpensier. On travailla à l’exécution de ce dessein avec tant de succès que les parents de Mlle de Mézières, contre les promesses qu’ils avaient faites au cardinal de Lorraine, se résolurent de la donner en mariage à ce jeune prince (...) Mlle de Mézières, tourmentée par ses parents d’épouser ce prince (...) se résolut enfin de suivre le sentiment de ses proches » (5-6). As the Bourbons and the de Guises compete for an alliance with the Mézières, they epitomize the rivalries for important marital alliances. In the process, the bride has to obey her family’s directives, changing her feelings each time her family decides on different marriage plans. As Maïté Albistur and Daniel Armogathe (*Histoire du féminisme français*, 1977) note, marriage and choice of a groom were the prerogatives of the father, prerogatives that were

As a result, both male and female writers of the early modern period represent marriage in negative terms. Most male detractors of marriage deployed misogynistic arguments, blaming women's inherent flaws and vices for the misery of married men (McLean 97-9). For instance, Molière, who wrote a number of plays about marriage (*L'École des maris*, *L'École des femmes*, *Le Mariage forcé*), has one of his characters cast cuckoldry in *L'Ecole des Femmes* as an inescapable destiny regardless of whether the wife is "savante" and "coquette" or innocent/ignorant and an angel, like Arnolphe's beloved Agnès. No remedies, be they the tolerance and patience prescribed by his friend, Chrysalde, or the extreme lengths to which the jealous Arnolphe goes, can stop a woman from becoming unfaithful to her husband. Characters in Molière's plays thus echo Boileau's *Satire X* (1667), which cautions a young man against the evils of marriage, and represents the wife in a series of different portraits as "une femme désordonnée, sans mesure et sans règle au vice abandonnée" (67).¹⁴²

Not surprisingly, perhaps, ever since the Middle Ages, women writers denounced marriage as "martyrdom," and a source of "misère."¹⁴³ Michel de Pure's *La Pretieuse, ou le mystère des ruelles* (1658)—a satire cast as a report of conversations held in the *ruelles*—shows the so-called *précieuses* claiming that when marriage is imposed regardless of desires

duly legislated, first by Henri II in the sixteenth century, and then in 1629 and 1639, with two laws that criminalized the marriage of minors without paternal consent (138). As Albistur and Armogathe conclude, « le père représentant du roi, et le roi envoyé de Dieu, sont les maîtres légitimes. Et se dresser contre leur autorité serait sacrilège » (139).

¹⁴² In his satire, Boileau repeats the tenets of Molière's *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (1659), whereby the so-called *précieuses* have no taste, no intelligence, and cannot discriminate great philosophers, like Aristotle, from second-class writers like Cotin. In other words, their views reveal a visceral aversion toward women as arbiters of taste and literary value, a role that salon women had appropriated (Domna C. Stanton. "The Fiction of Preciosity and the Fear of Women" *Yale French Studies*: 62 (1991): 107-34).

¹⁴³ Christine de Pizan, "Ci dit des infortunes des femmes" du *Livre de la mutacion de fortune*, and Madeleine des Roches, "Ode Première" in Domna C. Stanton, ed. *The Defiant Muse*. pp. 30-34 and 40-4.

and emotions, it leads people to marry *against* one another rather than *with* each other. Since marriage condemns women to irremediable unhappiness, they offer to modify marriage, instructing men to show equal respect to their wives as they had shown before marrying them, proposing to alternate dominating roles in rotating periods, limiting marriage duration to the birth of the first child, eliminating binding vows, and advocating free love and the abolition of marriage altogether.

These proposals, which aim at improving relationships between men and women, and in some cases, keeping them “in love” with one another, resonate with debates on love and marriage in novels by Madeleine de Scudéry (1601-1701). In her celebrated *Histoire de Sapho*, a section of *Le Grand Cyrus* (1649-1653), Sapho decides to move with her lover Phaon to the “royaume des nouveaux Sauromates,” a utopian realm in which love and the lovers’ mutual fidelity are regarded as highly as religion and as important as a citizen’s loyalty to the state.¹⁴⁴ As she leaves with her lover for the realm of love, Sapho denounces marriage as its antithesis and defends a relationship where both lovers swear eternal love and fidelity outside of marriage.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ In the novel, Clirante, who has lived in the *royaume des nouveaux Sauromates*, describes it as follows: “On y a mesme fait des Loix particulières pour l’amour; et il y a des punitions pour les Amans infidelles, comme il y en a pour de rebelles Sujets (...) Celui qui fonda nostre Estat voulut attacher ses Sujets dans leur païs, il les y voulut enchaîner par l’amour (...) toutes les coustume des Amans sont (...) presque aussi inviolables que celles de la Religion » (X, 2, pp 573). In addition, Democedes, Sapho’s friend and narrator of her story within the novel, says: “[Sapho] se résolut de tirer de Phaon une grande preuve d’amour : en l’obligeant de la suivre, dans le dessein qu’elle avoit d’aller [au pays des nouveaux Sauromates]: et en l’obligeant d’y aller mesme avec la certitude de ne l’espouser jamais : et de se contenter de toutes les innocentes marques d’affection qu’elle luy avoit données (...) Il accepta d’abord avecque joye la proposition d’aller avec elle, au Pais des nouveaux Sauromates : mais il ne luy promit qu’avec beaucoup de répugnance, de ne la presser jamais de l’espouser. Neantmoins comme elle luy permettoit de l’aimer tendrement, et qu’elle luy promettoit de l’aimer de mesme, il luy promit à la fin tout ce qu’elle voulut : si bien qu’après cela Sapho s’estima la plus heureuse Personne du monde ; et Phaon se creût aussi le plus heureux Amant de la Terre » (X, 2, pp. 599-600). Thus, Phaon’s decision to follow Sapho regardless of her refusal to marry him emphasizes love, rather than marital possession, as the highest and most desirable goal.

¹⁴⁵ In her dialogue with Tisandre, Sapho assigns blame to men for turning marriage into a slavery rather than a « good » for women : « il faut donc sans doute, répliqua Tisandre, que vous ne regardiez pas le Mariage comme

At the turn of the eighteenth century, Gabrielle Suchon (1632-1703)'s *Du Célibat volontaire ou la vie sans engagement* (1700), condemns forcing young women into the convent or into marriage and offers a “third way” where those who have neither the calling to take religious vows nor the desire to get married can lead a secular “vie sans engagement” (2), “une vie indifférente qui ne veut point d’autre engagement, que celui de n’en avoir point” (3). She describes those who choose this path as “[des] neutralistes” or “[des] âmes généreuses, qui s’emploient uniquement à servir Dieu, à secourir le prochain, & à se perfectionner elles-mêmes” (12). In fact, as Domna C. Stanton and Rebecca M. Wilkin (2009) observe, Suchon’s two major treatises propose a life in which women free themselves of constraints, ignorance and dependence, and attain a freedom that “manifests itself concretely in the possibility to choose one’s estate, profession, and residence, to travel to faraway lands to refine the mind and free it of its local prejudices, and ultimately, to seek happiness, which—along with the major schools of classical philosophy—she defines as the goal of human existence” (3). This vision of a “meditative and active existence—that we would call today the life of the intellectual” is “preferable to the only two acceptable paths for women in the seventeenth-century: the religious life and the married life” (3). To be sure, Suchon’s model echoes the lives of women writers who chose to remain single when they could. Either they did not attempt to remarry once they became widows, such as Mme de Sévigné, or they never married at all, such as Mlles de Gournay, Scudéry and Suchon. Mlle de Montpensier, too, is among those who ultimately never married.

un bien: il est vray, répliqua Sapho, que je le regarde comme un long esclavage: vous regardez donc tous les hommes comme des Tirans? Reprit Tisandre: je les regarde du moins comme le pouvant devenir, répliqua-t-elle, dès que je les regarde comme pouvant estre Maris » (X, 2, pp. 344). In saying this, Sapho counters the misogynistic discourse that made women the source of suffering in marriage.

Although Montpensier's views evolved, as I show in this chapter, she also advocated for a celibate life and imagined a retreat in which men and women could live away from court, free from the constraints of marriage. She shared this vision with Mme de Motteville, Anne of Austria's lady-in-waiting, in a series of letters the women exchanged, from 1660 to 1661. In the introduction to her edition of the letters, entitled *Against Marriage* (2002), Joan Dejean rightly identifies Montpensier's retreat as the result of her meditation "on the institution of marriage, its disadvantages as well as its advantages for women, and, most importantly, (...) [on] how women might spend their lives if they decided not to marry" (14). Certainly, Montpensier's letters reflect women's efforts to envision a new and ideal relationship between the sexes. However, far from expressing a static position against marriage, the letters are part of an evolving process that begins with an initial preoccupation—even fascination—with the marriage possibilities that were offered to her: she sees them as means of becoming a queen. Later, however, she views celibacy and autonomy as better options, as she does in the letters to Motteville. Finally, she reconsiders marriage altogether, not in terms of the social status it would give her or the political and financial benefits it would bring to her family—she does not need either given her rank and extraordinary wealth—but to achieve mutual love.

These three stages in Montpensier's views on marriage correspond to three historical periods: first, her early years at the Tuileries before and during the Fronde, a period marked by her expectations and desires to become queen; second, the years between 1653 and 1670, which include her two exiles—at Saint-Fargeau for participating in the Fronde and at Eu for refusing to marry the king of Portugal—in which she discovers and becomes an advocate of female autonomy; and third, the years between 1670 and 1681, which are marked by her

relationship with Antonin Nompar de Caumont, comte de Lauzun (1632-1723), a man who rose from the lowest military ranks to being a favorite of Louis XIV. These stages find a spatial correlative in the castles in which Montpensier lived and in which she made architectural choices that resonate with her varying positions on marriage: the Tuileries, the palace built by Catherine de Médici, and in which she was lodged at birth, represents the expectations already set for/by a woman of her rank; Saint-Fargeau, the site of self-reconstruction as an autonomous woman whose views are increasingly drawn towards a life without marriage, as her personal management of her estate of Champigny and the acquisition and enlargement of the chateau d'Eu confirm; and, finally, Choisy-le-Roi, a palace she designed and built from scratch that reproduces and expands her earlier projects of self-construction, and which, as it follows the end of her relationship with Lauzun, asserts her as having achieved a certain level of autonomy. In what follows, I examine these three stages in detail.

* * *

Early Years at Court: The Desire to be Queen

As a young princess of the blood holding the highest rank among women at court and second only to the Queen herself, Montpensier saw marriage as the instrument of her “établissement”¹⁴⁶ in the only rank that existed above her—queen or empress. Indeed, as proposals came and went, she imagined herself as nothing less than consort queen of a king.

¹⁴⁶ Furetière's many definitions of “établissement” include the following: “Signifie aussi *Fortune*. Cet homme a un bon *établissement* à la Cour, il y a une belle charge. Ce mariage avantageux luy a fait un bon *établissement*. Depuis son *établissement* à Paris il y a bien gagné son bien. Il s'est fait à la campagne un *établissement* pour y vivre en repos le reste de sa vie.” (s.v. « Établissement »).

This expectation came with a sense of entitlement to the throne, as this episode from her memoirs, regarding the courting of the Prince of Wales in 1646, illustrates:

La galanterie [du prince de Galles] parut encore fortement à une fête célèbre qu'il y eut au Palais-Royal sur la fin de l'hiver, où il eut une magnifique comédie italienne à machines et en musique, avec un bal ensuite, pour lequel la reine me voulut parer. L'on fut trois jours entiers à accommoder ma parure: ma robe étoit toute chamarrée de diamants avec des houppes incarnat, blanc et noir; j'avois sur moi toutes les pierreries de la couronne et de la reine d'Angleterre, qui en avoit encore en ce temps-là quelques-unes de reste. L'on ne peut rien voir de mieux ni de plus magnifiquement paré que je l'étois ce jour-là, et je ne manquai pas de trouver beaucoup de gens qui surent me dire assez à propos que ma belle taille, ma bonne mine, ma blancheur et l'éclat de mes cheveux blonds ne me paroient pas moins que toutes les richesses qui brilloient sur ma personne. Tout contribua ce jour-là à me faire paroître (I, 138).

In this passage, the queen of England, Montpensier's aunt Henrietta Maria (1609-1669), is intent on marrying Montpensier to her son, Charles II (1630-1685), the Prince of Wales and heir to the English throne, at a time when he had joined his mother in France, in her flight from the civil war in England, which would end with the execution of Charles I (1600-1649.)¹⁴⁷ Here, though, Montpensier seems less interested in her suitor than in her royal attire. In fact, the term "parer"¹⁴⁸ helps to evoke the queenly appearance that she aims for at this time. Since the diamonds on her dress and the royal gems on her head embellish her no less than her own physical attributes, they create an equation between "paraître" and

¹⁴⁷ In her memoirs, Montpensier describes how Charles courted her again in 1649, while his mother attempted to convince her of the benefit of this marriage: "Elle me dit [que] me mariant, je serois toujours maîtresse de mon bien, que le roi, son fils, vivroit, lui et son train, des deux cent mille écus, qu'il tiroit encore tant d'Angleterre que de la pension que le roi [de France] lui donnoit; que je serois reine plus que je n'étois, et que je serois la plus heureuse personne du monde par la tendresse et l'amitié que le roi, son fils, auroit pour moi; qu'il y avoit plusieurs princes en Allemagne qui lui promettoient de grands secours; qu'il avoit une grande faction en Angleterre, et que, lorsqu'on verroit qu'il auroit pris une aussi considérable alliance, cela lui serviroit beaucoup; que cela étant et ayant tous les secours qu'il espéroit, il seroit promptement rétabli en ses États » (I, 323). But Montpensier takes advice from Goulas, her father's secretary, who warns her against this marriage: "Goulas m'alléqua le misérable état où je serois, si j'épousois le roi d'Angleterre; et quoique j'eusse de grands biens, je n'en avois pas moins assez pour subvenir à une guerre telle qu'il falloit qu'il la fit, et, quand il auroit vendu tout mon bien, et qu'il n'auroit point reconquis son royaume, je mourrois de faim; qu'il pouvoit mourir, et que, cela arrivant, je serois la plus misérable reine du monde » (I, 329).

¹⁴⁸ "Orner quelque chose, la rendre plus belle, plus riche, plus agréable à voir" (Furetière, s.v. "parer").

“parure.” Her appearance becomes equal to the diamonds and crowns, and, in the process, both terms “naturalize” her expectation of becoming a queen and highlight her sense of entitlement. Further, not only does her “parure” serve to make her “paraître” (as) the queen, but so does the perfect staging in which she sets herself to perform her royal role:

Tout contribua ce jour-là à me faire paroître, parce que l’on dansa sur un grand théâtre accommodé tout exprès pour ce sujet, orné et éclairé de flambeaux autant qu’il le pouvoit être; il y avoit au milieu du fond de ce théâtre un trône élevé de trois marches, couvert d’un dais, et tout autour du théâtre des bancs pour les dames qui devoient danser, au pied desquelles étoient les danseurs; et le reste de la sale étoit en amphithéâtre qui nous avoit pour perspective. Le roi ni le prince de Galles ne se voulurent point mettre sur ce trône; je demurai seule; de sorte que je vis à mes pieds ces deux princes et ce qu’il avoit de princesses de la cour. Je ne me sentis point gênée en cette place et ceux qui m’avoient flattée, lorsque j’allai au bal, trouvèrent encore matière le lendemain de le faire. Tout le monde ne manqua pas de me dire que je n’avois jamais paru moins contrainte que sur ce trône; et que, comme j’étois de race à l’occuper, lorsque je serois en possession d’un, où j’aurois à demeurer plus longtemps qu’au bal, j’y serois encore avec plus de liberté qu’en celui-là (I, 138-9).

Seated on the throne, Montpensier captures visual attention, not only for her attire, jewelry and physical qualities, but also for her position, alone and physically higher than the king and the Prince of Wales, both of whom stand at her feet. The setting creates an image of royal female power in which women sit on top looking down at/on the men who remain beneath them.¹⁴⁹ To reinforce this setting, the staged throne is at the center of a semi-circular theater or amphitheatre, where she is surrounded by other princesses who are also seated on benches above their dancing partners, thus multiplying the image of females above males. Still, the idea of women on the throne is not unusual for Montpensier: in 1646, France was under the regency of Anne d’Autriche, and had seen a series of queens—such as Louise de Savoie (1476-1531), Catherine de Médicis (1519-1589) and Marie de Médici (1575-1642)—, since

¹⁴⁹ This image recurs in some of Montpensier’s novels, for instance, where, as I demonstrate in the next chapter, women are heads of state and men are in subordinate positions.

the sixteenth century, who had been in titular charge of the state during their son's minority.¹⁵⁰

In addition, Montpensier's emphatic expressions, such as "Tout contribua" and "Tout le monde ne manqua pas" underscore the significance of the moment. Here, ease and pleasure converge with a sense of entitlement as she asserts herself as part of the royal clan and points to her inevitable destiny—that of possessing a throne and turning this theatrical evening into a permanent position for life.

The desire to be queen reemerges often in Montpensier's memoirs—when she sees herself beloved by the people of Paris (I, 177; 204-5; 209); compares her court with that of Anne of Austria's (I, 275); projects herself as "reine de France" (I, 314; 335; II, 57, 113); sees herself as if "reine de Paris" (II, 77); makes references against the Salic Law;¹⁵¹ performs the duties of a sovereign in her principality of Dombes (III, 329-344); aligns herself with Queen Marie de Médicis and her palace of the Luxembourg, while she reconstructs Saint-Fargeau (I, 283-4); and when she reports comments made by Spanish courtiers on her physical resemblance to her aunt Queen Elizabeth, wife of Philippe IV of Spain (III, 479-480). Her desire also correlates with the fact that until Louis XIV's birth, which occurred when she was eleven, her father, Gaston d'Orléans, had been the designated heir to the

¹⁵⁰ See my discussion of regencies in the Introduction. For a detailed analysis, see Katherine Crawford, *Perilous Performances: Gender and Regency in Early Modern France*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

¹⁵¹ Montpensier writes: "Le president [du parlement de Dijon], dans sa harangue me dit une chose fort obligeante. Après m'avoir fort louée, il me dit que si j'eusse été du temps de ceux qui avoit fait la loi salique ou qu'ils eussent pu prévoir que la France eût eu une princesse telle que moi, on ne l'auroit jamais faite, ou que du moins on l'auroit supprimée en ma faveur" (III, 295). This comment relates to the fact that, until Louis XIV's birth, which occurred when she was eleven, her father, Gaston d'Orléans, had been the presumptive heir to the throne, should his brother Louis XIII die without descendants. Had it not been for Salic Law, Montpensier could have been in the line of succession to the throne of France. Further, this comment implies that Salic Law could be refashioned according to the needs of the moment and thus contests the alleged immutability of the law. It casts Montpensier as a princess deserving to having it changed in her favor. See my discussion of Salic Law in the Introduction.

throne, should his brother, Louis XIII, die without male descendants. Had it not been for Salic Law, as her subjects in Dombes had pointed out (III, 329-344), Montpensier herself could have been in the line of succession to the throne of France.

As a woman, though, marriage is Montpensier's only means of occupying a throne permanently, beginning with the prospect of marrying the future Louis XIV. The possibility was initially encouraged by Louis XIII and Anne d'Autriche, but quickly disapproved by Richelieu, who perhaps already had the Infanta of Spain in mind for the future king. In the first section of her memoirs, where she describes her childhood and life at court, Montpensier writes: "[La reine] me disoit toujours: 'vous serez ma belle-fille'; mais je n'écoutais de tout ce que l'on me disoit que ce qui étoit à la porté de mon age » (I, 38). And, again :

La naissance de monseigneur le Dauphin [the future Louis XIV] me donna une occupation nouvelle: je l'allois voir tous les jours et je l'appelois *mon petit mari*; le roi [Louis XIII] s'en divertissoit et trouvoit bon tout ce que je faisois. Le cardinal de Richelieu, qui ne vouloit pas que je m'y accoutumasse ni qu'on s'accoutumât à moi, me fit ordonner de retourner à Paris (I, 42).

Richelieu's order and the queen's words stick to the mind of the eleven-year old Montpensier to the point that, decades later, in 1679, when she foresees the possibility of a similar situation for Marie-Louise d'Orléans, the young Mademoiselle, daughter to Louis XIV's brother, Philippe d'Orléans (1640-1701), she warns Philippe not to let his daughter expect to marry the Dauphin, lest "[cela] lui empoisonne le reste de sa vie par l'espérance qu'elle en aura eue" (IV, 403). Although she is speaking for someone else, Montpensier is nonetheless acknowledging in hindsight the devastating effect of a wish that never materialized. In her youth, however, she feels entitled to marry Louis, for she sees herself as "le meilleur parti [pour le roi] de tous ceux que l'on lui pouvoit donner, hors l'Infante d'Espagne" (I, 314).

Apparently, the only dowry that could exceed her wealth at the time was Spain's huge empire.

As Richelieu thwarts Montpensier's dream of occupying the throne of France, the possibility arises of becoming the queen of other nations, such as Governess of the Spanish Netherlands (I, 43), Queen of Spain (I, 100-1), Queen of England (I, 126, 217-221, 324-5, 329), Archi-duchess of the Netherlands (I, 213-4; II, 85, 189), or even Empress of the Holy Roman Empire (I, 142-3, 219, 228, 232-3, 249-50). However, none of these prospects were seriously pursued by her father or by the crown. In her memoirs, Montpensier makes numerous references to this failure but does not offer explicit reasons why the marriages did not materialize.¹⁵² Perhaps her enormous wealth contributed to her father's apparent inertia. Indeed, Gaston's failure to arrange her marriage may have been caused by his need of money for his other four daughters, a need he attempted to meet by extorting as much from Montpensier as possible (II, 349). Similarly, for the royal family at large, Montpensier's wealth would have been more useful if it remained in the royal coffers than if it had been transferred to a potentially threatening foreign king. If she could not marry Louis or his brother Philippe d'Orléans, she should remain single so that her wealth could be kept within the royal family—as it eventually was.

The need to control the destiny of Montpensier's wealth converged with paternal authority on a daughter's marriage,¹⁵³ and explains the conflict that emerged when a certain

¹⁵² Contrary to the judgments of modern critics, Montpensier's desires, just like those of any mother man or woman in that period, played no role in the affair of state that her marriage would have represented. In *Mythes et réalités* (1975), Marie-Thérèse Hipp comments that Montpensier's memoirs contains "des développements abondants—parfois lassants—sur des points d'étiquette, des séries de portraits (...) et surtout son rêve quasi-obsessionnel de mariage qui revient de page à page avec une régularité navrante » (27). This contemptuous remark fails to take into account that marriage determined women's lives and was, indeed, their obligatory subject of concern.

¹⁵³ See note 1412 of this Chapter 3.

Saujon, a courtier looking for self-promotion at court, made an offer to Montpensier to negotiate her marriage with Emperor Ferdinand III's brother, Arch-Duke Leopold. When Anne d'Autriche discovered the plan, she accused Montpensier of arranging the marriage behind the back of the crown:

Comme Monsieur fut venu, la reine commença d'un ton assez aigre: 'nous savons votre père et moi les menées que vous avez avec Saujon et les grands desseins qu'il avoit.' (...) Elle poursuivit: 'Nous savons que Saujon vous veut marier à l'archiduc; qu'il vous dit qu'il aura les Pays-Bas en souveraineté, et force autres chimères dont vous vous êtes laissée persuader comme d'une vérité; l'archiduc est le dernier des hommes, et le plus méchant parti qui se puisse trouver.' Comme je ne disois mot, la reine me disoit: 'Répondez.' Je lui obéis, et lui répondis qu'elle faisoit bien de l'honneur à Saujon, s'il avoit été capable de se persuader un tel dessein, de le mettre en prison comme un homme raisonnable, et que les Petites-Maisons étoient un lieu bien plus propre, si le fait étoit vérifié; que d'entreprendre de faire ce qui n'appartenoit qu'au roi, son frère, il falloit être fou; que pour moi je n'avois pas passé jusqu'à cette heure pour être folle dans le monde; et qu'il faudroit que je le fusse bien pour laisser le soin de mon établissement à M. de Saujon; et je devois bien espérer, après celui qu'elle avoit eu d'établir la reine de Pologne, qui n'étoit ni de ma qualité ni en rien égale à moi, qu'elle feroit paroître en ma personne la reconnaissance des obligations qu'elle avoit à Monsieur; et qu'ainsi je me reposois entièrement sur elle de ma fortune; que je savois comme elle étoit obligée par l'amour de lui à m'en procurer une grande et conforme à ma qualité, et à la reconnaissance qu'elle devoit avoir pour Monsieur. Sa Majesté fut assez étonnée de la manière dont je répondois (I, 166-8).

Queen Anne presents Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614-1662) as the worst prospect for Montpensier, for marriage with this offspring of the Habsburg family—a sempiternal rival clan of the French Bourbons with which they were currently at war—held little appeal to the French royal family. To make it equally unappealing to Montpensier, Anne presents as chimerical the possibility that he might become sovereign of the Netherlands in the event of the death of his brother, Emperor Ferdinand III, thus aligning her

argument against Leopold with an underlying assumption that they all expect Montpensier to marry nothing less than a sovereign king.¹⁵⁴

Montpensier's initial silence, less than a dutiful acknowledgment of the queen's reasons, may be read as the effect of her anger and disappointment that the queen had not done better, up to this point, in keeping her promises of marrying her according to her rank. Thus, after dismissing Saujon's alleged crime as an act of folly in which she could not possibly participate, she reverses roles and exposes the queen's negligence under a thinly veiled sarcastic reproach. The reference to the recently married Queen of Poland, Louise-Marie de Gonzague-Nevers (1611-1667), daughter of the Duc de Nevers, and therefore of much lesser rank than hers, highlights this neglect and frames it as an insult against her. Although she leaves the room, "assez victorieuse de ce combat, mais fort en colère » (I, 168), their confrontation has humiliated her and leads to thoughts of revenge: "Si j'avois été capable du doux plaisir que donne la vengeance contre des personnes qui me sont aussi

¹⁵⁴ As Montpensier writes a few pages earlier in her memoirs, her expectation at the time—and the reason why she had refused to marry Prince Charles of Wales—was to marry the Emperor: "pendant que j'y étois [au bal du Palais-Royal en 1646] et que le prince étoit à mes pieds, mon coeur le regardoit du haut en bas aussi bien que mes yeux; j'avois alors dans l'esprit d'épouser l'empereur; à quoi il y avoit beaucoup d'apparence, si de la part de la court on eût agi de bonne foi; parce que Mondevergue, qui avoit été envoyé pour faire à l'empereur, de la part de Leurs Majestés, leurs compliments de condoléance sur la perte de sa femme, avoit rapporté que dans tout le pays et dans la cour de Vienne l'on souhaitoit fort que je fusse impératrice; que même quelques ministres lui avoient dit que la reine [de France] avoit moyen de procurer à l'empereur toute la consolation qu'il pouvoit trouver. Ce qui me rendoit encore la chose plus présente à l'esprit, c'est que la reine [de France], en m'habillant ce soir-là, ne m'avoit parlé d'autre chose que de ce mariage, et m'avoit dit qu'elle souhaitoit passionnément cette affaire-là, et qu'elle y feroit tout son possible, persuadée que c'étoit un bonheur considérable pour sa maison [des Habsburg]. Ainsi la pensée de l'empire occupoit si fort mon esprit, que je ne regardois plus le prince de Galles que comme un objet de pitié » (I, 139-140). This passage establishes Anne d'Autriche's intention to marry Montpensier to the Emperor. However, it soon becomes clear to Montpensier that she has been deceived when she hears rumors that the Emperor plans to marry an archduchess of Tyrol: "Le dépit que j'en eus me fit rechercher avec tant de curiosité la vérité de ce fait, que je découvris que le cardinal Mazarin et l'abbé de la Rivière m'avoient trompée; qu'ils ne m'avoient fait voir de belles apparences à cet établissement que pour m'entretenir d'un vain espoir; qu'ils n'avoient en effet jamais travaillé aux moyens d'en faire réussir le dessein. Quoique je fusse persuadée que ces gens-là n'agissoient point de bonne foi, je ne laissai pas d'être sensiblement saisie de colère contre la cour, et c'étoit un ressentiment qui me faisoit d'autant plus de peine que je n'avois pas moyen d'en donner des effets (...) J'étois ainsi leurrée à toute heure de tous les établissements qui me pourroient être propres » (I, 159-60). It is with this disappointment in mind that she confronts the queen and reproaches her negligence.

proches que la reine et Monsieur, j'en aurois pu prendre de voir la confusion dont cette affaire les couvrit; je vis cela avec confusion moi-même et songeois à ce que j'avois l'honneur de leur être avec un esprit de charité et de respect » (I, 171). Montpensier is at once vengeful and confused at the thought of vengeance on her royal relations.

However, an acceptable revenge soon emerges under the guise of heroic duty during the Fronde.¹⁵⁵ In 1649, the Princes had not yet joined the Fronde, and Paris was under the tumult of popular riots. As the crown decides to leave Paris and seek haven, Montpensier declares to be “toute troublée de joie de voir qu'ils [la cour] alloient faire une faute [sortir de Paris] et d'être spectatrice des misères qu'elle leur causeroit. Cela me vengeoit un peu des persécutions [interrogatoires] que j'avois souffertes. Je ne prévoyois pas alors que je me trouverois dans un parti considérable [la Fronde], où je pourrois faire mon devoir et me venger en même temps» (I, 196). Then, when in 1651-1652 Gaston finally joins Condé in the Fronde, she finds an acceptable way to exact retribution. Taking the role of the dutiful daughter, she can both avenge her past humiliation and rise to the political occasion.¹⁵⁶ But what was initially spurred by a wish of revenge turns into the means to become Queen of France when Condé promises she would become the queen should they win the war.

¹⁵⁵ This civil war begins in the late 1640s as a popular movement of resistance against the high tax policies implemented by Mazarin to fund the war against Spain. It is then adopted by the Parliament, which rejects Mazarin's increasingly absolutist policies. Starting in 1650 and through 1652 this first Fronde is reinforced by the “Princely Fronde,” led by the Princes of the blood, namely Louis de Condé and his brother Armand de Conti, their brother-in-law the duc de Longueville, the duc de La Rochefoucauld, the duc de Nemours—all of whom are finally joined by Montpensier's father, Gaston d'Orléans. See Orest Ranum, *The Fronde: A French Revolution 1648-1652* (New York & London: Norton and Company, 1993.)

¹⁵⁶ In response to the request of the men leading the revolt, Montpensier scales the walls of the strategic city of Orléans and rules it for a few weeks. Then, back in Paris, she intervenes in conflicts at the Hôtel-de-Ville and has the cannons of the Bastille fire at the king's troops to save Condé (I, 347-65; II, 1-110). Finally, despite her father's hesitation (who by then is suspecting their defeat and working for his own reconciliation with the king), she opens the gates of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and rescues Condé again (II, 110).

Montpensier writes in her memoirs: “Le comte de Fiesque¹⁵⁷ (...) me donna aussi force assurances de la part de M. le Prince [de Condé] du zèle qu’il avoit à me servir, et de sa joie, si je pouvois être persuadée qu’étant ce que nous étions, nos intérêts étoient communs; qu’il désiroit fort que je fusse reine de France, que c’étoit le plus grand avantage du monde pour lui » (I, 337). And then again, a few pages later :

[M. de Nemours]¹⁵⁸ me dit : ‘(...) si l’on fait la paix présentement vous serez reine de France ; et, si l’on attend à la faire quand nous ne serons plus les maîtres, vous ne serez, rien’ (...) Après cette conversation, j’allai avec la compagnie, où M. le Prince (...) commença : ‘Je crois que le comte de Fiesque vous aura dit beaucoup de choses de ma part touchant votre établissement : présentement les choses y sont disposées plus que jamais, et je vous promets qu’il ne se parlera point d’aucun traité de paix où vous ne soyez comprise.’ [Et il ajouta] que c’étoit la chose du monde qu’il souhaitoit avec le plus de passion que de me voir reine de France ; qu’il me prioit de croire que son intérêt s’y rencontroit ; que rien ne lui étoit plus avantageux, voyant les bontés que j’avois pour lui ; et que la confiance qu’il avoit en moi le persuadoit que je le considérerois toujours comme l’homme du monde le plus dépendant de moi ; et qu’il n’y avoit rien au monde qu’il ne fit pour voir réussir cette affaire et que je n’avois qu’à commander, qu’il m’obéiroit en tout comme un serviteur très-fidèle et très-zélé, et qu’il me supplioit de n’en pas douter (II, 56-8).

The reference to three men involved in the war discussing Montpensier’s future as queen of France provides a triple confirmation of her own wishes. In fact, when she writes that becoming queen would be in Condé’s interest, she implies that, should they win, she would marry Louis and thus reinforce Gaston’s power, who could then overturn Mazarin’s absolutist policies and return to the old system that gave more power to nobles and princes like Condé.

Montpensier’s expressed wish to be queen of France often overlaps with displays of female power that keep recurring in her narrative of the Fronde, particularly when she scales

¹⁵⁷ Charles-Léon, Comte de Fiesque (-1658), husband to Gilonne d’Harcourt de Fiesque, Montpensier’s lady-in-waiting, and a Frondeur close to the Prince de Condé.

¹⁵⁸ Charles-Amédée de Savoie, duc de Nemours, also a Frondeur.

the walls of Orléans, when she rules the city, and when she has the canons of the Bastille shoot at the king's troops. At Orléans, she asserts her power when she approaches the city (I, 347), holds a military council with her army captains (I, 352), and finally decides to enter Orléans on her own:

Étant donc montée [sur une butte en face de la ville], je laissai mes gardes aux bateaux, leur ordonnant de s'en retourner où étoient mes carrosses, pour montrer à messieurs d'Orléans que j'entrais dans leur ville avec toute sorte de confiance, n'ayant point de gens d'armes avec moi (...) Ma présence animait les bateliers; ils travaillaient avec plus de vigueur à rompre la porte. Le bourgeois en faisoit de même dans la ville (...) [J'entrai] dans la ville par la porte Brûlée; car cette illustre porte, et qui sera tant renommée par mon entrée, s'appelle ainsi. Quand je la vis rompue, et que l'on en eût ôté deux planches du milieu (...) Gramont me fit signe d'avancer. Comme il y avoit beaucoup de crotte, un valet de pied me prit et me porta et me fourra par ce trou, où je n'eus pas sitôt la tête passée que l'on battit le tambour. Je donnai la main au capitaine, et je lui dis: "vous serez bien aise de vous pouvoir vanter que vous m'avez fait entrer." Les cris de *Vive le roi, les princes! Et point de Mazarin!*¹⁵⁹ redoublèrent. Deux hommes me prirent et me mirent sur une chaise de bois. Je ne sais si je fus assise dedans ou sur le bras, tant la joie où j'étois m'avois mise hors de moi-même: tout le monde me baisoit les mains, et je me pâmois de rire de me voir en un si plaisant état (I, 361-2, *emphasis in the original*).

In Montpensier's account, her mere presence emboldens the boatmen and the bourgeois to help her take the city. Further, the narration of the way a valet lifted her, carried her and "[la] fourra par ce trou," details with graphic precision the act of seizing power. As she enters the city through a hole in its gate, the drums of victory sound, everyone hollers cries of triumph, and, as she "[s]e pâmoi[t] de rire," she is taken in a chair where, as on the staged throne in Paris, she sits intoxicated by the cathartic *jouissance* of her feat. Then, having taken possession of the territory, she has her officers parade and show that she is in charge of the city: "Comme j'avois beaucoup d'officiers de nos troupes avec moi, je pris plaisir de les faire paroître, afin que l'on vit leurs écharpes bleues, et faire connoître par là que j'étois patronne

¹⁵⁹ As these cries indicate, the Fronde was a movement of resistance not against the king, but against Mazarin's absolutism and tax policies. As Ranum observes, for many, displaying hostility against Mazarin "became a way out of the dilemma of having to choose between Condé and the crown" (273).

dans Orléans (...) ainsi les *mazarins* connurent n'avoir plus rien à espérer (...) enfin j'agissais avec une puissance absolue » (II, 2-3). Thus she took pleasure in displaying her power and showing to Mazarin's partisans that she had total control of the city, like an absolute ruler. Back in Paris, she watches from the roof of the Bastille king's troops approaching the city, and has the fortress cannons point towards them (II, 108). Her account of the episode of Orléans casts her presence as sufficient in itself to give the Fronde's officers renewed courage when they march out of the city towards the royal troops.¹⁶⁰ Then, when these troops persecute the *frondeurs*, she writes: « l'on tira de la Bastille deux ou trois volées de canon, comme je l'avois ordonné lorsque j'en sortis. Cela leur fit peur, ayant emporté un rang de cavaliers [des troupes royales] » (II, 111). In recounting how she ordered fire against the king's troops, she emphasizes her military authority and the effectiveness of this action in killing her opponents.

Much has been written about this episode at the Bastille. In *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), Voltaire describes it as follows:

Mademoiselle, fille de Gaston, prenant le parti de Condé que son père n'osa secourir, fit ouvrir les portes aux blessés, et eut la hardiesse de faire tirer sur les troupes du Roi le canon de la Bastille. L'armée royale se retira. Condé n'acquit que de la gloire. Mais Mademoiselle se perdit pour jamais dans l'esprit du Roi, son cousin, par cette action violente ; et le cardinal Mazarin, qui savait l'extrême envie qu'avait Mademoiselle d'épouser une tête couronnée dit alors: 'ce canon-là vient de tuer son mari'.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Montpensier notes: "Je m'en revins dans la maison, où j'avois été tout le jour pour voir passer l'armée; car je savois bien que tous les officiers seroient ravis de me voir. Je ne veux pas oublier de dire que le matin tous les officiers et les soldats étoient fort consternés ; car ils jugeoient qu'il n'y avoit point de quartier. Dès qu'ils surent que j'étois à la porte, ils firent des cris de joie non pareils, et dirent : 'Faisons merveille ; nous avons une retraite assurée : Mademoiselle est à la porte, qui nous la fera ouvrir, si nous sommes trop pressés.' M. le Prince me manda de leur envoyer du vin ; ce que je fis avec beaucoup de diligence, et comme ils passaient devant les fenêtres d'où j'étois, ils crioient : 'Nous avons bu à votre santé ; vous êtes notre libératrice' » (II, 110).

¹⁶¹ *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*. Paris: Chez Th. Desoer, 1817-19. IV, 1146.

Voltaire recognizes the contrast between Montpensier's audacity and her father's cowardice, but his conclusion that these actions disgraced her forever in the king's mind is exaggerated. The king did exile Montpensier, but once she returned to court, he accepted her within the royal family and let her enjoy the privileges of her position until her death. To be sure, the significance of shooting at the troops that defended the highest, divinely ordained, figure of power in France should not be underestimated.¹⁶² So doing, Montpensier crossed the boundaries that separated kings from subjects, authority from submission, masculine heroism from so-called feminine passivity. And when Condé and other Frondeurs praised her for saving them (I, 110), she discovered that she, too, like her male counterparts, was fully capable of great actions.

* * *

Towards Female Autonomy and Celibacy

With the Frondeurs' defeat, however, Montpensier's plans to become Queen of France fall apart irreversibly.¹⁶³ When Louis returns to Paris in 1652, and sends Montpensier a letter

¹⁶² See my discussion, in the Introduction, of how critics and historians such as Jean Garapon (1989; 1995) and Micheline Cuénin (1995) tend to disparage Montpensier's role in the Fronde. More recent works, however, contextualize Montpensier's actions within a broader view of the participation of women on both sides of the Fronde, including that of Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon, duchesse of Longueville and sister of the Princes de Condé and Conti, whom some called "l'âme de la Fronde" for her leading role; Anne de Gonzague de Clèves, Princesse Palatine, who helped free the princes from prison when they were briefly arrested, but who ultimately sided with the queen; Isabelle-Angélique de Montpmorency, duchesse de Châtillon, who worked as a negotiator on behalf of Condé; and Mme de Chevreuse, who had been Anne d'Autriche's lady-in-waiting and who had been involved in an earlier revolt against Richelieu (see Hubert Carrier, "L'Action politique et militaire des femmes dans la Fronde" in *Encyclopédie politique et historique des femmes*. Ed. Christine Fauré. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997, pp. 49-71.)

¹⁶³ Orest Ranum (1993) summarizes the factors that resulted in the end of the Fronde as follows: "(1) the successful distribution of military commands by Mazarin to ensure that his generals would remain loyal and would be willing to face Condé on a battlefield; (2) the rise of disgust and anger over the civil war among the more politically engaged and the wealthier elements of the urban populations of Paris and Bordeaux; (3) the

evicting her from Les Tuileries (II, 192-3), she loses any prospect of marrying him or of ensuring, for the moment at least, her alliance with a foreign king. Yet, this loss also leads her to gain a sense of the possibility of an independent life outside of marriage.

Montpensier's interest in marriage decreases as she transforms exile into an opportunity for self-reconstruction.

Several factors played a role in this process. First, the actions she carried out during the Fronde gave Montpensier a sense of military and political power. Second, as the previous chapter showed, reconstructing herself and her court at Saint-Fargeau made her see herself not as an object that depended on a father or a husband but as an autonomous person capable of taking care of herself and her estate on her own.¹⁶⁴ Montpensier managed her estates, increased them with the recovery of her domain of Champigny and the acquisition of the estate of Eu, and exerted control over her finances. And when she addressed the men who were in charge of her litigations over the losses she incurred at Champigny and who believed she should not get involved, she wore « un justaucorps », a fitted knee-long and flared coat worn by men, and held a « un fouet à la main » (III, 182).

Dressing in men's clothes suggests the third factor that shaped Montpensier's views about marriage: her encounter with Christina of Sweden (1626-1689), who visited France in 1656, soon after abdicating the throne of Sweden. Her account of this encounter highlights Christina's views against marriage and her "bizarre habillement" and behavior—a

shift of enough high-ranking aristocrats to the side of the crown, which impeded Condé-Gaston putsches in Provence, Languedoc, and Normandy; and (4) the defeat of the Condé-Beaufort troops loyal to the crown" (311). In addition, Ranum observes that Gaston's ambivalence and ambiguity were a major factor in the Fronde's defeat (312-3).

¹⁶⁴ Montpensier recognizes that: "Comme je revins de mon exil, (...) il me parut que j'étois plus capable qu'auparavant" (III, 533), thus acknowledging the changes she had undergone in exile.

strangeness that elicits both attraction and repulsion in Montpensier. In fact, her portrait of Christine emphasizes the combination of male and female features¹⁶⁵—a notion that finds further reinforcement in Montpensier's account of the time they spent together:

Elle m'embrassa et me dit : « j'ai la plus grande joie du monde d'avoir l'honneur de vous voir ; je le souhaitois avec passion (...) elle me fit plusieurs questions et des cajoleries infinies, me louant sur toutes choses (...) Après le ballet nous fumes à la comédie ; là, elle me surprit ; car en louant des endroits qui lui plaisoient elle juroit Dieu ; elle se couchoit dans sa chaise, jetoit ses jambes d'un côté, d'un autre, les passoit sur les bras [de sa chaise] ; enfin elle faisoit des postures que je n'avois jamais vu faire qu'à Trivelin et à Jodelet,¹⁶⁶ qui sont deux bouffons, l'un italien et l'autre françois. Elle reprenoit les vers qui lui plaisaient (...) Il lui prend des rêveries profondes ; fait de grands soupirs ; puis tout d'un coup elle revient comme une personne qui s'éveille en sursaut ; elle est tout à fait extraordinaire (II, 459-460).

Although friendly with Montpensier, Christina shows no restraint in blaspheming, adopting postures unseen in a queen in France, and that Montpensier associates with those of court buffoons. In deviating from conventions, Christina's behavior reproduces the "bizarre" effect of her outfit. Yet, despite her extraordinary manners, Christina empathizes with her desire to be queen of France and, according to Montpensier's memoirs, claims that she wants to:

s'employer par toutes sortes de voies pour me (...) raccommoder à la cour et avec Son Altesse Royale ; [elle disait] que j'étois née pour être reine, qu'elle souhaitoit

¹⁶⁵ Montpensier writes: "J'avois tant ouï parler de la manière bizarre de son habillement, que je mourois de peur de rire en la voyant (...) elle me surprit, mais non pas de manière à faire rire. Elle avoit une jupe d'étoffe de soie grise avec de la dentelle d'or et d'argent, un justaucorps de camelot couleur de feu, avec de la dentelle de même [que] la jupe, et une petite tresse or, argent et noir ; de même il y avoit sur la jupe aussi un mouchoir noué de point de Gênes avec un ruban couleur de feu ; une perruque blonde, et derrière un rond comme les femmes en portent ; un chapeau avec des plumes noires, qu'elle tenoit (...) Elle est blanche ; les yeux bleus ; des moments, elle les a doux, d'autres fort rudes (...) fort petite, son justaucorps cache sa mauvaise taille. Enfin à tout prendre, elle me parut un joli petit garçon (II, 457-8). Here, Christina's outfit is marked by an abundance of colors in yellows and blacks, such as the "dentelle d'or," "camelot couleur de feu" and "ruban couleur de feu" as well as the "tresse or" which is also "argent et noir"—a matching tone for her "jupe d'étoffe de soie grise" and "chapeau avec des plumes noires." These contrasting colors suggest a fiery but dark image of the queen. Second, the "justaucorps" and "perruque blonde" point to a combination of masculine and feminine associations, reinforced by Christina's shifting gaze between "doux" and "rude," and her overall appearance as a boy who is small and pretty. Montpensier's meticulous description reveals the strong impression the Swedish queen made on her.

¹⁶⁶ Trivelin and Jodelet were comic actors. Corneille mentions Jodelet as a comedian of "farces" in his *Suite du Menteur* (Act. I, sc. III).

avec passion que je la fusse de France ; que c'étoit le bien et l'avantage de l'État ; que j'étois la plus belle et la plus aimable, la plus riche et la plus grande princesse de l'Europe ; que la politique vouloit cela ; qu'elle en parleroit à M. le cardinal (II, 461).

Montpensier thus places in Christina's mouth the praise she wants to hear of herself and revalidates her own desires to be queen of France. In addition, Christina's speech represents the first reference against marriage in Montpensier's memoirs. In this regard, Christina's position appears paradoxical, even contradictory. On the one hand, marriage should be made for love, as Christina purportedly told the king regarding his relationship with Marie Mancini (1639-1715), Mazarin's oldest niece: « Si j'étois à votre place, j'épouserois une personne que j'aimerois » (II, 478). With this comment, she dismisses or counters the widespread conception of royal marriage as a tool for furthering alliances. On the other hand, however, Christina displays a virulent position against marriage and child-bearing. As Montpensier reports:

Elle proposa à madame de Thianges¹⁶⁷ de s'en aller à Rome avec elle, et que c'étoit une raillerie de s'amuser à son mari; que le meilleur n'en valoit rien, et qu'il étoit fort à propos de le quitter. Elle pesta fort contre le mariage et me conseilla de ne me jamais marier, trouvant abominable d'avoir des enfants (II, 480).

To Christina, husbands are unworthy, marriage undesirable, and child-bearing abominable. Montpensier does not comment on Christina's position, except to remark that her meddling in Louis's affair with Marie Mancini might have aroused Anne's and Mazarin's disapproval and, therefore, caused a hastier departure from court than Christina would have wanted (II, 479). That she remains silent may be read as tacit agreement, considering that, when she is

¹⁶⁷ Madame de Thianges was formerly Gabrielle de Mortemart who married Claude Leonore de Damas marquis de Thianges in 1655. She was sister to Françoise-Athenais Mortemart, who later became Madame de Montespan, Louis XIV's mistress. She was favored in court even after Montespan's downfall. Saint-Simon describes her as an "amie intime" of Montpensier (Montpensier's *Mémoires*, II, 170-1, note 1).

writing this section of her memoirs, between 1658 and 1660, Montpensier is also condemning marriage in her other writings.¹⁶⁸

After this encounter, references to marriage proposals decrease in Montpensier's memoirs as her ambivalence increases. Before her exile, she had considered over half a dozen marriage possibilities other than Louis XIV.¹⁶⁹ Afterwards, she only mentions three suitors. The first is Monsieur (Philippe d'Orléans), a prospect she had considered before Christine's visit (II, 467) but about whom she notes upon her return to court: "il étoit homme à songer plus à sa beauté et à son ajustement qu'à se relever jamais par de grandes actions, et à se rendre considerable; de sorte que je l'aimois fort pour mon cousin, mais que je ne l'aurois jamais aimé comme mon mari" (III, 284). Thus, after all, rank is not the only standard in the ideal husband; heroic merit is also important. Moreover, Monsieur was a notorious sodomite noted for his preoccupation with dress and appearance, cross-dressing and stormy affairs with male lovers.¹⁷⁰

The second and third prospects are king Charles II again, and M. de Savoie.¹⁷¹ Despite their rank and character, they fail to compel Montpensier's interest. In 1677, as she reflects in hindsight about these proposals, she writes:

¹⁶⁸ *Histoire de la princesse de Paplagonie* (1659) and letters to Mme de Motteville (1660-1.)

¹⁶⁹ The most important of these proposals in the order of their appearance in the memoirs include: Anne d'Autriche's brother, Ferdinand (1609-1641), Prince of the Spanish Netherlands (I, 43); the comte de Soissons (d. 1641) (I, 46-7); Philippe IV of Spain (I, 100-1); the Prince of Wales and future king of England (I, 126, 217-221, 324-5, 329); the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (I, 142-3, 219, 228, 232-3, 249-50); Leopold Archiduc of the Netherlands (I, 213-4; II, 85, 189); and the Prince de Condé (II, 154-5; III, 126).

¹⁷⁰ See Didier Godard. *Le Goût de Monsieur*. Paris: Editions H20, 2002, especially pages 123-154.

¹⁷¹ Charles-Emmanuel II, Duc de Savoie (1634-1675), was the son of Montpensier's aunt Christine de Savoie and her husband Victor-Amédée 1er. In 1663 he married Montpensier's half-sister, Francoise Madeleine d'Orléans (1648-1664), who died a year later (Montpensier's *Mémoires*, Index, IV, 717).

J'écoutois tout ce que l'on me disoit sur ce chapitre avec une grande indifférence; et quand j'y songeois, il me paraissoit qu'il n'y avoit rien de si difficile à juger que celui que j'épouserois, quoiqu'alors il y eût assez de partis qui me convinssent (...) J'ai grand'peur que la résignation où je me trouvois pour lors ne vint pas du principe dont elle doit venir, et que ce fut le peu d'inclination que j'avois au mariage par l'indifférence que j'avois pour les partis qui pouvoient songer à moi (III, 388-9).

Montpensier casts her “peu d'inclination” or little ‘natural’ disposition toward marriage as resulting not from a higher principle of preference for celibacy but rather from the proposals presented to her that she found uninteresting. That she uses the term *inclination*,¹⁷² which refers to an inherent attitude rather than a passing whim, indicates that the desire to get married is not inborn in her. In fact, this lack of *inclination* had emerged before: in 1638, in the first section of her memoirs, when she writes: « je ne me souciois pas de me marier » (I, 43-4) and, in 1641, « je n'avais, sans savoir pourquoi, nulle inclination à me marier » (I, 46). Decades later, in 1677, at the age of fifty, she represents this lack of interest in marriage as something that came both from the lack of a natural disposition and the lack of interesting matches:

Comme l'on verra assez, par tout ce que j'ai écrit dans mes Mémoires, je n'ai eu trop envie de me marier, à moins d'une grandeur qui égalât la mienne (ambition avec laquelle j'étois née, et qui surpassoit encore ma naissance, s'il peut y avoir quelque maison au-dessus; mais l'imagination vive que Dieu m'a donnée à toujours poussé les choses dans l'excès), ou d'une inclination de pareille nature, dont je n'avois été touchée pour lors (III, 394).

Here, Montpensier casts marriage as either a means to gain a higher rank or the aim of those who have an inborn disposition. Her references to rank, marked by terms such as “trop,” “égalât,” “surpassoit,” “excès” as well as “naissance,” “née,” “grandeur,” and “ambition,”

¹⁷² “Inclination: se dit figurément en choses spirituelles des affections de l'âme; & signifie alors une pente ou disposition naturelle à faire quelque chose. *Les uns ont de l'inclination aux armes; les autres à l'étude; les uns à la vertu; les autres à la desbauche; on ne réussit jamais bien en une chose quand on force son inclination*” (Furetière, s.v. ‘Inclination.’) In other words, to have *inclination* for something is to be ‘naturally’ attracted towards it and compelled to engage in it.

point to the recurrent concern with status and hierarchies that had directed her earlier views on marriage, and that she now explains as the result of an ambition fueled by a vivid, excessive imagination. She qualifies *inclination* as something “dont je n’avois été touchée pour lors,” hinting at her relationship with Lauzun, which had begun in 1670, and was still underway when she picked up her pen again in 1677.

Montpensier’s professed lack of desire for marriage is sometimes undercut by contrary feelings. As she repeats a few pages later, back in 1660 and until she met Lauzun in 1670, « je n’avois pas fort envie de me marier » (III, 424). However, she also admits: « Des moments, je me voulois bien marier; d’autres, je ne m’en souciois pas ; mais j’étois bien aise que l’on en parlât et que l’on connût dans le monde que l’on ne me négligeoit pas ; que l’on eût soin de mon établissement, mais au fait et au prendre je ne sais, si la chose eut été prête à se conduire, si je l’aurois voulue » (III, 501). Thus, at times she would rather remain single, and at other times, since marriage is so closely connected to status, her reputation and her self-respect, she wants the court to be concerned with her *établissement*, which she believes her father and the monarchs had neglected. She wants them to show concern about her, but it is unclear whether she would have really wanted to be married, or if this is a denial when it has become clear she will not marry.

When Louis XIV’s wedding to the Infanta of Spain confirms to Montpensier that she will never become Queen of France,¹⁷³ life away from court and free from marriage emerges as particularly compelling. Thus in 1662, when he sends captain Turenne to propose to Montpensier that she marry Alphonse VI, king of Portugal (1656-1683) and thus secure an

¹⁷³ In fact, this marriage also marked the loss of Montpensier’s status as the second female member of the monarchic family after the queen mother.

alliance with Portugal against Spain—a proposal that carried serious possibilities of happening (III, 534-8)—she refuses in the name of preserving her autonomy:

Mon cousin, il fait bon être Mademoiselle en France avec cinq cent mille livres de rente, faisant honneur à la Cour, ne lui rien demander, honorée par ma personne comme par ma qualité. Quand l'on est ainsi, on y demeure. Si l'on s'ennuie à la Cour, l'on ira à la campagne, à ses maisons, où l'on a une cour. On y fait bâtir, on s'y divertit (III, 537).

To be single, enormously wealthy, and stationed at one of the highest ranks, Montpensier concludes, is far more desirable than getting married. When one is Mademoiselle—both in social and legal status—one remains Mademoiselle. Further, her conviction that she can build (“bâtir”) and thus combat boredom at court reinforces her argument in favor of an autonomous life by evoking her previous experience at Saint-Fargeau as fundamental to her newly found preference for celibacy.

However, since Montpensier’s father, Gaston, has died by this time and Louis XIV has thus become a symbolic father to her,¹⁷⁴ her argument to retain her autonomy, rather than to accept his order to get married, defies both paternal and royal prerogatives. Not surprisingly, Turenne remains unconvinced and warns her:

Mais quand l'on est Mademoiselle, avec tout ce que vous avez dit, on est sujette du roi. Il veut ce qu'il veut. Quand on ne le veut pas, il gronde; il donne mille dégoûts à la cour; il passe souvent plus loin: il chasse les gens. Quand ils se plaisent à une maison, il les envoie à une autre. Il fait promener d'un bout du royaume à l'autre. Quelquefois il met en prison dans sa propre maison, envoie dans un couvent, et après tout cela il faut obéir, et l'on fait par force ce que l'on auroit fait de bonne grâce, après avoir beaucoup souffert (III, 537-8).

Turenne’s threat means to establish that far from being autonomous and her own mistress, Montpensier depends on the king’s orders and will incur his wrath should she disobey him;

¹⁷⁴ Upon Gaston’s death, Louis XIV told Montpensier that from now on he would be like a father to her (III, 424). Although Montpensier considers his words to be benevolent, the implication is that, as a surrogate father, Louis could reinforce his already existing kingly authority over her and make sure that she would not think she was free from paternal authority.

indeed, she may be confined at home or in a convent, or exiled from the court to a far away region. In any case, she will be forced to obey. And yet, despite Turenne's threats, Montpensier decides to risk these consequences rather than have "un mari sot et paralytique," as Alphonse VI had been described to her.¹⁷⁵ Once, she refuses the proposal, Turenne returns with the order for her to leave and go to Saint-Fargeau (III, 545). She accepts with dignity, but not without publicizing it: "Je ne voulus pas taire la cause de mon exil; j'écrivis à tout ce que je connoissois de gens que c'étoit à cause que je ne voulois pas épouser le roi de Portugal (...) Je demeurai dans ma solitude assez tranquillement, ayant la conscience nette de tout ce que l'on me pouvoit reprocher" (III, 546-7). As Montpensier disseminates the cause of her exile, she asserts a right to choose—be it a celibate life or a husband of her liking—and thus defines herself as an advocate for women against their being forced into marriage. Calm and at peace with herself despite being exiled once again means, or so she insists, she

¹⁷⁵ Montpensier quotes Turenne's description of Alphonse VI: "C'est un garçon qui n'a jamais eu de volonté que celle de sa mère, accoutumé à faire ce que l'on veut; vous le formerez comme il vous plaira. Car on ne sait s'il a de l'esprit ou s'il n'en a point; c'est comme il faut les maris pour être heureuse. Il est assez beau de visage, blond, point mal fait, hors qu'étant venu au monde paralytique, il a un côté qui est plus foible que l'autre et qui n'a pas pris tant de nourriture; mais cela ne paraît pas quand il est habillé; il traîne seulement un peu une jambe et s'aide malaisément du bras » (IV, 535-6). Turenne attempts to convince Montpensier to accept as her husband a man he characterizes as a boy whose scarce willpower and intelligence would actually make her happy since they would give her the upper hand in the relationship. That Alphonse VI is paralytic and drags his leg does not seem to matter much in the large scheme of what is, after all, a political alliance. While she is in exile, Turenne keeps attempting to convince Montpensier, and sends her several envoys with that mission. One of them, M. Richardière, provides an even more disturbing portrait of Alphonse VI: "Il me le dépeignit d'une autre [façon], mais plus véritable et mauvaise: il me dit qu'il [Alphonse VI] avoit de l'esprit, mais un esprit malin, ignorant, et que la reine sa mère voyoit bien présentement, par la façon dont il vivoit avec elle, le tort qu'elle avoit eu de ne lui rien faire apprendre; débauché; cruel, qui prenoit plaisir à tuer; nulle politesse; ce qu'ont d'ordinaire les gens de ces pays-là. [Richardière disait] 'Ils n'ont pas beaucoup de jugement, mais ils ont l'esprit vif et poli; lui l'a rustre et point d'un homme de qualité; aime le vin, le tabac; s'ennuie avec les honnêtes gens; mais comme il n'a que dix-neuf ou vingt ans, il changera'" (IV, 562). With this portrait, Montpensier confirms that she has made the right decision in refusing to marry a man who is in fact a cruel and debauched criminal. The validity of her decision is again reinforced with Richardière's description of women's condition in Portugal, a condition that sounds equally unappealing: "Vous y donnerez la liberté aux femmes, qui sont comme des esclaves; l'on n'ose se promener dans son propre jardin. Si on voit une femme à la fenêtre, on dit qu'elle ne vaut rien. Enfin c'est le plus horrible pays du monde; mais vous le mettez sur le pied qu'il vous plaira" (IV, 562). Thus convinced that this is not the country in which she wants to live, she answers: "Je l'assurai que (...) je n'irois jamais. Je lui donnai la réponse pour M. de Turenne, et je le priai de lui dire de sortir de sa tête de m'envoyer en Portugal" (IV, 562).

believes she has done the right, the ethical thing. It is clear, though, that she could take this unusual decision for a woman of her times because she had had a life at Saint-Fargeau where she could use exile for her own benefit and fulfillment.

Montpensier approaches her second exile with little or no sign of distress, resuming the courtly life she had begun at Saint-Fargeau. But the weather and humidity there affect her health and she requests permission to move to her chateau of Eu, in Normandy (III, 572-3), a much more magnificent house than Saint-Fargeau (Fig. 2, Appendix C.) Here she embraces the life in retreat she had envisioned in her letters to Motteville. As she writes in her memoirs in 1677:

Je vins ici, résolue d'y passer mon hiver, sans en avoir aucun chagrin. J'avois fait commencer à changer les dedans d'un pavillon avant que de partir; j'eus le plaisir d'y voir travailler des menuisiers et des peintres; et quoique ce pays-ci soit plus froid à cause de la mer, l'hiver y est moins rude; il fut cette année-là le plus beau du monde (...) Il y avoit force gens de qualité; ma cour étoit grosse. Je lisois; je travaillois; les jours d'écrire emportoient du temps; toutes ces choses le font passer insensiblement (III, 576).

Determined to spend the winter at this recently acquired chateau, Montpensier devotes her time renovating Eu and surveying her workers, holding court, entertaining visitors, reading and writing—all very much as she did during her first exile. Even the beautiful winter seems to enhance her stay. Years later, when the king asks her whether she was vexed or bored during this period of exile, she proudly claims that she was not (IV, 4). In fact, she returned often to Eu, and remained there for months at a time, for instance in 1667 (IV, 62) and in 1668, when, she states, “je m’amusois fort ici; j’y faisois travailler. J’y demeurois”(IV, 68). In 1677, it is at Eu that she decides to pick up her pen and write the second section of her memoirs (III, 370-2).

As historian Jean Vatout notes in his *Histoire et description du chateau d'Eu* (1839), the castle was initially built by Catherine de Clèves (1548-1633), wife of the Duc de Guise (1550-1588), who used some of the structures of an old medieval castle (244).¹⁷⁶ Although Montpensier had seen the chateau on an earlier trip with the court, her first visit there was in 1661, four years after she bought it in 1657, upon returning from her exile at Saint-Fargeau.¹⁷⁷ She describes her first impressions as follows:

Je trouvai le château assez beau; j'y avois passé il y avoit quelques années à la cour. On peut juger par les dessins que M. de Guise-le-Balafré avoit, si tout ce qu'il a fait n'avoit pas le [caractère] de grandeur, et c'est lui qui a bâti cette maison. Il n'y a que la moitié de faite; on a laissé le vieux logement des anciens comtes d'Eu, qui étoient de la maison d'Artois. La situation est belle: on y voit la mer quasi de tous les appartements; il n'y avoit point de jardins (III, 524-5).

Montpensier finds the castle appealing for its advantageous position and its views of the ocean,¹⁷⁸ but incomplete. The original plans are left unfinished and there are no gardens. Thus, she decides to landscape its adjacent lands and build additional structures. Vatout, who studied the castle and consulted the papers of the town of Eu, writes: “[Montpensier] en étendit le terrain, qu'elle fit clore d'une vaste muraille; planta de belles allées, fit bâtir dans cet enclos un autre petit château. Elle joignit au vieux château de nouveaux pavillons, un beau parterre en terrasse, et orna les appartements” (333).¹⁷⁹ While little can be said of the

¹⁷⁶ In 1622, Catherine de Clèves, whose husband had been assassinated by Henri III's orders in 1688, also built a church at Eu, known as the “Collégiale” (Vatout 263).

¹⁷⁷ In her memoirs, Montpensier documents this acquisition: “Mademoiselle de Guise me parla de l'acquisition d'Eu, et qu'il fallait qu'elle vendît cette terre, et qu'elle seroit au désespoir qu'elle tombât en d'autres mains que les miennes. Je mandai à [her secretary] Nau de voir avec elle à conclure le marché » (III, 160). “On m'apporta le contrat à la grille du Val-de-Grâce, où j'allai dîner le jour que je partis de Paris (le 7 octobre 1657 » (III, 161).

¹⁷⁸ This claim may be an overstatement on Montpensier's part, since the chateau is quite distant from the seashore and trees may have been in the way at the time.

¹⁷⁹ See in Fig. 6, Appendix C, a photograph taken of a seventeenth-century map illustrating the chateau and its extended garden, along with an enclosure, at the end of which one can see a menagerie, a pavilion standing on its own, and the “autre petit chateau” Vatout refers to.

actual changes Montpensier made to the chateau,¹⁸⁰—the extension of the terraced land, the chateau’s enclosure and planting of trees, as well as the addition of a menagerie, a small pavilion and a smaller chateau, which, Vatout claims, was destined to service the nearby stables¹⁸¹—the work points to a desire to have additional spaces of retreat and to enjoy the outdoors. The pavilion, in particular, perched as it is on a small, but densely wooded hill, hidden from public view, still dominates the entire park and must have had a view over the ocean.¹⁸²

In a real sense, these additions materialize the retreat fantasy Montpensier had described two years earlier in her letters to Mme de Motteville.¹⁸³ At Eu she can have a small haven hidden in the woods, with a view of the ocean and of a meadow with streams, and she can plant trees and flowers in its brand new garden. In addition, she can spend time “adjusting her house”—renovating its interiors, fitting it out with furnishings and decorating it to her taste—reading, writing, and enjoying the company of her many visitors.

Montpensier’s stay at Eu also initiated a period in which she significantly increased her art patronage. In addition to commissioning portraits of her relatives, she joined the

¹⁸⁰ As Alban Duparc, curator of the Musée Louis-Phillipe currently lodged in the chateau of Eu, made clear to me, in the past three centuries, the chateau underwent renovations by Viollet-Le-Duc (1814-1879) in the nineteenth century for Louis-Phillipe, as well as further changes made by the Comte and Comtesse de Paris in the 20th century after a fire in 1902. Since there are no records or floorplans of the chateau before these changes, it is impossible to identify the structural changes Montpensier refers to. (Personal communication in a visit to the chateau made on June 29, 2007.) See also Vincent Pitts, *La Grande Mademoiselle at the Court of France* (2000), page 172, note 58.

¹⁸¹ Vatout writes: “Il était situé au bout du parc actuel, du côté de la ferme, et était destiné au service des écuries. Il a été abattu dans les premiers jours de l’empire” (333, note 1).

¹⁸² Still existing, this pavilion does not belong to the chateau and has been preserved by the current descendants of the Orléans family, the children of late Henri Comte de Paris (1908-1999) and his wife Isabelle of Orléans-Braganza, Comtesse de Paris (1911-2003), who do not allow direct access to it. See in the Appendix an old photograph taken for a local magazine and graciously offered by Hélène Schney, a staff member at the chateau. See also pictures of the nearby park.

¹⁸³ See a detailed description of this retreat fantasy in Chapter IV.

tradition of kings, queens, and princes who represented themselves as mythological

figures.¹⁸⁴ She had herself portrayed as an Amazon (anonymous, 1664), as Diana

(anonymous, no date), and as Minerva (Deruet, between 1657 and 1660; and Pierre

Bourguignon, 1672).¹⁸⁵ These figures suggest a marked emphasis on her past as a warrior and on her unmarried condition.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ See Françoise Bardon's *Le portrait mythologique à la cour de France sous Henri IV et Louis XIII: mythologie et politique*. Paris: Picard, 1975. See also a review of how Montpensier's portrait as Minerva became the piece that Bourguignon submitted on his reception to the French Academy in Bardon's article "Fonctionnement d'un portrait mythologique: La grande mademoiselle en Minerve par Pierre Bourguignon" in *Coloquio Artes* (26) 1976. 5-17.

¹⁸⁵ See Elise Goodman's *A Cultivated Woman: Portraiture in Seventeenth-Century France*. Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 2008) for reproductions of portraits of Montpensier as Minerva (Claude Deruet, no date, p. 210), an Amazon (anonymous, 1664, p. 213), and Diana (anonymous, no date, 215). In addition, see in Appendix illustrations of an engraving of Montpensier as a young Amazon by Simon Pierre (1640-1710), a gouache of Montpensier as an Amazon by Werner Joseph (1637-1710?), as well as Pierre Bourguignon's (1630-1698) portrait of Montpensier as Minerva.

¹⁸⁶ The portrait as an Amazon belongs to the general trend, in the seventeenth century, of representing women who had participated in military actions as "amazons." As Sylvie Steinberg has observed, in the "pro-women" discourse of late sixteenth century and through the first half of the seventeenth century, the figure of the Amazon stood as a symbol of female power. Pamphlets produced during the Fronde represented women who participated in the civil war as the "new" Amazons: "En 1649, lorsqu'elle rentre en France, Madame de Chevreuse est comparée à Penthésilée dans *L'Amazone Francaise au secours des Parisiens* et à Tomiris dans *L'Ilustre Conquérante* (...) Madame de Longueville est, elle aussi présentée comme une nouvelle Amazone dans *L'Apothéose de Madame la duchesse de Longueville*, un pamphlet écrit en 1651." ("Le mythe des Amazones et son utilisation politique de la Renaissance à la Fronde" in *Royaume de fémynie: Pouvoirs, contraintes, espaces de liberté des femmes, de la Renaissance à la Fronde*, ed. Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier and Éliane Viennot. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999, pp. 261-73.) In addition, for some writers, such as Le Moyne (*La Galerie des femmes fortes*, 1647), the Amazon's ability to perform military actions stood as an emblem of *la femme forte*: the ideal woman who distinguished herself from the rest of women by an inordinate strength of character that enabled her to guard her chastity—which, as the main virtue in a woman, corresponded to the "manly" virtue of courage—and preserve other virtues such as constance, faithfulness, resoluteness, true religious devotion, and frankness, all of which contrasted with common female weakness and its correlates, instability, inconstance, indolence, hypocrisy and deceitfulness (McLean, 68-86). Representations of Amazons found visual expressions in works such as those of Abraham Bosse's *Zénobie*, an engraving after Claude Vignon's original painting that illustrated Le Moyne's *Galerie*, and the paintings of Noël Quillerier commissioned by Marie de Cossé Brissac, maréchale de La Meilleraie (see Joan Dejean's "Violent Women and Violence against Women: Representing the "Strong" Woman in Early Modern France" in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. (29) 1, 2003: 117-147). Montpensier's portraits as an Amazon also echo representations of her as an Amazon in the *mazarinades* published soon after the episode of Orléans. See Micheline Cuénin's "Une Amazone impure" (1995), which discusses the manifestos, "Nouvelles extraordinaires de ce qui s'est passé tant à Blois qu'à Gergeau et es environs, et l'entrée de Mademoiselle dans la ville d'Orléans" (A Paris, chez Claude le Roy, au Mont Saint-Hilaire [B.M. Orléans, s.d. H 5761]) and "Harangue faite à Mademoiselle par Messieurs d'Orléans à son arrivée." (A Paris, chez Claude le Roy, au Mont Saint-Hilaire [B.M. Orléans, 8 H 5760.])

Montpensier's portraits as mythological figures, particularly the one as Minerva by Pierre Bourguignon, evoke the works of Italian mythographers, such as Natale Conti (1520?-1580?) whose treatise *Mythologiae* (1568) compiles a catalogue of the gods, goddesses and myths of Antiquity, complete with descriptions of their representations in statues and paintings, and with interpretations of the moral lessons myths allegedly provide. For instance, In a 1627 edition of *Mythologie* by Jean Baudoin,¹⁸⁷ based on the French translation of Natale Conti's *Mythologiae*¹⁸⁸ published in 1597 by Jean de Montlyard, Minerva is described as birthed by Jupiter and Vulcano, a reproductive act that excludes women.¹⁸⁹ Other accounts, Baudoin points out, present Minerva as the daughter of Jupiter's first wife, Métis, but as a child born of gruesome violence where, Jupiter, afraid of being replaced by a son, eats Minerva's mother and kills her brother; she is the only one allowed to survive.¹⁹⁰ Thus, Minerva inherits her father's strength and prudence¹⁹¹ and springs forth as a goddess of

¹⁸⁷ Jean Baudoin (1590-1650) was a humanist scholar and a charter member of the Académie Française.

¹⁸⁸ The *Mythologiae* of Natale Conti (1520-1582) received twenty-one editions in Latin and six in French.

¹⁸⁹ According to Baudoin, Jupiter "se donna un coup de poing au cerveau, dont il devint gros & engendra Pallas" (I, 284), and Vulcano "luy servant de sage-femme, tenant à deux mains une forte & bien trenchante coignée, avec laquelle il luy fend & ouvre la teste qui luy servoit comme d'ost; car dez qu'il eust la teste fendue en deux, il dit qu'il en jaillit une fille toute armée: & ne luy fallut ny Lucine, ny une quantité de femmes pour luy faciliter ses couches (I, 283) As a result, "Minerve nasquit sans mere" (283).

¹⁹⁰ Baudoin writes: "Jupiter par l'avertissement du Ciel estoillé, & de la Terre la prevint, & l'amadoua de si belles paroles, qu'elle [Métis] se laissa devorer, ainsi grosse qu'elle estoit. Ce qu'il fit, pource que les Destinées portoient que d'elle devoit naistre deux creatures sages à merveilles; Minerve aux yeux azurez, d'une mesme force & prudence avec son pere; & ensuite un fils magnanime, qui regneroit sur les Dieux & sur les hommes. Mais Jupiter l'engloutit en son ventre devant qu'elle l'eut produit en lumiere: puis devenu gros au lieu d'elle, & sans aide d'aucun enfanta de sa cervelle la brave & prudente Minerve près la riviere Triton » (285).

¹⁹¹ Furetière defines the virtue of "Prudence" as "La première des vertus cardinales qui enseigne à bien conduire sa vie et ses moeurs, ses discours & ses actions suivant la droite raison. La prudence nous oblige à bien examiner les choses à prendre conseil" (s.v. "Prudence.")

war who, contrary to her ruthless brother Mars, wisely guides men in battle and, thus, acts as a protector and a defender.¹⁹²

Baudoin's representation of the brave and prudent Minerva also emphasizes violence to guard her virginity. He gives another version of Minerva "qui tua son père, comme il la vouloit forcer" (285), a daughter who "couppa la tete à son père Pallas qui avoit des aisles, & la voulut prendre à force pour luy ravir sa virginité: & que de sa peau elle en fit un rondache, & se planta ses aisles au talon" (286).¹⁹³ As Minerva here turns her incestuous father's skin into a shield for herself, sets his wings on her ankles, and transforms the perpetrator of violence into an amulet, she appropriates the violence initially directed against her and recasts it as a source of protection.

That Minerva so effectively defends her virginity establishes her as one of the fiercest guardians of female chastity—a role reiterated in the myth of the Gorgon or Medusa, whom she had decapitated by Perseus because of her « desbordée convoitise & trop excessive incontinence» (761). Baudoin recounts:

Minerve fut si faschée de voir son temple pollué & sa majesté tant criminellement offensée, que pour ne laisser un si grand forfait impuny, elle convertit premièrement les cheveux de Meduse (par la beauté desquels elle avait tant agréé à Neptun) en serpens, puis luy donna cette vertu pour la rendre odieuse et abominable à tout le monde, que tous ceux qui l'envisageroient, sesroient transformez en pierre" (761).

The transformation of Medusa's hair into serpents and of men into stones, is meant to punish unrestrained sexuality, both in men and women. Since this punishment affects all men who

¹⁹² Minerva was "the patroness, not only of women, on whom she conferred skill in sewing, spinning, weaving, etc., but she also guided men in the dangers of war, where victory is gained by cunning, prudence, courage and perseverance." As Athené, "her courage is a wise courage, not a blind rashness like that of Ares; and she is always represented, accordingly, as getting the better of him. In this connection she was honoured in Athené's worship mainly as a protector and a defender" (Harper, s.v. "Athené" and "Minerva.")

¹⁹³ Harper, too, documents this second version of Minerva as Pallas' daughter (s.v. "Minerva.")

pass by and see her, Minerva sends Perseus to cut off Medusa's head, which she then affixes on her shield¹⁹⁴--an act that echoes the account of the Minerva who had slain her father and used his remains as an amulet.¹⁹⁵ In fact, the entire story—whereby the metamorphosed female head terrifies and petrifies men and the goddess sheds blood—may be read as a narrative of female power.¹⁹⁶

In addition to the narratives of myths, Baudoin provides accounts of visual representations of Minerva that reinforce this notion of female power and fierceness (284-7). With her armor, helmet and sword, the javelin and the shield onto which the monstrous head of the Medusa has been affixed, Minerva's portrait embodies a "viril" and "robust" woman whom he characterizes with the terms traditionally used to describe masculine strength.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ According to Baudoin, Perseus "couppa la teste de Meduse, la regardant à travers le miroir (que lui avoit donné Minerve] la teste tournée en arrière, et Pallas lui guidant le bras » (762). Minerva then "ficha depuis ce chef de Meduse en son pavois, & le porta tousiours quand elle marchoit à quelque belliqueux exploits" (763).

¹⁹⁵ In addition to this power to paralyze and terrify enemies, Medusa's head was also thought of as a « means of protection against all enchantment, whether of word or act, and we thus find it throughout Greek history employed as a powerful amulet, and often carved with graceful settings on decorative furniture and costly ornaments" (Harper, s.v. "Gorgo.") As a result, both the father and Medusa, Minerva's former foes, are equated in this metamorphosis that turns them into amulets.

¹⁹⁶ Freud associates Medusa's head with the genitals of the mother and the horror that its sight inspires due to the male fear of castration. As the goddess wears Medusa's head on her shield, Freud argues, she thus becomes « a woman who is unapproachable and repels all sexual desires—since she displays the terrifying genitals of the Mother » (18: 273-4). Although Freud's interpretation is misogynistic, as critics such as Hélène Cixous famously observed ("Le rire de la Méduse" in *L'Arc*, 1975, pp. 39-54), it does emphasize the notion that Medusa's head, in warding off men's sexual desires, serves to guard female chastity. Since, in the view of some seventeenth-century writers, such as Du Bosc (*La Femme Heroïque*) and de Grenaille (*L'Honneste Femme*), female chastity led to women's "true freedom," for it was closely tied to their honor, icons that defend it may thus be read as instruments that reinforce the search for female autonomy and power. In addition, as shown in Le Moyne's *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes* (1647), chastity is strongly attached to a woman's inner strength and stands as the main virtue of the *femme forte*, who, in contrast to women in general, is portrayed as constant, resolute, loyal, faithful, energetic, and frank (84-6). As Ian McLean observes, chastity led women to "spiritual independence" which is "an essential attribute of the heroic woman, for it allows her the necessary freedom of decision." McLean notes that "it is significant that the majority of Du Bosc's and Le Moyne's heroines are either unmarried or widowed, for the constraint of marriage, 'ont ie ne sçay quoy d'empeschant, principalement pour les vertus héroïques'" (85).

¹⁹⁷ See Le Moyne's *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes* (1647), where he characterizes the *femmes fortes* who excelled in arms as "viriles."

Like Minerva, Montpensier lost her mother at birth, performed heroic and prudent acts during the war of the Fronde, and had a complex and violent relationship with her father. In Bourguignon's portrait of Montpensier as Minerva, this complex father-daughter relationship emerges with full force. On the surface, it emulates a visual tradition of women holding smaller portraits of their male relatives, and thus seems to conform to the image of the daughter who recognizes that her high rank is due to her filial relation to Gaston, whose qualities would be commemorated in this inset portrait. On a closer look, however, the focus is clearly on Montpensier rather than on her father. First of all, she dominates the frame by taking up almost three-quarters of the canvass's space; Gaston's bust is contained in a smaller, rounded frame she holds in one hand. The contrast between the two is reinforced not only by the disparity of their dress—she is wearing sandals and an antique loose robe, in clear emulation of Minerva's statue, while he is in seventeenth-century dress and cape—but particularly by their gaze. Whereas Gaston is represented in a traditional frontal position aimed at engaging the viewers, Montpensier averts her eyes in a direction opposite to him—thus marking her distance from him.¹⁹⁸ At the same time, her seated position, in front of a backdrop drapery embroidered with the royal *fleur-de-lys*, evokes the staged throne in which she sat at the Palais-Royal (I, 138-9). And yet, the portrait may refer less to her royal genealogy, signified by the drapery motifs and her father's portrait, than to female power: she sits upright and commanding, holding the javelin as though it were a scepter, wearing a helmet whose large, rounded feathers insinuate a crown, while the shield with the fierce

¹⁹⁸ Elise Goodman (2008) reads Montpensier's averted gaze as representing her "lofty air:" "Montpensier, who despised all lowly things, averts her gaze from us [the viewers], the supplicants, toward someone or something outside the picture worthier than we [sic]. Perhaps most notably, Montpensier's portrait imbues her image with her self-described 'lofty air,' an attitude that many of her contemporaries construed as *hauteur*" ("Constructing the Quintessential Minerva: Mademoiselle de Montpensier" in *The Cultivated Woman: Portraiture in Seventeenth-Century France*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2008, p.110).

Medusa lies on the floor to her right. Gaston's portrait takes the place of Medusa on Minerva's shield and serves as a reminder of the shield's connotations of female power, determination to guard female chastity, and, most important in my view, the daughter's revolt against the violent father. In fact, the cropping of the image of Gaston's head within a frame that Montpensier holds in her hands reinforces this notion of decapitation—as Freud observed, to decapitate is to castrate (28: 273)—and suggests the tremendous weakening of the paternal figure. Ever more, the head Montpensier holds does not belong to Medusa but to another monster—the father who had inflicted pain on the daughter and whose death represented her liberation. Since Medusa's head now lies on the floor, on Montpensier's right, the painting evokes both the Minerva who had Medusa slain—and, thus, a guardian of female chastity—and the other Minerva who slashed the head of the father who wanted to rape her. Now holding Gaston framed and affixed on a new shield—the inset portrait—she can bind him tightly contained and confined within her power, forever silent and eternally petrified.¹⁹⁹ The painting, then, is a complex palimpsest of inset portraits lying over decapitated heads, dutiful over rebellious daughters, and amulets over monstrous figures.

¹⁹⁹ Other women had portrayed themselves as Minerva, mostly to highlight their patronage of the arts, as did Anne of Austria, when she commissioned Philippe de Champaigne (1602-1674) to portray her as Minerva. However, Anne is only wearing Minerva's helmet, and in her hand she holds a book, instead of the shield, which lies on the floor near the spear and owl. As a result, the warrior aspect of Minerva has been strongly minimized. The only other painting, to my knowledge, in which a woman is portrayed in Minerva while holding an inset portrait of a male relative is that of Henriette d'Angleterre (1644-1670), first wife of Philippe d'Orléans (Monsieur), painted by Antoine Matthieu (1631-1673). However, this representation of Henrietta as Minerva is in stark contrast to that of Montpensier since she is wearing none of Minerva's iconographic attributes (helmet, spear, owl, shield). Instead, only the helmet can be seen, casually thrown behind her while the shield with the head of Medusa has completely disappeared. In addition, the way in which Henriette is holding Monsieur's portrait, on her knee and with both hands while she and her husband look directly at the viewer, has none of the violent connotations suggested in Montpensier's portrait and is much more effective in rendering the picture as an homage to Monsieur (See Figs. 3 and 6 in Appendix C.) See also Elise Goodman's critique (2008) of Henriette's and Anne d'Autriche's portraits as Minerva in *The Cultivated Woman*, 75-90, and Francoise Bardon's *Le Portrait mythologique à la cour de France sous Henri IV et Louis XIII: Mythologie et Politique*. Paris: Picard, 1974, especially pages 63-4 and plates XXVI, XXVII, illustrating portraits of Minerva and of Anne d'Autriche as Minerva, and XXXIV for an engraving by C. de Passe of a portrait of Marie de Médicis as Minerva that emphasizes her power, but in which no portrait of a male relative is included.

Finally, the painting also suggests wisdom, signified by Minerva's owl, which sits on Montpensier's helmet, the head being the seat of intellect. For the olive tree, Minerva's attribute as goddess of the arts and sciences, Bourguignon has substituted musical instruments and books lying on the floor near Montpensier's feet, thus underscoring music and literature, which Montpensier patronized and/or practiced. In addition, as Elise Goodman (2008) has observed, the socle of the platform supporting Gaston's portrait contains a low relief sculpture by Jacques Buirette (1631-1699), entitled *L'Union de peinture et de sculpture* (1663) (112). In my view, this replica helps to forge the union of the two main female figures in the painting, Minerva and Montpensier, who—like the figures touching each other on the socle—cross boundaries between the painted and the sculpted, the mythological and the historical, the imaginary and the physical, and thus become a new ideal figure—the female who embodies celibacy, autonomy and power.

* * *

Reconstructing Marriage and Man: the Lauzun Affair

Despite her desire to materialize a fantasy of freedom, when Montpensier realized she would never become queen of France she did not abandon altogether the desire for marriage. Instead, in 1670, less than ten years after her exile at Eu, she decides she wants to choose for herself a man she loves: Antonin Nompar de Caumont, comte de Lauzun (1632-1723), a man who belongs to an old but poor noble family. As she begins the account of this affair in her memoirs,²⁰⁰ it becomes clear that her views on marriage have drastically evolved into a renewed stand in its favor. This time, however, the marriage she desires is based on mutual love and friendship, rather than on rank and social status.²⁰¹ Montpensier explains her change of perspective:

²⁰⁰ In 1677, Montpensier picks up her pen at Eu to write the second section of her memoirs and to relive her ultimately painful relationship with Lauzun: “Dix-sept ans de discontinuation et tout ce qui s’est passé pendant cette interruption peuvent m’avoir fait oublier beaucoup de choses; mais comme ce n’est que pour moi que j’écris, il n’importe. Je vais donc les commencer aujourd’hui 18 août 1677, à Eu » (III, 370).

²⁰¹ Drawing from Saint-Simon’s memoirs and *Lauzun: Un Courtier du Grand Roi* (Paris, 1913), a biography by Auguste-Armand, duc de La Force, a collateral descendant of Lauzun, Vincent Pitts summarizes Lauzun’s background as follows: “Lauzun was born in 1633 at the chateau of the same name (...) The Caumonts were an old noble family of the Agenais district. Antonin’s father, Gabriel de Caumont, headed the junior branch of the family; his mother, Charlotte, belonged to the senior branch, and was a granddaughter of Jacques Nompar de Caumont, duc de la Force and maréchal of France, who (...) fought alongside Henri IV in the civil wars of the late sixteenth century. Although well connected, the Lauzun branch was poor. Antonin, one of eight children, was a second son, destined to make his own way in the world. At the age of fourteen, he was sent to Paris to be raised in the household of his father’s cousin, the maréchal duc de Gramont. Since his father was still living, Antonin made his appearance in Paris society as the marquis de Puyguilhem, a junior title in the family. During the winter months, he attended one of the fashionable academies in the city where young noblemen learned skills useful in warfare, such as applied mathematics, fencing, a smattering of languages, as well as the poise and manners expected of a nobleman. In the summer months he served in the Gramont regiment under the eyes of his patron. By the mid-1650’s, Antonin had attained the rank of captain, and in 1658 became colonel of a regiment of dragoons (...) Throughout the 1660s, Antonin belonged to the small group of courtiers who had surrounded Louis XIV in his pursuit of private pleasures. He also acquired a reputation of his own as a ladies’ man, his name linked with some of the same women found on Louis XIV’s long list of conquests (...) Antonin’s attraction lay not in his person but in his personality: until the end of his very long life—he died at ninety in 1723—he was famous for his flashing wit and devastating *bons mots*. He would lead his prey on, demolish him or her with an unexpected sally, and withdraw from a circle of laughing spectators before the

Comme l'on ne sauroit demeurer bien quand l'on y est et que l'esprit de l'homme est changeant, l'ennui de ma condition, quoique heureuse, me prit et l'envie de me marier. Je raisonnois en moi-même (car je n'en parlai à personne) et je me disois: "Ce n'est point une pensée vague; il faut qu'elle ait quelque objet;" et je ne trouvai point qui c'étoit. Je cherchois, je songeois et je ne trouvois point. Enfin, après m'être inquiétée quelques jours, je m'aperçus que c'étoit M. de Lauzun que j'aimois, qui s'étoit glissé dans mon coeur (IV, 92).

The conflation of "ennui" and happiness in the same sentence implies that while Montpensier's condition is not unhappy, something is missing, which she attributes to a human inability to be happy and to achieve stability, a view that echoes Pascal's description of the human condition.²⁰² When she emphasizes "que jamais personne ne m'avoit témoigné d'amitié;²⁰³ qu'il fallait une fois en sa vie goûter la douceur de se voir aimée de quelqu'un, qui valût la peine que l'on l'aimât » (IV, 92), Montpensier's perspective stands in stark contrast to her earlier advocacy of a celibate life. Her impulse to get married is now driven by a need to overcome what seems to her a loveless and friendless existence and to fulfill a desire for love. Suddenly, to love and to be loved is at the forefront of her decision to marry, which is no longer the dreadful experience she had dismissed in her letters to Mme de Motteville (*Against Marriage*, 42).²⁰⁴ Instead, she now fashions love as a valid pursuit, and

victim could recover his (or her) balance (...) Lauzun combined these qualities with others that made him less appealing: a short temper, a domineering personality, which extended to physical assaults on women, and an egotism that interfered with his extraordinary effort to be the most visible and obsequious of Louis XIV's courtiers. This was particularly evident in the pursuit of women, where he had the effrontery to undertake a rivalry with the king (176-7). Thus, as it appears, Lauzun was not only of a much lower origin than Montpensier, but he became a courtier noted for his sexual conquests. In Montpensier's version, however, this aspect is strongly minimized.

²⁰² Domna C. Stanton. "The Ideal of 'repos' in Seventeenth-Century French Literature." *L'Esprit Créateur* 15:1-2 (1975): 79-97. See earlier discussion of *ennui* in Chapter II of this dissertation.

²⁰³ In the seventeenth-century, *Amitié* is not only friendship or the affection that one feels for someone, but also a term that can be used "en matière d'amour" (Furetière, s.v. "amitié"), and is in fact, found under the entry of *aimer* in the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (1694).

²⁰⁴ See Chapter IV.

cites some verses spoken by Mélisse, the main female character of Corneille's *La Suite du menteur* (1644), a play she saw when she was seventeen:

Je me souvenois de certains vers de Corneille que j'avois vus autrefois dans une de ses comédies (...) que j'ai souvent relus depuis, que voici: Quand les ordres du ciel nous ont faits l'un pour l'autre/ Lise, c'est un accord bientôt fait que le nôtre./ Sa main entre les coeurs, par un secret pouvoir,/ Sème l'intelligence avant que de se voir;/ Il prépare si bien l'amant et la maîtresse,/ Que leur âme au seul nom s'émeut et s'intéresse./ On s'estime, on se cherche, on s'aime en un moment; Tout ce qu'on s'entredit persuade aisément: Et, sans s'inquiéter de mille peurs frivoles,/ La foi semble courir au-devant des paroles./ La langue en peu de mots en explique beaucoup;/ les yeux, plus éloquents, font tout voir tout d'un coup;/ Et de quoi qu'à l'envi tous les deux nous instruisent,/ Le coeur en entend plus que tous les deux n'en disent (IV, 93).

Montpensier elevates love by casting it as divinely preordained and as instantaneous and irresistible. As if seventeen again, she is effervescent with passion as she repeats these verses to herself, engraving them in her memory, mind and heart:

Ces vers me parurent me convenir admirablement bien. Aussi occupoient-ils souvent ma mémoire et mon esprit et sont-ils bien fortement dans mon coeur. On les peut tourner de toutes les manières. Ils sont chrétiens, quoique d'une comédie. On ne sauroit mieux dire sur la prédestination des mariages ou la prévision de Dieu, qu'ils disent, et on peut trouver là une très-bonne morale et en faire des méditations; assurément que j'y ai souvent pensé à l'église. Ils sont aussi les plus galants et les plus tendres du monde (IV, 93-4).

Here, Montpensier's emphasis on the moral and Christian aspect of the play seeks to legitimize her motives for choosing Lauzun, while still praising these verses as the most gallants and "tendres."²⁰⁵

As Montpensier ponders her situation in private ("en moi-même"), she looks around in search of an object that could satisfy her wish, and settles on Lauzun, asserting her own agency in deciding who will be her husband. In the process, not only does Lauzun appear

²⁰⁵ In his analysis of these same verses of *La Suite du Menteur*, Jean Rousset (1981) identifies what he calls the neo-platonic discourse of pre-destined love, as it appeared in Honoré D'Urfé's *L'Astrée* (1607) which Mélisse's servant Lyse cites to explain Melisse's love (98).

second to her desire to get married, but his feelings are never considered. Once Montpensier has set her sights on him, she justifies her choice with praise for his character—rather than his rank—and the love they could potentially give to each other. As she writes: “je le regardois comme le plus honnête homme du monde, le plus agréable, et que rien ne manquoit à mon bonheur que d’avoir un mari fait comme lui, que j’aimerois fort et qui m’aimeroit aussi (IV, 92). To elevate the man of her choice as worthy of her and to offset his lack of rank and wealth, she begins by casting him as “le plus *honnête homme* du monde.” A seventeenth-century ideal that early on meant “to succeed at court” (20), according to Domna C. Stanton (1980)—in other words, to be an *arriviste*—required the honor and renown of military service and the pursuit of women who could offer prestige (20-1). However, others, like Chevalier de Méré, following Montaigne for “his views on professionalism, pedantry, education, and conversation, his brand of stoicism and epicureanism, [and] his comfortable distance from religion and independent attitude toward other established codes” (25), defined the *honnête homme* as the incarnation of the aristocrat and superior being who transformed the self into a system of signs that included the “body, gesture, adornment, manners and speech,” and geared his strategy “to the captivation of others and the imposition of [his] superiority” (7).

With his military profession, his success with women and his position as the king’s favorite, Lauzun seemed to incarnate the skills of the *arriviste* rather than the virtues hailed by Méré. Still, in Montpensier’s portrait, he appears to have displayed some of the signs and qualities of the captivating *honnête homme*:

C’est un petit homme; personne ne sauroit dire qu’il n’ait pas la taille la plus droite, la plus jolie et la plus agréable. Les jambes sont belles; un bon air à tout ce qu’il fait; peu de cheveux blonds, mais fort mêlés de gris, mal peignés et souvent gras; de beaux yeux bleus, mais quasi toujours rouges; un air fin; une jolie mine. Son sourire plait.

Le bout du nez pointu, rouge; quelque chose d'élevé dans la physionomie; fort négligé; quand il lui plait d'être ajusté, il est fort bien. Voilà l'homme. Pour son humeur et ses manières, je défie de les connoître, de les dire ni de les copier. Enfin il m'a plus; je l'aime passionnément (IV, 249).

Despite being short, having mostly greasy and ungroomed gray hair, red eyes and a red nose, and being typically badly dressed, Lauzun cuts a fine figure in Montpensier's eyes since he has an "air fin," is graceful in everything he does, and has a "jolie mine," a captivating smile, an undescrivable and inimitable "humeur" and manners, and something elevated in his physiognomy—all of which constitutes an intangible *je-ne-sais-quoi* that captivates her ("il m'a plus"), makes her love him passionately and mitigates or erases his imperfections. In other words, he has subtle qualities that attract others, a mysterious capacity to charm, to "plaire," that makes him appear as the emperor of the whole world (IV, 96).²⁰⁶

Ignoring or dismissing other aspects of Lauzun, including his reputation for having a short temper and for engaging in numerous sexual liaisons at court, Montpensier supports her choice by emphasizing Lauzun's merit and worth, which, she claims, surpass anything she might do for him:

[J]e me faisois un plan de ce que je pouvois faire pour lui, qui lui donneroit une grande élévation; mais je trouvois que le mérite qu'il avoit pour la soutenir étoit encore au-dessus de tout ce que je pourrois faire. Je me flattois agréablement dans ces pensées et j'étois ravie de voir, par l'estime qu'il avoit dans le monde, que je ne voyois point tout ce que je dis par préoccupation; mais que c'étoit la vérité (IV, 92-3).

Nevertheless she does raise his rank and increase his wealth through lavish gifts of titles and domains from her own estates. In so doing, she inverts the *topos* of men raising women's

²⁰⁶ Furthermore, not only is Lauzun "agréable" in Montpensier's eyes, but, although he knows how to look good when it fancies him to dress properly, even his neglected dress and his ungroomed and greasy hair are acceptable, as they represent a certain *négligence* that, as Domna C. Stanton (1980) argues, "identifies a master of *honnêteté*," (125-6). Moreover, Lauzun's "air fin" attests of the ultimate sign of the *honnête* man, which is the *grâce* of his deportment, "a seasoning which lends appeal to a person's slightest gesture (...) it is the beauty of action and repose (...) the perfect balance (...) whether in motion or at rest, a *certain air*, full of natural allurements and free of artifice, which accompanies the body's every stance, active or inactive, with the result that as our eye dwells on it, our mind simultaneously gives its tacit approval" (124).

status through marriage, as commonly happened in what was known as *une mésalliance*. As

Mme de Sévigné reports in her letter dated December 19, 1670:

Le mercredi, Mademoiselle fit une donation à M. de Lauzun, avec dessein de lui donner les titres, les noms et les ornements nécessaires pour être nommés dans le contrat de mariage, qui fut fait le même jour. Elle lui donna donc, en attendant mieux, quatre duchés: le premier, c'est le comté d'Eu, qui est la première pairie de France et qui donne le premier rang; le duché de Montpensier, dont il porta hier le nom toute la journée; le duché de Saint-Fargeau, le duché Châtellerault, tout cela estimé vingt-deux millions. Le contrat fut fait ensuite, où il prit le nom de Montpensier » (Lettre 122).²⁰⁷

Montpensier's account of her donation is slightly different in her memoirs, since instead of the dukedoms of Eu, Saint-Fargeau and Châtellerault, she mentions the gift of her greatest estate, the principality of Dombes : « On dressa une donation que je lui faisois de la duché de Montpensier et de la principauté de Dombes, afin que l'on mît cela dans ses qualités au contrat et à la publication des bans » (IV, 225). In fact, as she ponders her decision to marry Lauzun, Montpensier enumerates the much more prosaic consequences this marriage would bring her:

[Je pensois à] l'obligation qu'il m'auroit; combien cela me seroit glorieux; ceux qui me loueroient; ceux qui me blâmeroient; la douceur de demeurer en mon pays, où il y avoit si peu de gens au-dessus de moi, qui me devoit guérir du regret que je pourrois avoit d'être pas reine dans des pays étrangers, dont les rois n'étoient pas faits comme M de Lauzun. Pour les souverains, je trouvois que d'être sujet d'un aussi grand roi que le notre valoit bien les souverains. Enfin je me disois un jour tout ce qui me pouvoit donner tout le gré imaginable dans la pensée que j'avois: j'en trouvois à ôter l'espérance à mes héritiers d'avoir mon bien de souhaiter ma mort, qui étoit bien grand (...) Enfin après avoir souvent passé et repassée le pour et le contre dans ma tête, mon coeur décida l'affaire, et ce fut aux Recollets²⁰⁸ que je pris ma dernière résolution (IV, 94-5).²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Mme de Sévigné's estimate is exaggerated. According to Vincent Pitts, at her death, Montpensier's fortune could be estimated to 12 millions livres, surpassed only by the Condé's fortune, at 19 million. Of these donations, Lauzun only retained Saint-Fargeau. In 1685, Montpensier changed the will that made him her universal heir and instead named Philippe d'Orléans as her heir (Pitts, 263-268).

²⁰⁸ A convent built in the seventeenth century outside the walls of Paris.

²⁰⁹ In his *Journal*, Olivier d'Ormesson writes : « La négociation [de ce mariage] en avoit commencé dès le voyage du roi en Flandre, où Mademoiselle avoit dit plusieurs fois à M. de Lauzun qu'elle ne vouloit plus être

Despite Montpensier's earlier claim that this was a decision of the heart, Lauzun and his wishes are, in this deliberation, once again, secondary, for she assumes that marriage with her would be a good fortune for him. These advantages—the praise and the blame her action would receive, staying at the French court, and, ultimately, frustrating the expectations of her heirs (namely, her half-sisters)—are reasons that have little to do with the heart, even less with the man. Moreover, marriage here is not designed to serve the aims of her royal family, but to defeat them: rather than being married to a stranger and sent to a foreign country on an alliance that would serve the king's political purposes, she will marry someone she knows, esteems, and elevates—an act she casts as glorious and generous and that should elicit the praise of many and the eternal gratitude of Lauzun, henceforth to be known as M. de Montpensier. Last but not least, instead of being the passive object or victim of marriage negotiations, she will take control of her future, make her “resolution,” and—decades after Queen Anne had scolded her for arranging a marriage on her own (see *supra* quote)—choose a husband of her liking, declare her love for him and have him accept to marry her (IV, 172-3).

* * *

The Man, the Garden, and the Scandal

In the midst of her affair with Lauzun, Montpensier perceives the entire world through the prism of her relationship. In her account of a visit she made with the court to the

la victime de l'Etat ; qu'elle vouloit se marier et faire d'un gentilhomme [son mari] » (Montpensier's *Mémoires*, Appendice IX, IV, 564-5).

garden of Enghien, she compares the garden itself with Lauzun. This comparison evokes associations she had made in past architectural constructions, such as that of Saint-Fargeau and herself (see Chapter II.) Yet, whereas in that correlation of space and person, the castle conflated with Montpensier, here the alignment she makes between Lauzun and the garden equates the object of her love to an object of her gaze. The comparison objectifies the man and turns him into a thing under her power.

In her memoirs, Montpensier recounts her visit to Enghien and its extraordinary garden:

On alla à Ath.²¹⁰ On parla de la beauté d'un jardin, qui est près de là (...) Monsieur eut envie d'y aller; le roi le permit (...) Il n'y eut que Monsieur et quelques dames qui y vinrent avec nous (...) Le château est grand, mais vieux. Pour le jardin, c'est la plus belle chose du monde et la plus extraordinaire; mais il faudrait un temps infini à en faire la description, et après cela on n'y comprendrait rien, si on ne l'avoit vu (IV, 282).

Located at some thirty-nine kilometers southwest of Brussels, the garden of Enghien was built by the Arenberg family, who initially bought it from Henri IV in 1606,²¹¹ and had been recently restored by the city of Enghien. The description of this garden and thus what Montpensier might have meant in comparing it to Lauzun can be reconstituted from engravings, tapestries, and the accounts of visitors. The most famous engravings are the series made by the Dutch Romeyn de Hooghe (1645-1708), which includes a *Vue cavalière*

²¹⁰ The county and town of Ath, located near Brussels, belonged to France at the time of Montpensier's visit in the early 1670's since Louis XIV had conquered it in 1667. See Ath's official site at http://www.ath.be/default.asp?V_DOC_ID=999, accessed on June 2, 2009.

²¹¹ Initial construction of this garden began with Charles d'Arenberg (1550-1616), who was succeeded by his wife Anne de Croy (1564-1635), who created "a botanic garden and a grotto full of mechanical birds which sang by water power" (Anthony Mitchell, "'La plus belle chose du monde' and the Enghien Tapestries at Dyrham Park and Maiden Bradley" in *Apollo: The International Magazine of Arts*. 446 (1999), p. 34. Then, their son, Antoine (1593-1669), who then became Père Charles de Bruxelles, continued the works, and eventually partnered with his nephew Philippe-François (1624-74) to make the garden that dazzled visitors like Montpensier. See illustrations of engravings and tapestries in Mitchell (33-37).

of the gardens at Enghien (1685); *The Motte seen from the Triumphal arch*; *The Parterre des fleurs*; and *The Pavillon des Sept Etoiles* (Mitchell, 34-6). There is also a plan of the gardens, drawn around 1660, which shows what Mitchell identifies as the “correct” layout (contrary to Hooghe’s *cavalière* view, which shows some *allées* or pathways laid in narrower angles.) Briefly described, the garden is designed around a center, the *Etoile*, a heptagonal pavilion from which spread out seven main axes or large pathways planted with trees (35). The land between each of the seven pathways is filled with twelve smaller, enclosed and compartmentalized gardens that surround the pavilion and thus accentuate its emplacement at the garden’s center. The main pathway, which leads to a triumphal arch, opens, to its right, on five enclosed gardens or *parterres* grouped together and encircled by a large wall, and separated from each other by inner walls with openings that allow circulation from one *parterre* to the other (35). To the right of the garden there is a long lake with, at its center, another pavilion known as the Motte. A long Mall or “mail” lies between the garden and the lake. In sum, the overall effect is that of an extremely elaborate and complex design of pathways and pavilions, orderly planted trees, and diversely arranged, meticulously manicured parterres decorated with fountains and labyrinths. While the garden evokes the wonders of nature, it clearly emphasizes man’s power over nature; and as such, it also announces Louis XIV’s goals at Versailles in the following years.²¹²

Montpensier’s compares Lauzun to the garden of Enghien on several significant grounds: “[Lauzun] avoit des manières à me ramener et à me mettre de bonne humeur, qu’il n’y en eut jamais de pareilles [manières]; il est tout comme le jardin d’Enghien: en de

²¹² See Chandra Mukerji’s *Territorial Ambitions* (1997) for a detailed analysis of Versailles as a gardening project meant to showcase the king’s power, not only over nature itself, but also over the territories that he aimed at conquering with each war.

certaines choses il faut le voir; car on ne sauroit le dépeindre ni l'imiter" (IV, 283). First, in the most literal terms, it suggests that Lauzun has a therapeutic effect on her when she is out of sorts. Second, she elevates him above anything nameable and portrayable, for his manner is indescribable and inimitable. At the same time, however, the comparison objectifies Lauzun: as a garden, he can be groomed and cultivated, manicured and landscaped, and most of all, he can be an object of pleasure for *her* gaze. This objectification inverts traditional gender dichotomies: a man—and a virile, military man at that—now becomes the object of a female gaze.

However, Montpensier's reconstruction of Lauzun does not succeed when she decides to announce her decision to Louis XIV and petition his approval. Indeed, her declaration that her wealth and rank were capable in themselves to elevate any man of her choice clearly was offensive to Louis XIV's sense of his own absoluteness.²¹³ And yet, initially, the king gives his consent, but as she prepares for the wedding, the whole of Paris is rocked by this scandal. As Mme de Sévigné's famous letter announcing the wedding

²¹³ Montpensier quotes her request: "Sire, c'est pour dire à Votre Majesté (le coeur me bat) ce que je lui ai écrit. Je ne change point de résolution: plus j'y pense, plus je l'examine, [plus] je trouve que je serai heureuse. J'estime, sire, et j'aime M. de Lauzun; l'honneur que Votre Majesté lui fait m'a fait naître ces sentiments. J'ai de quoi l'élever plus qu'un prince étranger. L'honneur d'être votre sujet me le fait plus considérer qu'un souverain. C'est Votre Majesté qui l'élève; ce n'est point moi; car tout ce que j'ai et moi-même, je dépends de vous. Je ne fais rien pour lui; c'est vous, sire, qui faites tout et qui ferez aussi le repos et la joie de ma vie. Je ne l'aurois pas cru en une chose pareille autrefois; tout change. Je ne fais rien dans cette affaire contre mon honneur ni contre ma conscience. A toute chose on y donne un mauvais tour, quand l'on veut. L'approbation de Votre Majesté, la conduite que j'ai eue toute ma vie, me font croire que l'on n'y en sauroit donner un mauvais. Je ne trouve rien de blessé en cette affaire que mon ambition. Il s'en trouve à faire des choses extraordinaires: l'élévation d'un homme qui l'est autant que M. de Lauzun me paroît quelque chose de beau » (IV, 189-90). This plea, loaded as it is in negative phrase constructions, emphasizes a shift of power from self to the king. Now, it appears that not only is the king the only one who can elevate Lauzun and give her the happiness she wants, but he even gave birth to her feelings for him. Expressions such as "ce n'est point moi," "je ne fais rien," "je ne l'aurois pas cru," "l'on n'y en sauroit donner," and "je ne trouve rien de blessé"—are all part of a rhetorical strategy to defend her case, and might be interpreted, perhaps, as a display of submission to the king's will that might serve to mitigate, in his eyes, the audacity of her choice. In addition, she acknowledges that this marriage vexes nothing except her past ambition of becoming queen, and casts the elevation of a man as an equally worthy aspiration.

confirms, such a marriage was utterly unfathomable.²¹⁴ Among those who were most upset by the possibility of her marriage were those who were expecting to inherit from her—namely, her stepmother and sisters, Monsieur, and even the house of Condé. They were quick to intervene behind the scenes to make the king change his mind.²¹⁵ In Mme de Sévigné's account, the result is catastrophic for Montpensier:

Le jeudi matin, qui était hier, Mademoiselle espéra que le Roi signerait, comme il l'avait dit ; mais sur les sept heures du soir, Sa Majesté étant persuadée, par la Reine, Monsieur et plusieurs barbons,²¹⁶ que cette affaire faisait tort à sa réputation, il se résolut de la rompre, et après avoir fait venir Mademoiselle et M. de Lauzun, il leur déclara, devant Monsieur le Prince, qu'il leur défendait de plus songer à ce mariage. M. de Lauzun reçut cet ordre avec tout le respect, toute la soumission, toute la fermeté, et tout le désespoir que méritait une si grande chute. Pour Mademoiselle, suivant son humeur, elle éclata en pleurs, en cris, de douleurs violentes, en plaintes excessives, et tout le jour elle a gardé son lit, sans rien avaler que des bouillons. Voilà

²¹⁴ A Coulanges, A Paris, ce 15 décembre 1670 : Je m'en vais vous mander la chose la plus étonnante, la plus surprenante, la plus merveilleuse, la plus miraculeuse, la plus triomphante, la plus étourdissante, la plus inouïe, la plus singulière, la plus extraordinaire, la plus incroyable, la plus imprévue, la plus grande, la plus petite, la plus rare, la plus commune, la plus éclatante, la plus secrète jusqu'aujourd'hui, la plus brillante, la plus digne d'envie : enfin une chose dont on ne trouve qu'un exemple dans les siècles passés, encore cet exemple n'est-il pas juste (...) une chose qui fait crier miséricorde à tout le monde (...) une chose enfin qui se fera dimanche, où ceux qui la verront croiront avoir la berlue ; une chose qui se fera, et que ne sera peut-être pas faite lundi. Je ne puis me résoudre à la dire ; devinez-la je vous le donne en trois (...) M. de Lauzun épouse dimanche au Louvre, devinez qui ? (...) il épouse Mademoiselle, ma foi ! par ma foi ! ma foi jurée ! Mademoiselle, la grande mademoiselle ; Mademoiselle, fille de feu Monsieur ; Mademoiselle, petite-fille de Henri IV ; mademoiselle d'Eu, mademoiselle de Dombes, mademoiselle de Montpensier, mademoiselle d'Orléans ; Mademoiselle, cousine germaine du Roi ; Mademoiselle, destinée au trône ; Mademoiselle, le seul parti de France qui fût digne de Monsieur : Voilà un beau sujet de discourir. Si vous criez, si vous êtes hors de vous-même, si vous dites que nous avons menti, que cela est faux, qu'on se moque de vous, que voilà une belle raillerie, que cela est bien fade à imaginer ; si enfin vous nous dites des injures : nous trouverons que vous avez raison ; nous en avons fait autant que vous » (*Lettres*, Lettre 72). Sévigné toys with her readers before announcing the marriage and the parties involved, and characterizes it as the most extraordinary, the most surprising, etc., emphasizing its scandalous nature. Although she also finds it « digne d'envie », it is clear that the most salient aspect of this scandal is the gap between Montpensier's rank and wealth and those of Lauzun.

²¹⁵ In his *Journal*, Olivier d'Ormesson writes : « Je sus de M. Le Pelletier [qui succéda à Colbert comme contrôleur général des finances] que Madame, la douairière, avoit écrit au roi une grande lettre pour l'empêcher ; que M. le Prince avoit aussi parlé fort sagement au roi, et que M. le maréchal de Villeroy avoit aussi parlé de son côté, et que le roi s'étoit rendu à leurs raisons (...) Tout le monde a loué le roi de cette action, car ce mariage tournoit à sa honte, ne pouvant avoir été entrepris que de son consentement (Montpensier's *Mémoires*, Appendice IX, IV, 564-5).

²¹⁶ Furetière defines "barbon" as "vieillard qui est revenu de tous les plaisirs de la jeunesse, qui les condamne, et qui les empêche autant qu'il peut" (s.v. "Barbon.")

un beau songe, voilà un beau sujet de roman ou de tragédie, mais surtout un beau sujet de raisonner et de parler éternellement (Lettre 122).

According to Sévigné, Montpensier's marriage with Lauzun would have been such a scandal it would have damaged the king's reputation: if he allowed his first cousin to do this, he would be showing weakness and lack of authority. Thus the king forbids the marriage.

Sévigné's lengthy narrative of this affair indicates that Lauzun seems to submit respectfully to the king's orders, but not Montpensier. Typically, she shows no restraint, is deeply distressed for she realizes that she is not, indeed, mistress of herself, to choose a husband of her liking, and to fashion a marriage on her own terms. As Sévigné puts it, such a marriage was a beautiful fantasy, a beautiful plot to a novel or tragedy, and certainly a great topic of debate for years to come, but not a reality.

Nearly a year later, Lauzun is sent to the remote prison of Pignerol, a jail in which he would remain ten years. Apparently, during this period, Louis XIV did not even want to hear his name pronounced.²¹⁷ As Vincent Pitts observes, no reason was provided for this punishment but the fact that Louis XIV remained silent about it indicates that Lauzun's "crime" was considered extremely serious. Many, like the marquis de la Fare (1644-1712), believed Montpensier and Lauzun had married in secret, a possibility that she did not bother to deny,²¹⁸ while others, such as Saint-Simon, thought Lauzun's punishment was the result of

²¹⁷ Vincent Pitts reports an incident that indicates Louis XIV's views: "On one occasion in 1673, while the court was in the vicinity of Strasbourg, a naïve local official with some past ties to the court asked the king about a number of his old aristocratic acquaintances. An amused Louis was happy to bring him up to date, until the unwary man asked about Lauzun. When the king did not reply, he repeated the question several times, even asking the reason for the silence. The only answer was a royal stare and jeers from the courtiers who accompanied the king" (214).

²¹⁸ Montpensier comments: "on fit courre le bruit que nous nous étions mariés avant que de partir de Paris, et la Gasette de Hollande le [dit]. On me l'apporta pour me la montrer. [Lauzun] rioit; je ne dis rien; je [la] lui envoyai" (IV, 279). That she did not bother deny the announcement made in the Gazette led many to believe that they had actually married in secret. No proof of this secret marriage has been found, but if it were true, then Montpensier would have, indeed, materialized her wishes, in total defiance of the king's will, and,

a series of violent confrontations between him and Mme de Montespan,²¹⁹ whom Lauzun accused of having worked against the marriage (Pitts 210-11); the king supposedly requested Lauzun to apologize to Montespan, an order that he allegedly refused to obey (211).

In her memoirs, Montpensier describes her reaction at hearing the news.²²⁰ After the shock, she decides to stay at court, with the hope of eliciting Louis XIV's mercy through her perseverance (IV, 311). She does not wonder about the reason for his imprisonment, a silence that might be interpreted as indicating she understood why. During the ten years of Lauzun's imprisonment, Montpensier does everything in her power to have the king forgive Lauzun and to free him. After many years of these supplications, Mme de Montespan finds a way to profit from Montpensier's plea and suggests the price to her: turn over her principality of Dombes and her comté of Eu (Montpensier's earlier donations of these properties to Lauzun had been annulled) to her own son, Louis XIV's bastard child, the Duc de Maine (IV, 425-7). Montpensier makes the donation in 1680, Lauzun is finally freed in 1681 and, although he and Montpensier are never officially allowed to marry, they maintain a relationship for some years.²²¹

consequently, brought about Lauzun's imprisonment. Had they not been married, the very plotting of this marriage in secret and attempt to elevate himself to be part of the royal family by courting the king's first cousin may have been enough in themselves to deserve such a rash punishment.

²¹⁹ Françoise-Athénaïs de Rochechouart de Mortemart, Marquise de Montespan (1641-1707) and Louis XIV's mistress, bore him seven children.

²²⁰ Montpensier recounts; "La comtesse de Fiesque me dit: 'C'est qu'il est arrêté. –Quoi! Lui dis-je; M. de Lauzun est arrêté?' Je fus saisie au dernier point; je trouvai madame de Nogent [Lauzun's sister] quasi évanouie. Je fus longtemps sans parler; puis je demandai comment. Rollinde me dit qu'il avoit été arrêté une heure après avoir été arrivé à Saint-Germain; que Rochefort l'avoit trouvé dans sa chambre. On peut croire l'état où cela me mit (...) Je suis étonnée de n'en être pas morte » (IV, 309-310).

²²¹ This donation, however, is not to Montpensier's glory. Feudal rules and customs established that as the sovereign ruler of Dombes, she was not free to give away her principality, certainly not to an individual of inferior rank such as the king's bastard son, or, Lauzun, as she intended to do earlier.

In the last section of her memoirs, however, Montpensier protests that he was very changed by his years in prison. Thus when he visits the chateau of Choisy that she had begun to build during his absence, he disapproves and pettily remarks that she should have given him the money she had used for its construction:

Il me dit un jour que j'y étois en me promenant: 'voilà un bâtiment bien inutile; il ne falloit là qu'une petite maison à venir manger une fricassée de poulet et point pour y coucher. Toutes ces terrasses coûtent des sommes immenses: à quoi cela est-il bon?' Quelqu'un lui dit que ce n'étoit pas trop beau pour moi. Il se mit à jurer qu'il étoit bien aisé à ceux à qui cela ne coûtoit rien d'en parler. Je lui dis que je n'avois rien fait que par l'avis de M. Colbert. Il dit: 'Vous le payera-t-il? Pour moi, j'ai sujet de trouver à redire; vous auriez mieux employé cet argent en me le donnant.' Je lui répondis doucement: 'Je vous en ai assez donné et fait donner pour que vous soyez encore content, et j'ai assez donné aussi pour racheter votre mauvaise conduite.' Il alloit jouer partout, il jouoit un fort gros jeu. Quand il perdoit, il étoit au désespoir (IV, 481).

Far from the charming *honnête homme* with whom she had fallen in love ten years earlier, Lauzun appears here as a greedy, ungrateful, rude, and hypocritical man. He lies, gambles, and womanizes, and, eventually, accuses her of having ruined his fortune (IV, 510). Further, as Montpensier reminds him of the generous donations she had made to him and to buy the king's pardon, love seems reduced to an economic transaction. Seeing the degree to which their relationship has degenerated, she dismisses him from her home: "Je demeurai dans un grand sang-froid. Je lui dis: 'Adieu, donc;' et j'entrai dans ma petite chambre. J'y fus quelque temps; je rentra; je le trouvai encore (...) J'allai à lui, lui disant: "C'est trop, tenez votre résolution; allez-vous-en.' Il se retira et fut chez Monsieur lui dire que je l'avois chassé comme un coquin, et se plaignit fort de moi" (IV, 510).²²² With this order, Montpensier ended the affair she had initiated fifteen years earlier.

²²² The *Journal d'Angeau* dates this event as May 4, 1684.

Montpensier and Lauzun's relationship involved a tension that did not exist in traditional marriages or relationships, for rank and gender hierarchies had usually been conflated, based in the belief that those who hold higher rank should govern their inferiors, as husbands do with wives. However, Montpensier's rank as princess of the blood—a rank that had always shaped her sense of self—was markedly superior to Lauzun's, no matter how high she wished to refashion him in her own mind and in his social and financial status. In fact, her gifts of titles and estates did little to change his rank for she did not have the authority and legitimacy that a king has to confer status to nobles. If anything, these gifts probably served to create resentment and even humiliation since they came from a woman rather than from the king. In fact, even though she was one of the most privileged women in Europe, she was not free to marry the man she wanted as a husband.

In retrospect, Montpensier's various stands regarding marriage reveal a complicated coming to terms with this ingrained plot in the life of women of her times: first, she appropriates marriage as a tool for self-advancement, since it represents a means to becoming queen; when this approach fails, she decides to preserve her freedom rather than to cave in and accept the choices that Louis XIV has made for her; then, once she has conquered her freedom and remained unmarried for the first half of her adult life, at forty-three, an age at which she realizes she is mortal,²²³ she decides that she wants to love and to be loved, and turns marriage into a path she wishes to take. In so doing, she disregards hundreds of years of practices that had established marriage as a tool for enhancing family and state alliances,

²²³ The sense of mortality is certainly a decisive motive for Montpensier. She exclaims: "Hélas! (...) quand on a quarante ans, que l'on veut faire une folie, il n'y faut pas penser si longtemps, on n'a qu'à voir si celui que l'on prend n'en fait pas une; au moins il redresse celle qui la fait" (*Mémoires*, IV, 125). The notion of her mortality recurs again when she places in Lauzun's mouth the warning: "souvenez-vous que vous êtes mortelle" (126), thus reinforcing her decision to get married.

most especially in royal families, and does the opposite of what salon women vied for when they denounced marriage as the antithesis of love.

Further, when Montpensier does decide to marry for love, the process of selecting the man she thinks would fulfill this role is utterly emasculating: not only does the desire for love emerge before she even knows her object, but she consciously looks around, amongst the many prospects available at court, before she settles her sights on Lauzun. Once she has made her choice, she spends an entire year courting him, making him her friend and confidante until she makes the declaration of love.²²⁴ Then she, not he, asks for the king's permission. Finally, in their pre-nuptial agreement, she donates her estates and titles to him, and although this gift may seem a gesture of generosity, a sign of material detachment, or even a calculated act that, in elevating his status, would make their marriage more socially

²²⁴ Montpensier discusses her affair as another project or plan, when she recounts that once she decided on Lauzun, "j'étais ravie d'être seule dans ma chambre; je me faisais un plan de ce que je pouvais faire pour lui" (IV, 92). She adds: "Enfin, après avoir souvent passé et repassé le pour et le contre dans ma tête, mon coeur décida l'affaire, (...) je pris ma dernière résolution » (IV, 94-95); she had to carry out this plan by herself, having no one to confide in, as she writes: "[Madame] l'aimoit fort, je mourois d'envie de lui parler de mon dessein, étant persuadée qu'elle l'approuveroit; mais je n'osois » (IV, 94). She decides to make Lauzun her confidante as a way to have a reason to interact privately with him: "Je mourois d'envie de lui donner occasion de me dire ce que [son coeur] sentoit pour moi. Je ne savois comment faire. Enfin il me vint un bruit que l'on disoit que le roi rendoit la Lorraine et que le roi me vouloit marier au prince Charles. Je me dis: 'Voici une heureuse occasion pour en donner à M. de Lauzun de me parler.' Je l'envoyai chercher à sa chambre" (IV, 95). Thus, she gears the topic of their initial conversations towards her own prospects of marriage (IV, 96) and that any man would be honored to be chosen by her. In Lauzun's words: " 'Si vous avez envie de vous marier, vous avez de quoi faire un homme égal en grandeur et en puissance aux souverains. Il saura par-dessus que vous aurez le plaisir de l'avoir fait; qu'il vous en aura l'obligation (...) Il ne faut point dire comme il faut qu'il soit fait pour posséder un tel honneur; car en vous plaisant et étant choisi par vous, ce sera un homme admirable. Rien ne lui manquera'" (IV, 98-99). She justifies her decision to make her declaration to him, rather than wait for him to make this move, by the fact that it would have been too presumptuous of him to ask her directly: "il me paroissait que connoissant mes intentions [de me marier], il ne devoit pas me dire directement 'prenez-moi;'" (IV, 101). Months later, she finally declares herself: "j'écrivis sur une feuille de papier tout au haut: 'C'est vous;' et la mis dans ma poche (...) Je tirai [cette feuille], où il n'y avoit qu'un mot qui en disoit beaucoup; je lui montrai; je la remettois dans ma poche (...) Il me pressoit fort de la lui donner, en disant que le coeur lui battoit (...) Nous n'osions nous parler ni même nous regarder (...) Il étoit fort proche de moi; je lui dis sans le regarder: 'Je suis transie de froid.' Il me dit: 'Je suis bien plus transi de ce que j'ai vu » (IV, 173-4). Later on, she explains to him how her esteem is the main reason why she wants to marry him (IV, 177-78).

acceptable, the fact is that he becomes Monsieur de Montpensier—rather than she Madame de Lauzun—he loses his name, and with it, the symbolic supremacy of husband over wife.²²⁵

Montpensier's narrative of their affair deprives Lauzun of his subjectivity: he is first the object of her desire, someone she grooms in her writings as "le plus honnête homme du monde" (IV, 92), and, ten years later, when he returns from prison radically changed and entirely unpleasant with her, she does not wonder about the reason for such change, at least not openly. Perhaps, from his perspective, Lauzun was enjoying a promising life before she cast her powerful eyes on him: as the captain of the king's guards and the king's favorite, he was admired by men and desired by women—and his affair with Montpensier, whether her fault or his, led him to spend ten years of his life in the inhospitable prison of Pignerol. Thus, to many, his change in feelings towards her is understandable, though history has mostly portrayed him as an ingrate who betrayed Montpensier.

* * *

A House of My Own: Back to Architecture

In Montpensier's engagement with architecture, building seems to compensate for emotional and financial losses. Reconstructing Saint-Fargeau, for example, followed the losses she incurred with the defeat of the Fronde, and the renovations, enlargements and new

²²⁵ Even the fact that she preferred to marry in France rather than to move to a foreign country (IV, 96) indicates a resistance to the norm of female mobility which prescribed women to leave their home and move to the home of their husbands (see my note 3 below on gendered norms of mobility.) Except for the times in which she imagined herself as the queen of some foreign kingdom, Montpensier never planned to leave behind her estates upon marriage. On the contrary, one of the reasons she used to justify her choice of Lauzun as a husband is that it would allow her to stay in France where she enjoyed many privileges been near the king.

constructions at Eu followed her second exile. Similarly, immediately after she signs the donation of Dombes and the donation of Eu to Mme de Montespan in 1680—which meant the loss of her most important estates—she decides to buy land and to build a palace of her own from scratch with a design to suit her own taste. While her reconstruction of Saint-Fargeau was largely connected to the writing of her memoirs, and her enlargement of Eu to advocating for female autonomy, the land acquisition and architectural choices she made for Choisy are permeated with both residues of her relationship with Lauzun and a return to her pre-Lauzun themes of self-construction and female power.

The link to Lauzun is apparent in the language Montpensier employs to describe her approach to Choisy: a “lifelong” desire to have a house of her own, excitement when she finally finds the right one, a rejection of dominant norms of architecture, a focus on extensive garden landscaping and on creating dominating vistas, and finally, after their relationship has ended, the total exclusion of Lauzun from the chateau’s gallery of portraits. At the same time, much of Choisy’s architecture takes up the themes of previous chateaux: the timing of its construction in 1680 follows and parallels her return to writing her memoirs again in 1677; its façade displays the same arrangement of Doric pilasters topped by Ionic volutes that she had commissioned for the chapel of Saint-Fargeau; and the gallery of portraits that she had hung at the fortress is here reproduced and amplified with many more paintings depicting additional family members and highlighting herself at the center of the house.

In the third and last section of her memoirs, which she begins writing in 1689, when she is 62, Montpensier introduces her account on Choisy as follows:

Toute ma vie j’avois eu envie d’avoir une maison auprès de Paris; j’avois toujours cherché, et toutes celles que j’allois voir, quelque jolies qu’elles fussent, j’y trouvois toujours quelque défaut, soit à la situation ou au bâtiment; enfin je n’en avois point trouvé à mon gré. On m’en indiqua une qui étoit à deux lieues de Paris, à un village

nommé Choisy, au dessus de Villeneuve, sur le bord de la rivière de Seine. J’y courus en grande hâte ; je la trouvai à ma fantaisie, au moins la situation ; car il n’y avoit point de bâtiment. Je l’achetai quarante mille francs (IV, 427).

Montpensier’s “lifelong” search for a house of her own evokes her previous quest for a life of her own and a husband to her liking. In fact its very name, *Choisy*, highlights this aspect of *choice* rather than an inheritance, as was Saint-Fargeau, or a family transfer, as was Eu. In this process, just as she did when looking for a husband, she looks around for the right space, the right building, until she can find the one that really pleases her. The comment evokes her earlier account of looking for an object that could fulfill her urge to get married : « je ne trouvais point qui c’étoit. Je cherchois, je songeois et je ne trouvois point. Enfin (...) je m’aperçus que c’étoit M. de Lauzun que j’aimois, qui s’étoit glissé dans mon cœur » (IV, 92). And like Lauzun, who belonged to a much lower rank and needed to be elevated in order to marry her, Choisy has no chateau already erected and needs for her to build one. In other words, just as she constructed Lauzun to be her ideal husband, she will now build the house in conformity to her own taste.

That she is intent on building her house on her own terms is apparent in the following account where, as in her affair with Lauzun, Montpensier asserts herself as the sole mover and decider :

j’y menai Le Nôtre²²⁶ qui dit qu’il falloit mettre tout ce qu’il y avoit de bois à bas. On me fit un plan d’une maison, où il n’y auroit qu’un étage. La proposition d’abattre le peu qu’il y avoit de couvert me déplut, moi qui aime à me promener à toutes sortes d’heures. Le Nôtre dit au roi que j’avois choisi la plus vilaine situation du monde, que l’on n’y voyoit la rivière que comme par une lucarne. Quand j’allai à la cour peu de jours après, fort entêtée de ma maison, le roi me questionna et me fit grand plaisir. Après m’avoir bien laissée conter, il me dit ce que Le Nôtre lui avoit dit. Je le plantai

²²⁶ André Le Nôtre, (1613-1700), landscape designer and gardener of Louis XIV. He is mostly known for his designs of the gardens of Versailles. (see Ian Thompson. *The Sun King's Garden: Louis XIV, André Le Nôtre and the Creation of the Gardens of Versailles*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006).

là et fis accommoder ma maison et mon jardin à ma mode (...). J'employai Gabriel, un fort bon architecte, et qui fit ma maison à ma mode (IV, 428).²²⁷

Since Le Nôtre's criticism counters Montpensier's preference for wooded areas, she chooses an architect who will accept her taste and construct "ma maison à ma mode." Further, her rejection of the official royal designer and his plans for the total clearing of the area evokes her past defiance of social norms when she attempted to marry on her own terms and with a man of her liking.

The connection to Lauzun is reinforced, in Montpensier's descriptions of Choisy, by a clear emphasis on its gardens, rather than on the chateau itself. She explains the brevity of her architectural description by claiming that "Si j'avois voulu lire un des livres qui... traitent [d'architecture], j'aurois fait une belle description; mais c'eut été une affectation qui ne me convient point" (IV 428). In fact, what she does describe at length is the gardens and vistas:

C'est un grand corps de logis avec deux avances aux deux bouts, pour marquer des pavillons, tout de pierre de taille, sans aucun ornement ni architecture (...) Il y a une grande terrasse qui est devant la maison, qui règne depuis un bout jusqu'à l'autre du jardin (...) Au-dessous de cette terrasse est un parterre assez petit, mais borné par la rivière, que l'on voit de l'appartement, pas en toute saison. Comme j'ai fait bâtir ma maison pour y aller en été, j'ai pris mes mesures pour que l'on vit la rivière dans le temps où elle est la plus basse ; de mon lit, je la vois et [je vois] passer tous les bateaux. A droite et à gauche sont deux petits bois et une grande terrasse qui règne encore d'un bout du jardin à l'autre ; il y a des fontaines autant qu'il en faut ; et si j'en voulois davantage, j'en aurois. J'ai fait planter beaucoup d'allées qui viennent fort bien (IV, 428-9).

Montpensier emphasizes here how the garden rules over the château and is further diversified into a parterre, small and larger terraces, wooded areas, and several pathways and fountains.

To make sure she can see the Seine from her bed, she designs the garden with herself and her

²²⁷ Jacques IV Gabriel (1630-1686), father and grandfather of the celebrated Jacques V Gabriel and Ange-Jacques Gabriel, respectively, also participated in the construction of Versailles together with Louis le Vau. In addition, he collaborated in the construction of Clagny for Mme de Montespan (*Les Gabriel*. Ed. Michel Gallet and Yves Bottineau. Paris: Picard, 1982, pp. 23-5).

palace at the center, where, like the *Etoile* at the center of Enghien, she can extend her gaze throughout her territory:

Ce qu'il y a de plus agréable, c'est que de tous les côtés de ma maison on voit la rivière, et de tous les bouts de mes allées. D'un côté de ma maison on voit jusqu'à l'arc de triomphe ; de l'autre Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, la forêt de Sénart et vis-à-vis la plaine de Créteil, qui est toute pleine de villages et de châteaux. En éloignement sur les côteaues, par delà la Marne, on voit Saint-Maur, Villeneuve-le-Roi (IV, 429).

The views to the river, the triumphal arch, woods, valleys, nearby towns and castle, which evoke the long vistas that both the English and French gardens offered the visitor,²²⁸ are no less important than her domination of her own territory through the frequent repetition of the possessive adjective (“ma maison,” “mes allées.” This emphasizes a connection between owner and castle, and places both on top of a visual hierarchy in which the owner, standing from within the castle, can extend her gaze over her land and beyond. In this sense, the garden also supports what Choisy ultimately represents: a return to self-construction and to the theme of female power.

To be sure, existing engravings of the external appearance of the chateau of Choisy show one fundamental aspect of its façade—displaying the Orders—where, as in the chapel of Saint-Fargeau, Doric pilasters are topped by Ionic volutes. As Chapters I and II showed, in the neo-vitruvian architectural discourse that had been revived since the Renaissance, Doric columns represent male bodies while the Ionic volutes stand for the hair styled in buns allegedly worn by the Greek “matron.” Since both are combined in one pilaster, with the added reinforcement of the pilasters’ square lines signifying male strength, the columns can be read as a reproduction of the architectural allegory found in Saint-Fargeau—an allegory in which female heads rule over male bodies. In addition, the display of these Orders on the

²²⁸ As Chandra Mukerji (*Territorial Ambitions*, 1997) observes, these vistas « ran toward the horizon” suggesting they were “continuous with nature itself” (25).

front façade of the palace, rather than in the discreet interior of the chapel, magnifies the effect of the allegory.

In this post-Lauzun period of her life, Montpensier returns to the strategy she had deployed at Saint-Fargeau of establishing her royal lineage. First, the chateau's rusticated walls evoke those of the Palais du Luxembourg commissioned by Marie de Médicis.²²⁹ Second, the display of all her royal relatives in an extended portrait gallery she arranges in the second floor of Choisy reproduces and expands that of Saint-Fargeau. Further, she emphasizes the importance of this gallery with a detailed description in her memoirs, followed by lengthy narrations of the life of each of the members portrayed:

Il y a une salle où je mange où sont tous mes proches, c'est-à-dire le roi, mon grand-père, la reine ma grand-mère, le feu roi Louis XIII, mon oncle, la reine Anne d'Autriche, sa femme, les reines de d'Espagne et d'Angleterre, mes tantes, et les rois, leurs maris, les duchesses de Savoie, ma tante et ma sœur, et leurs maris, la princesse de Savoie, fille aînée de la première, et la duchesse de Parme, sa cadette ; ma mère, ma belle-mère et l'Infante Isabelle-Claire-Eugénie d'Autriche, gouvernante des Pays-Bas, à qui mon père avoit tant d'obligations, et dont honoroit tant la mémoire qu'il est bien juste de la placer parmi tous mes proches. Les portraits de MM. Les princes Henri de Bourbon, Louis et Henri Jules et Armand de Bourbon, prince de Conti y sont aussi, et mesdames les princesses Marguerite de Montmorency, Claire-Clémence de Maillé, et Anne Palatine de Bavière, et Anne Martinozzi (...) M. de Montpensier y est aussi, avec madame sa femme Catherine-Henriette de Joyeuse ; et moi sur la cheminée, qui tiens le portrait de mon père. Il m'a semblé qu'il était mieux là qu'entre ses deux femmes, étant bien aise de ne mettre personne au rang de ma mère (IV, 430).

In the portraits of her numerous royal and noble relatives, the only conspicuous absence is Lauzun, since, in 1688-1689, she had already separated from him and had refused ever to see him again. Moreover, her father's portrait does not stand on its own, but in an inset within a portrait of her. It is not clear whether this is her portrait dressed as Minerva, by Pierre Bourguignon, or another painting of herself in conventional attire, also holding her father's

²²⁹See Chapter I and illustrations in Appendices A and C.

portrait, attributed to Jean Nocret (1615-1672) (Fig. 22 in Appendix C.) What is certain is that both represent Gaston under her control. As Minerva or some other figure, she has placed herself on top of the fireplace, the position traditionally designated for the master of the house. Not only is this place no longer reserved to a male ancestor, as she did in Saint-Fargeau, but it is now hers to occupy. And as she does so, she holds a position of power over her dead father: she is free to put him where she wants him to be—in her hands rather than “entre ses deux femmes,” an allusion not only to her own higher rank but also to the control she can now exert over his memory. In this sense, Gaston’s position in her hands may also be read as the place of the husband she never had, the man who betrayed her, or, the man over whom she wanted to exert control.

Montpensier places the portraits of Louis XIV, her first cousin, in a separate room:

Le petit cabinet où sont les conquêtes du roi, les sièges, les combats, les occasions y sont écrits, afin que l’on sache ce que c’est. On y connoit le roi partout ; il y est fort bien peint ; il est sur la cheminée à cheval. Il est fâcheux que le cabinet soit trop petit ; car il y a bien encore des choses à y mettre ; mais je trouverai des places ailleurs, et comme [elles] s’augmentent tous les jours, j’augmenterois plutôt ma maison que de n’avoir pas le plaisir de les y voir (IV, 427-432).

Despite her claims of eventually finding a larger room for Louis XIV’s portraits, the fact is that they remain confined to a “petit cabinet” –which she mentions twice—and separated from her and the rest of the family. Ironically, contrary to what was done at Versailles, where, according to Chandra Mukerji, each battle was a pretext for further visual displays of Louis XIV’s power, Montpensier encloses all visual representation of his military exploits in a small room and, in doing so, confines him away from the rest of the family. She has the last word in a saga that began the day she called him *mon petit mari*: it is now Louis’s turn to end up in exile.

As Montpensier places herself on top of the fireplace and at the center of the house, and writes in detail about her family members, she highlights the connection between self and castle: “il paroît par le détail où je suis entrée sur Choisy, que je l’aime; c’est mon ouvrage: je l’ai toute faite; on m’en parlait souvent” (IV, 434). “Ouvrage,” a term she had used at Saint-Fargeau that signifies both the work of the mind and that of the hand, the work of design as well as of writing, now reappears, as in full circle, in this last section of Montpensier’s memoirs. In fact, the choice of the feminine form for “faite” reinforces this conflation of self and building through the notion of her “maison.” Further, just as this comment follows the lengthy description of the gallery of portraits she hung at Choisy (IV, 432-437), the “détail” refers both to the extent of her writing about this chateau and the attention with which she built it and outfitted its interiors. The use of the phrase “je l’aime” in its absolute form clearly indicates that Choisy has become an object of love—perhaps the only object left at this time in her life. Certainly, none of the main male objects of her life and desire are highlighted in this room: Lauzun is utterly absent, Louis is in a separate room, and Gaston does not have a portrait of his own but rather, remains confined—*coffiné*—between her hands. Thus, Choisy and this last section of her memoirs stand as Montpensier’s last work of construction before her death. They attest to a lifelong search to set herself free from kingly, paternal, and marital authority, and from being a “chose dépendante,” as Courtin and Molière had characterized women, thus asserting herself as much as possible as an autonomous person.

Montpensier placed herself at the center both in her writing and her buildings. She asserted herself as the subject who writes, who decides, who acts, and who builds. In so doing, she eschews stereotypical norms of the early modern period that aimed to reducing women to mere objects of male rules and desires. Yet her works are also filled with paradoxes, blind spots and contradictions. In the next chapter, I examine these limitations, particularly those in which she reveals a sense of entitlement to class privilege and her complicity with an ideology that justified and reaffirmed social hierarchies.

* * *

CHAPTER IV

Montpensier's Imaginary Spaces: A Moon, an Island, a Kingdom and a Retreat

Memoirs and castles may have served Mlle de Montpensier's strategies of self-construction, but so did the texts she wrote between 1653 and 1661, including *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny marquise de Fouquesolles* (1653), a literary self-portrait (1657), *Relation de l'isle imaginaire* (1659), *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie* (1659), and the letters she exchanged with Francoise Bertaut de Motteville²³⁰ between 1660 and 1661. As a whole, these texts reveal the complexity of Montpensier's concerns, for not only do they flesh out her ideals of female freedom and power, but they also expose her blind spots and limitations, namely a sense of entitlement to rank privilege and some stereotypes about women and about people of other nations that she incorporates when she needs to assert supremacy. In this sense, she does not hesitate to draw from the misogynistic clichés of women as the source of man's downfall and misery deployed in the *querelle des femmes*, nor does she refrain from bringing into play racist portrayals of so-called "barbaric" nations, and, then, to place herself above them. Such complexity, which stems from both her desire of freedom and a class anxiety produced by the rising bourgeoisie, emerges in the texts' narrative, characters, and imaginary spaces—a moon, an island, a faraway kingdom, and a retreat on a French riverbank—, and reinforces both her ideology of rank privilege and the desires of freedom and power that she manifested in her memoirs and chateaux.

Indeed, as Montpensier discusses the writing of each of these texts, not only does she cast them in opposition to the memoirs but, in the process, they emerge as reflecting the

²³⁰ On Mme de Motteville see note 29 in the Introduction.

efforts of self-construction at work in the memoirs and in the chateaux. On the one hand, the memoirs appear as the superior, legitimate, textual space set above the minor, “bagatelles,” whose importance she dismisses herself. On the other hand, although, with a few exceptions, the texts contain few references to either representational architecture or to distribution of space inside a building, their architecture, or formal structure, reinforces some of the themes that permeate the memoirs and chateaux, namely Montpensier’s exile and self-reconstruction at Saint-Fargeau, her desire to be queen, her longing of freedom and power. Indeed, these themes recur in the texts’ narrative, characters, and fictional spaces, especially when read against the unspoken background in which they were written.

Further, these themes can also be detected in the architecture or form of each text. As I show below in detail, Montpensier’s first text, *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d’Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolles*, written in 1653, at the outset of her exile at Saint-Fargeau, stands as a work in progress, a construction site in which multiple voices, fragments, and genres come together, a bit chaotically, to fashion a bizarre woman, Mme de Fouquesolles, a former friend who effectively becomes Montpensier’s “other.” As she is banished to the moon and turned into the queen of the lunatics, similarities emerge between her and Montpensier through the themes of exile and queens. These correspondences highlight a contrast between Saint-Fargeau, the locus of Montpensier’s divinely ordained supremacy, and the moon, a place that is traditionally associated with women, madness, and death. Further, since *Histoire* is formally structured as a set of multiple texts, narrators, and genres, not only does it function as a means to experiment with the genre of self-writing in which Montpensier was immersing herself, but it can also be read as the “other” of the memoirs, for the fragmentary,

chaotic, and multiple in *Histoire* stand in opposition to the efforts toward linearity, orderliness, and unity in the memoirs.

Montpensier's second text, *Relation de l'isle imaginaire*, written in 1659, six years later, once she was back at court and free to perform herself fully according to her titles, also reveals her concerns about rank hierarchies as well as her desires of power, most especially in the way she casts its main addressee, M. de Busillet, a bourgeois, whose aspirations to social privileges transgress dominant discourses of class. Her main strategy is dual: on the one hand, she depicts this man as an intruder, an outsider who is clearly different from herself (as one can deduce by reading his description against the literary self-portrait she produced around the same time); on the other hand, she derisively presents him with the description of an island she claims has been offered to her and that she wants him to govern. As a result of the ruse, Busillet's threatening aspirations to power and prestige become as inoffensive and imaginary—or non-existent—as the island. Structurally, the text is much more linear than *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolles*, since it is told by one male narrator who recounts his journey and discovery of an island he claims would make a profitable colony. However, similar disparity in themes and genres permeate his narrative, which borrows from several traditions at once. Certainly, *Relation* is hard to pinpoint under one generic label: it can be read both as a pastoral and as its parody, a utopia and a dystopia, a chivalric novel, a travel narrative, a colonization project, none of them, and all at once. Such overlaying of genres evokes the multiplicity found in *Histoire de Jeanne*. At the same time, it also points to its opposite, the generically unified narrative that Montpensier was simultaneously inscribing in her memoirs, regarding her position as the princess of a sovereign principality of Dombes.

Montpensier's preference for unity surfaces in *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, her third text, written soon after *Relation*, and whose main goal is to praise female figures that represent the ideals to which she aspired. For Paphlagonie and its neighboring states are all countries ruled by queens who are unmarried heads of state, and who, as such, serve as commentaries against marriage and against the Salic Law.²³¹ Since Montpensier's desires to become queen, and, later, to remain single, had largely defined her, *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie* emerges as a platform on which to imagine female power and autonomy. Contrary to her previous fictional writings, this text is characterized both by a thematic and generic cohesion and by a narrative linearity that work effectively to reinforce the focus on female power.

In Montpensier's last text, the series of letters she exchanged with Mme de Motteville between 1660 and 1662, she adopts an entirely different genre, the epistolary, to flesh out an ideal of freedom in the form of a retreat where men and women could live unmarried and away from court. Having recently discovered, through her exile at Saint-Fargeau, the benefits of leading an autonomous life, Montpensier imagines the possibility of remaining single—and thus free from male domination—and mistress of herself in a space of her own choice, surrounded by like-minded individuals, and dedicated to the pursuit of chaste pleasures: writing, reading, music, gardening, and, of course, building. The retreat projects on paper Montpensier's desires, but it also prefigures some of the choices she made soon after she wrote these letters, when she refused to marry to king the Portugal and, as a result, became exiled once again. In my view, the use of letters, rather than a linear and closed narrative about a utopian land, attests to a preference for conversation, collaboration, and communal

²³¹ See my discussion of Salic Law in the Introduction.

knowledge and to a freedom of choice that complements the ideals of autonomy she aspired to enact in this retreat.

These texts correspond to—and reinforce—Montpensier's choices regarding the material spaces she owned at the time—Saint-Fargeau, Dombes, and Eu. In what follows, I examine the ways in which both the content and architecture of these five texts—*Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolles*, the literary self-portrait, *Relation de l'isle imaginaire*, *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, and the letters she exchanged with Mme de Motteville—served to bolster strategies of self-construction Montpensier deployed in her memoirs and chateaux.

* * *

Queen on Earth, Queen on the Moon: the Use of Madness against the Other

At the outset of her exile at Saint-Fargeau in 1653, when Montpensier was putting away documents and papers, she remembered she had written, some years earlier, a short text entitled *Vie de madame de Fouquerolles*: “En rangeant mes cassettes et papiers, » she recalls in her memoirs, « je me souvins de la *Vie de madame de Fouquerolles*, que Préfontaine²³² avoit à moi. Il me la rendit, et je l’achevai; et, comme j’avois fort envie de dire quelque chose de tout ce qui s’étoit passé, je trouvai invention d’en mettre quelque petite chose » (II, 242). At this point in the memoirs, it is unclear who Mme de Fouquerolles was and exactly when Montpensier wrote this *Vie*, or even what kind of writing it was. But, certainly, re-reading it

²³² Louis de Préfontaine was Montpensier's secretary. Little is known of him, except through references in her memoirs.

seems to have given her the desire to experiment with the craft of writing her life, and, in so doing, constructing herself in opposition to someone else.²³³

But just who is this Madame de Fouquerolles, the subject of an entire work, about whom Montpensier says little in her memoirs?²³⁴ In her introduction to a recent facsimile reproduction of this *Histoire* (1999), Patricia Cholakian identifies Fouquerolles' family, the Herbignys, as belonging to the *noblesse de robe*, members of the high bourgeoisie who had ennobled themselves by purchasing official charges in the government as well as positions as magistrates in the Parliament (9-10).²³⁵ Of a much lower social extraction than Montpensier, Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny appears, as Cholakian puts it, "a social climber who cultivated Mademoiselle's patronage to secure a niche for herself at court" (10). As a member of Montpensier's circle, she bodies forth the image of courtiers who expected their closeness to

²³³ Montpensier began writing her memoirs soon after she published *Vie de Madame de Fouquerolles* (*Mémoires*, II, 248). Critics such as Jean Garapon find that *Histoire* is « paradoxalement essentielle pour comprendre une vocation d'écrivain, » since « elle a deviné peu à peu l'étrange pouvoir de l'écriture, sa puissance d'investigation sur le moi, sa vertu à la fois curative et libératrice » (41-2). However, Garapon dismisses the value of *Histoire* as a « divertissement littéraire sans prétention » whose pages are « parfois mesquines, le plus souvent amusantes dans leur frivolité » (« Mademoiselle à Saint-Fargeau : la découverte de l'écriture. » *PFSCL* XXII, 42 (1995), 41). On the other hand, Patricia Cholakian (1999) identifies *Histoire* as « Montpensier's first effort at self-representation, for this is not so much Fouquesolles's story as hers. Writing about herself in the voice of the friend turned enemy, she tells the story of their relationship from *her* point of view (...) she has « Fouquesolles » say a great deal about her character, most of it laudatory » (23). In other words, Cholakian adds, Montpensier uses Fouquesolles as a ventriloquist manipulates a dummy to say things about herself she wants others to know (11).

²³⁴ The only mention of Fouquerolles in Montpensier's memoirs refers to 1642, when Montpensier was fifteen: « Ce fut dans ce temps que je connus [Mme] de Fouquerolles, que j'ai tant fait parler dans la vie que j'ai écrite, et qui instruira assez de ce que j'en pourrais dire sans que j'en mette rien ici » (I, 55). The choice to exclude Fouquerolles and to assign her a special, separate, and confining space in *Vie* casts the two texts as mirror images of the two women, whereby the memoir is to the *Vie* what Montpensier is to Fouquerolles: like the princess who is positioned above the marquise, the large, serious, allegedly truthful and, thus, legitimate memoirs stands higher and in opposition to the smaller, amusing, fictional collection of somewhat curious pieces whose authorship is unclear (see my discussion on authorship in note 6 below.)

²³⁵ Cholakian also observes that the manuscript's title reads "Fouquesolles" rather than Fouquerolles, and that it was mistakenly transcribed as "Fouquerolles" in the Chérueil edition of Montpensier's memoirs (1858.) Further, while she finds two branches of the Fouquesolles family in the archives of Amiens, there is no record of a family named "Fouquerolles" (5, note 1). Since no other satisfying identification of Fouquerolles exists, I have adopted Cholakian's assertion on the spelling change and, except for citations from Montpensier's memoirs, I refer to the name in the title and in the text as Fouquesolles.

high nobles and royalty to yield personal benefits. True or not, this is the argument the text advances: that Fouquesolles had only become Montpensier's friend in order to extract power and privileges from her, and, through the years, had deceived Montpensier into believing she cared for her. As a punishment for her hypocrisy, she is renamed Eve and crowned queen of the moon.

Formally, the text consists of multiple pieces in different genres, such as memoirs, letters, and poems, narrated in the first person by several narrators. These pieces include a prefatory letter to a certain Mme de Saujon, allegedly a lady-in-waiting of the Duchesse d'Orléans, Gaston d'Orléans's second wife (Marguerite de Lorraine, 1615-1672); an *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny*, a pseudo-memoir of approximately seventy pages in which a fictional "Fouquesolles" recounts her life, including her childhood, her unfortunate marriage, the mistreatment of her family-in-law, her inclusion as a member of Mademoiselle's household, and her desire to dominate Mademoiselle (3-73); a *Manifeste de Mademoiselle*, in which Montpensier, under her title of Mademoiselle, also recounts her childhood and relationships with Fouquesolles and with her father, her participation in the Fronde and her subsequent exile (74-94); some *Stances* praising the *Manifeste de Mademoiselle* whose narrators and/or alleged authors appear to be Mademoiselle's friends (95-8);²³⁶

²³⁶ Both Patricia Cholakian (1999) and Juliette Cherbuliez (2005) take at face-value Montpensier's claims, and the fictional Fouquesolles's account, that the published *Histoire* is the product of a collaboration between Montpensier and some of the members of her circle, namely her ladies-in-waiting, the countesses of Frontenac and Fiesques, her friends Mme d'Epéron, Mme de Choisy, Mlle de Remenencourt (69). In this sense, they echo Joan De Jean's discussion of collaboration in the context of the salons (see De Jean's *Tender Geographies*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, especially the section on Mlle de Scudéry's collaboration with her brother Georges and other members of her salon, who, De Jean claims, must have contributed their scholarly expertise to *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus*, pp. 72-4). But just as De Jean herself admits, that "we cannot be certain that the actual writing [of *Artamène*] was also a joint venture," the same cannot be ascertained about the extent to which Montpensier's *Histoire de Jeanne* was written in collaboration with the mentioned individuals. That Fouquesolles refers to them as co-authoring these texts does not mean that they actually did so or, at the very least, that they wrote what is said they wrote. Considering that this was Montpensier's first literary exercise, one should be mindful of the possibility that her claim could be a subterfuge to eschew authorship,

Fouquesolles's fictional *Responce* to the *Manifeste* (98-118), in which she attempts unsuccessfully to justify herself and to claim her innocence; satirical letters in prose and verse against Fouquesolles, entitled *L'Entrée d'Eve, reine de la lune en la ville, capitale de son Etat* (119-175), in which she is renamed Eve and crowned queen of the moon; a *Suite de l'Histoire de la Marquise de Fouquesolles* (176-199), in which Fouquesolles resumes her narrative; several sonnets, allegedly from Mademoiselle's friends, entitled *Sur la vieille et la nouvelle Eve* (200), *Sur le mesme sujet* (201), *Chanson* (202), *Autre* (203-4), *A S.A.R. [A Son Altesse Royale] Mademoiselle: Stances* (205-7), *Procez criminel d'Eve* (207-13) and *Metamorphose d'Eve en biche* (214-21), a poem in which Eve is turned into a deer, and dismembered by Diana and Apollo. All these fragments are strung together by short interventions from Fouquesolles herself, who introduces them, and who comments on the reactions of Mademoiselle's friends, as if she were orchestrating the entire text as a spectacle of her own ridicule.²³⁷

The text is thus structured in two main sections: the memoirs—Jeanne's *Histoire* and *Responce* and Mademoiselle's *Manifeste*—one pitted against the other as if in a court of law, each aiming at fighting attacks on their narrator's reputation; and the chorus of additional

since it was not well regarded, for an aristocrat, much less a royal princess, to be an author—let alone the author of a text in which she publicly derides a former member of her household.

²³⁷ For instance, Fouquesolles introduces as follows the songs written against her: "Il se fit une infinité de chansons qui furent incontinent dans la bouche de tout le monde, dont je conceus une douleur mortelle, & une rage inconcevable contre Madame de Frontenac, qui en avait composé la plus grande partie. Ce qui augmentait mon déplaisir était que je savais que mille gens prenaient à tâche de me désobliger, & particulièrement Madame d'Epernon, Madame la Comtesse de Fiesque, & Madame de Choisy qui sont les amies les plus confidentes de Mademoiselle" (69). In fact, since Fouquesolles never openly expresses anger against Montpensier, her mention of all these alleged co-authors may be read as a strategy in which Montpensier has Fouquesolles transfer her anger on them. Later, when addressing herself to her dedicatee, Mme de Saujon, Fouquesolles comments that Mademoiselle's piece against her is in fact entertaining: "Dans ce temps elle dit un jour en raillant avec Madame de Frontenac & Mademoiselle de Remencourt, qu'elle voulait faire un Manifeste contre moi pour se justifier de l'ingratitude dont je l'accusais, & pour se purger de l'inconstance que je lui voulais imputer sans raison (...) Cette pièce est trop curieuse pour vous priver du plaisir de l'entendre, & j'ajouterai même la réponse que j'y fis" (71-3).

pieces—letters and poems—that represent Fouquesolles as Eve and queen of the moon. In both sections, the women are cast as contraries: Mademoiselle stands as reasonable, generous, and the legitimate holder of power, while Fouquesolles is manipulative, greedy, clumsy and a hypocrite. The contrast between the two women appears from the outset, specifically, through Fouquesolles's voice, as she describes herself and her relationship with Mademoiselle:

Je me montrais être gaie ou triste selon les évènements des affaires de Monsieur son Père pour qui elle a toujours une tendresse nompareille; ce qui m'attirait d'autant plus son amitié, qu'Elle ne voyait pas que j'étais née si grande Comédienne, que quelque sentiment que mon visage fît paraître, j'en avais toujours de tout contraire dans le Coeur & que les choses m'étaient indifférentes quand j'y témoignais le plus d'affection (8).

Here, Fouquesolles confesses her cunning ability to deceive Mademoiselle into believing she was her friend. Yet, paradoxically, her confession also involves a convenient gesture of sincerity to make credible both her self-incrimination and the references to Mademoiselle's love for her father. Certainly, two contradictory operations are in effect here, since Fouquesolles commends Mademoiselle all the while incarnating insincerity and hypocrisy. However, while Fouquesolles is portrayed as base and self-degrading, Mademoiselle emerges as impervious to any attempt to dominate her:

Ce n'est pas que j'aie nulle pente à me laisser gouverner, car je suis née la personne du monde la plus volontaire qui crains le plus la soumission, & qui suis la moins complaisante. J'ai seulement toutes les peines du monde à l'être pour les personnes à qui je dois : le devoir pourtant me rend ce joug supportable, parce qu'étant née d'une qualité au dessous de si peu de gens, il se trouve que je ne dois de complaisance qu'à des personnes à qui mon devoir se joint avec toute la tendresse & l'amitié possible : ce qui fait que Dieu m'ayant fait naître d'une humeur si hautaine j'ai bien sujet de le louer d'y avoir proportionné une qualité qui me dispense de toutes les peines qu'il m'auroit fallu prendre à corriger ce défaut naturel (77-8).

The repetition of the superlative (la *plus* volontaire, qui crains le *plus* la soumission, qui suis la *moins* complaisante) highlights Montpensier's proud and intransigent character. But, rank

justifies her, since the “qualité” bestowed on her compensates for the faults with which she was born. As a result, she does not have to correct herself or go to lengths to please others because her rank frees her from such obligations. In other words, she presents her sense of entitlement or supremacy as a “natural” flaw, a defect that is acceptable and, indeed, compatible with her status.

By contrast, Fouquesolles’s desire to please Mademoiselle results only from her ambitions. Such hypocrisy is unforgivable and deserves the most severe punishment in the text. Thus, in *L’Entrée d’Eve, reine de la lune en la ville, capitale de son état*, she is sent into exile and condemned to be the queen of madness on the moon (113-4). Certainly, the exile narrative evokes Montpensier’s own, except that, in her memoirs, her desire for power is not viewed as greed but, rather, as a legitimate aspiration expected of someone of her rank. Further, although Saint-Fargeau had struck her as being “un autre monde” (II, 223), a term that evokes the world of the dead, the banished and the forgotten, she reconstructed the castle, picked up the pen to write her memoirs, and re-established herself as a member of the royal family, thus turning the site of banishment into a space of self-affirmation. To the contrary, the punishment inflicted on Fouquesolles in *L’Entrée d’Eve* carries no possibility of rebirth or redemption. Rather, it represents the annihilation of those individuals who, like Fouquesolles, transgress social boundaries. First, the narrative itself effectively obliterates Fouquesolles as a subject: her name is changed to Eve, who, as the misogynistic strain of the *querelle des femmes* claimed, is the emblem of man’s downfall, and instead of being the first-person narrator of her story, she is now the written “other,” the object of a discourse that derides her. Second, not only is she banished from Earth, but she is turned into a madwoman. She appears in front of the moon’s Senate and announces that she is their queen to please

them, rather than to rule, because, she says, « je n'ai n'y cerveau n'y cervelle (...) J'ay l'esprit fait au badinage » (130-1). To this, her chancellor responds : « Grande Reyne qu'on appelle Eve,/ Vous estes folle, ou bien ie resve,/ Vostre legere Maiesté, (...) / Que chacun de ces nobles foux/ Aille à vos pieds se jeter à genoux,/ Et que vous soiez reconnuë,/ Comme de sens la moins pourvuë » (131-2). Having recognized that she lacks reason and sense, the members of her assembly proceed to proclaim her unanimously, « Reine de la Lune et des Petites Maisons » (133).²³⁸ Thus crowned queen of the moon, Fouquesolles formally enters the realm of madness. But her reign will last but a short time, for in the end, she is turned into a hind and shred into pieces by the gods (214-16). As this demise echoes the myth of Acteon, who was metamorphosed into a stag for having seen Diana naked in her bath and then shred by his own hounds, it also mirrors the hierarchy between Acteon and the gods who have so punished him. Indeed, the act of writing such a demise for Fouquesolles/Eve does cast her as the defenseless mortal at the mercy of a circle of nobles who see their upper position as one that has been divinely ordained.

Early modern discourses variously associate the moon with negative stereotypes of women, madness, and death. It is characterized as “feminine” in Claude Dariot’s²³⁹

L'Introduction au jugement des astres (1558), a treatise of astrology that explains the zodiac and the influence of planets on humans, and characterizes the moon as cold, humid and, one

²³⁸ “Petites Maisons” was a hospital for the mentally ill in Paris. As Furetière tells us, “On dit aussi, qu’il faut mettre un homme aux petites *maisons*, quand il est fou, ou quand il fait une extravagance signalée; à cause qu’il y a à Paris un Hospital de ce nom où on enferme ces foux” (s.v. “Maison.”)

²³⁹ Claude Dariot (1530 or 1533-1594) was a Protestant and a physician interested in astrology. He studied medicine at Montpellier and left France soon after the St-Bartholomew’s Day Massacre. His astrology guide was first published in Latin in 1557, and was translated into English and reprinted several times throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See Allen G. Debus, *The French Paracelsians: The Chemical Challenge to Medical and Scientific Revolution in Early Modern France*. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 40.

of the two “feminine” planets of the zodiac (11-2).²⁴⁰ Dariot also makes the moon an emblem of death as he opposes it to the sun, the generator of life, and fashions it as the planet of corruption (13) and, thus, as a tool to gauge the seriousness of disease and to predict the timing of death (21-2, 59-60, and 68-9).²⁴¹ Further, a more generalized view of the moon associates it with madness, as the word “lunatique” reminds us.²⁴² According to Furetière, “lunatique” is that individual “qui se gouverne selon la Lune,” thus, “les gens fantasques sont appelez *lunatiques*, parce que tantost ils sont de bonne humeur & complaisants, tantos farouches & de difficile accez (...) On a donné ausi ce nom aux fous & aux épileptiques”

²⁴⁰ The zodiac, Dariot writes, is divided into twelve “signs,” each of them dominated by a planet (7). Yet, only Venus and the moon are feminine.

²⁴¹ As part of his elaborate instructions to predict the time and manner of death, Dariot writes: “Quand donq en la nativité d’aucun ou en quelque question, la Lune, ou le significateur principal se trouve en aucun d’iceux, s’il n’est en l’un des angles, & en la maison ou exaltation, & Oriental, il apportera à celui qui est né, la perte & ruine de quelque membre, ou bien la perte de la chose demandée” (23). No other planet of his treatise is so explicitly connected with loss and death.

²⁴² In addition, writers such as Cyrano de Bergerac conceptualized the moon as “un autre monde,” but in much more complex terms, as he did in his *Voyage dans la lune: L’Autre Monde ou Histoire comique des états et empires de la lune* (1657). Bergerac uses the moon as a platform from which to contest philosophical, political and religious issues ranging from the notion of man’s immortality and uniqueness amongst living creatures (73-4, 109-110), the notion of creation as an explanation for the origin of the universe (97), the belief in the existence of God (114-5), the lack of freedom of thought in Europe (70-1), and the ethics of war, which far from being a noble activity, he sees as based on inequality of forces (79). For a detailed analysis of Bergerac’s text as a fundamental critique of authority and religion, see Erica Harth’s *Cyrano de Bergerac and the Polemics of Modernity* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970). In her introduction to Montpensier’s *Histoire de Jeanne*, Patricia Cholakian asserts that Bergerac’s text “obviously came to the attention of Montpensier’s coterie, who either read it in manuscript or heard about it from those who had” since his early manuscripts had been circulating since 1650 and could well have been read by Montpensier or members of her circle (20-1). Juliette Cherbuliez (1995) subscribes to this view in her claim that “through the diversity of its form, the *Histoire* clearly responds to other experimental texts of its day, most prominently Cyrano’s *Histoire comique des états et empires de la lune*” (163). Yet, it seems to me that Montpensier’s possible awareness of Bergerac’s text amounts neither to evidence of the influence of his text nor to proof of an authorial intention to imitate him. In fact, the similarity between the two texts is quite limited, since Montpensier’s work in no way reproduces Bergerac’s profound social and philosophical critique. If anything, similarities include making the moon a “kingdom” in opposition to the kingdoms on the Earth, ruled by a woman, and dominated by the inversion of values, whereby madness and ugliness trump reason and beauty. However, not only is *Histoire* different from Bergerac’s text in its form, since Bergerac’s has none of the diverse components of Montpensier’s text, but it casts the moon as a space of punishment, not a desirable locus from which to criticize the status quo on Earth.

(s.v. “Lunatique”).²⁴³ The anonymous²⁴⁴ *La Sphère de la lune composée de la tête de la femme* (1652), redirects against women this association of the moon with madness in a text that aims to demonstrate that so-called women’s weaknesses originate in the influence of the moon over their heads.²⁴⁵ But, since *La Sphère* replaces the names of the twelve houses of the zodiac with those of the vices that allegedly affect a woman’s head, it echoes not Dariot’s astrological treatise, but Jacques Olivier’s *Alphabet de l’imperfection et malice des femmes* (1617), a misogynistic tirade on women’s alleged flaws.

There is no evidence that Montpensier knew *La Sphere* or Olivier’s treatise, but, in *L’Entrée d’Eve, Reine de la Lune en la ville, capitale de son Etat*, she associates the moon with madness and with women—ominous women alone, such as Eve, and later, Medea, Helen, and Niobe, as I show below. In addition, she depicts the moon as a space of oriental otherness. First, she populates it with barbarous peoples, such as those who constitute Eve’s regiment of guards, which is “composé de plusieurs nations, entre autres de Gots de Visigots, d’Ostrogots, de Margajats & de Topinambous & de toutes les nations les plus esloignées, tous vestus & armez à la mode de leur Pais: les Officiers tous armez de croissants, le bruit

²⁴³ Furetière adds, “on dit aussi, qu’un homme a des *lunes*, qu’il est sujet à des *Lunes*, quand il est fantasque & inégal, tantôt agréable, tantôt importun: On dit aussi, qu’une personne a la *Lune* dans la teste, ou un quartier de la *Lune*, pour dire, qu’elle est un peu folle ou legere (s.v. “Lune”).

²⁴⁴ Both the *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises* (1996 [1951]) and Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore’s preface to her recent edition of *La Sphère* (1992) attribute this text signed by “Mademoiselle de B***” to Charlotte Saumaize de Chazan, Comtesse de Flecelles de Brégis ou Brégy (1619-1693), lady-in-waiting to Anne d’Autriche and author of *Oeuvres galantes en prose et en vers* (1666) and *Cinq questions d’amour* (1677). However, evidence for this attribution is rather thin, since Berriot-Salvadore comments that “l’énigme de *La Sphère de la Lune* trouve-t-elle son éclaircissement dans les autres oeuvres de Mademoiselle de B*** qui, de repère en repère, offrent au lecteur une clef” (8-9), but she fails to show exactly which references demonstrate such authorship.

²⁴⁵ See Laurinda Dixon’s discussion of the association of the moon with women in *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine*. Ithaca ; London : Cornell University Press, 1995, which includes an anonymous illustration of women with crescents over their heads.

des tambours estoit a peu près comme celui des charivaris qu'on fait en France (146).²⁴⁶ Not only are these “nations” the most remote from France, in geographical and cultural terms, but their names function as signs of an undesirable, savage otherness. For instance, the reference to the tribes of margajats and topinambous seems to be drawn from Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil autrement dite Amérique* (1972 [1573]), which describes the margajats as allies of the Portuguese and, consequently, sworn enemies of the French, whom the cannibals would gladly eat (58). In fact, the term “margajat” was pejorative, since, according to Richelet, a « margajat » is an: « homme petit & malfait, sans aucune mine (...) On applique aussi ce nom à certains peuples de l'Amérique qu'on trouve dans les terres du Brésil (...) c'est un terme d'injure dont on se sert en parlant d'un galopin. » (s.v. “Margajat.”) As to the topinambous, Léry describes them as “savages” and “cannibals” who go about naked, ornament their bodies with paints of all colors, birds' feathers, bones, and stones, wear necklaces with pendants in the shape of crescent moons, pierce their faces, and eat their enemies (96-108). In sum, these descriptions body forth the savage, bizarre, even the frightening. Along with the equally “barbaric” nations of Goths, Visigoths and, implicitly, muslims, as can be deduced from the officers who wear crescent moons, these “nations” reproduce racist stereotypes that reinforce the notion that those who populate the moon are inferior to the reasonable and civilized French.

Having thus represented the moon as a space inhabited by the mad and the savage, and thus opposed to her own reasonable and refined Saint-Fargeau, Montpensier turns it as a site of punishment. She does so first in the description of a gallery of portrait in Eve's palace.

²⁴⁶ « Charivari » is defined in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* as a « bruit tumultueux de poiles, poillons, chaudrons, etc. (...) Il se dit fig. de toute sorte de bruit, de crierie, de querelles entre petites gens. (*Dict. de l'Académie française*, dédié au Roy, 1694).

Contrary to Saint-Fargeau's gallery, which served to mark Montpensier's lineage to the kings and queens of Europe, Eve's gallery displays wretched mythological figures who have brought divine wrath upon themselves, such as Prometheus, Sisyphus and Tantalus,²⁴⁷ and "tous les malheureux et les malheureuses de la fable » including « les portraits des Medées, des Helenes & de ces autres femmes si funestes au genre humain" (148). Beyond Medea, who practiced witchcraft and killed her children, and Helen, the cause of the death and destruction of Troy, the most prominent female portrait in this gallery is that of "la malheureuse Niobé que les Dieux punirent cruellement par ce qu'elle avoit osé pretendre quelque avantage sur Latone qui estoit du sang des Dieux" (148).²⁴⁸ Indeed, Niobe's crime was to put herself above Latona, mother of Diana and Apollo, and to claim her superiority on account of her six sons and six daughters. The emblem of *hubris*, Niobe's portrait functions as a metaphor of Fouquesolles's own excessive ambition. By implication Mademoiselle becomes identified with Latona, the descendant of a divine lineage.

If Niobe's tale ends with the killing of her children by Diana and Apollo, so will be Fouquesolles/Eve's demise, since the same gods shred her to pieces (214-5). Certainly, the

²⁴⁷ "Les sujets des tableaux qui s'y voyent sont tous pris de la fable & de l'histoire: (...) le Prométhée est dépeint à perfection avec ce Vautour qui lui vient béqueter le foi, pour le punir du larcin qu'il avoit été faire jusque dans le Ciel. On y voit Tantale qui ne peut satisfaire à l'envie cruelle qu'il a sans cesse de boire & de manger, bien qu'il soit près de l'eau & qu'il soit environné de fruits. Sisyphe qui porte un caillou d'une grosseur prodigieuse du bas en haut d'une montagne y est représenté dans son travail ingrat avec toute l'industrie possible » (147). In other words, these are all figures that incurred divine wrath for having defied the gods and displaying excessive *hubris*.

²⁴⁸ *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1965) describes Niobe as "the daughter of Tantalus and Dione. She was the sister of Pelops and wife of Amphion of Thebes. Like her father, she stood in close connection with the gods, especially with Leto, the wife of Zeus, and fell into misfortune by her own arrogance. In her maternal pride for her numerous progeny of six sons and six daughters, the ill-fated woman ventured to compare herself to Leto, who had only two children. To punish this presumption Apollo and Artemis slew with their arrows all Niobe's children in their parents' palace (...) Niobe, who was changed to stone on the lonely hills of Sipylus, could not, even in this form, forget her sorrow." (s.v. "Niobe"). As to Latona, the Roman name for Leto, she was a daughter of the Titan Coeus and Phoebe, a sister of Asteria. She was the mother of Apollo and Artemis by Zeus, to whom she was married before Hera" (s.v. "Leto").

moon is the ultimate space of death, as astrologers had established. Montpensier highlights this theme of death when describing the location of Eve's palace and its subsequent destruction:

Il arriva que dans l'espace qu'on avoit pris pour faire ce Palais, il se rencontra une longue allée de noyers, dont la vieillesse jointe à la hauteur qu'ils avoient, rendoit ce lieu là extrêmement agréable. Bien que ces arbres soient très malheureux pour attirer sur eux le foudre du Ciel, & rendre funestes par ce moyen tous les endroits qui en sont proches, l'on ne les voulut pas pourtant faire abattre : & l'on trouva ce lieu d'autant plus propre à bastir le Palais de sa Majesté, que sa présence qui rend misérables les lieux où elle est, auroit pû porter la colère & la disgrâce du Ciel dans ceux qui en avoient été exempts iusqu' alors (...) Il s'éleva un vent impétueux qui ébranla cet édifice jusques à ses fondemens, & l'on entendit à mesme temps un bruit effroyable, causé par le tonnerre qui fut suivi d'un grand coup de foudre qui l'abattit en un instant, comme si le Ciel l'air & la terre eussent conspiré à la priver de la jouissance des belles monstres & des belles apparences, dont elle faisoit tout son bonheur (...) plusieurs de ses gens qui l'avoient suivis, furent envelopez sous les rüines de ce grand édifice (...) Il lui fut impossible alors de retenir ses larmes en voyant le débris d'un Palais superbe qu'on luy avoit edifié (139-144).

A wretched and deadly space that draws divine wrath in the form of lightning bolts, thunder, and a tempest that shakes the palace to its core, destroying it and killing some of Eve's people, this moon embodies punishment and death. Still, the image of Eve crying over her destroyed palace also evokes Montpensier's own arrival at Saint-Fargeau, when she found the medieval fortress in such a state of ruin that she was seized by fear and horror, and began to weep (*Mémoires*, II, 227-8). But whereas Montpensier turned Saint-Fargeau into a life-affirming space, Eve is assigned a new palace that only bodies forth images of death:

Après avoir fait quelques pas par de la cette allée de Noyers, elle apperceut un Palais basti de Pierre noire & blanche d'une maniere assez belle, & qui n'estoit gueres esloignée de la moderne. Il y avoit neantmoins quelque chose de mélancolique, le principal corps du logis tenant de la forme d'un Tombeau & les deux pavillons qui estoient au deux costez bastis en fasson [sic] de deux grandes urnes, sur lesquels estoient des torches ; la balustrade qui regnoit autour du corps du logis & des deux pavillons estoit faite en figure d'os de morts, & tout ce qu'il avoit d'ornement dans cette maison estoit triste & lugubre, & devoit plutost décorer un Mausolée que le Palais d'une Reine vivante (...) Ce blanc & ce noir qui parroissoit dans l'assemblage

des pierres qui composoient cette maison ne faisoit pas un effet fort gay, quoy que pourtant assez beau (144-5).

Thus, Eve's palace is dark, melancholic, and gloomy, its structure takes the shape of urns, skeletons and tombs, a sinister space of death. The overall effect is reinforced in the description of Eve's chamber, which contains a bed made « [d']une estoffe du païs, d'argent & noir, doublée de feuillemorte » (158), that is, black, silver, and dead leaves—the colors and materials of death.

In sum, Fouquesolles' confinement to a moon that represents otherness in various forms (exile, evil women, madness, savagery, and death) neutralizes, and eventually eliminates her threatening desires for power. In contrast, Saint-Fargeau emerges implicitly as the space of life, legitimacy, reason, power, and royal entitlement. In fact, such contrasts correspond to the disparity that exists between the structure of the memoirs and that of *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert*, since the memoirs follow a unified, linear and life-affirming narrative, while *Histoire* emerges from a chaotic assemblage or “ramassis” of unfinished fragments, quasi-anonymous voices, and disparate genres intent on affirming the destruction of an individual.

* * *

The Island vs. the Meadow: Staging Chaos against Order

Montpensier reproduces the strategy of setting herself above—and in opposition to—others in *Relation de l'isle imaginaire* (1659), a textual product of her decision to mock a man she considered unworthy of the social privileges to which he aspired. This man was a

certain François de Busillet, sieur de Messimieu,²⁴⁹ who, as she recounts in her memoirs, bore the “extraordinary” title of “chevalier d’honneur” of the parlement of Dombes, of which she was the sovereign princess.²⁵⁰ As she writes, Messimieu exhibited such desires of grandeur that she could not resist the opportunity to shame him for what she deemed inappropriate ambitions:

Il y a un certain chevalier d’honneur au parlement de Dombes: c’est une charge assez extraordinaire; mais les gens de feu mon père étoient habiles à en créer de toutes façons pour avoir de l’argent. Ils prirent exemple sur le parlement de Dijon. Ce chevalier est un homme assez comique qui me divertissoit, ayant des démêlés assez admirables avec sa compagnie. (...) je lui dis que l’on me vouloit vendre une île dont je voulois lui donner le gouvernement. Il me remercia fort et m’en demanda le nom. Je lui dis que je ne le savois pas et que l’on me le devoit envoyer au premier ordinaire et la description de l’île. Le soir que j’arrivai à Trévoux, je m’en allai dans mon cabinet, et je commençai cette relation (III, 340).

As Montpensier makes clear here, Messimieu’s title was the result of the wiliness of her father’s staff to create sources of income—namely, the sale of public positions—a practice that emulated the crown’s in the parlements of cities like Dijon as a result of its need for

²⁴⁹ The only record I have found to identify Messimieu is a public notice of a lawsuit against Sieur François de Busillet Sieur de Messimieu, dating from 1639, in which it is established that he had to pay taxes because he lacked proof of noble lineage: “HUGON. - Advertissement au procez pendant pardevant Monseigneur de Lozières conseiller du Roy en ses conseils, intendant de la justice, police & finances en la province de Dauphiné, & commissaire député par sa majesté pour l’exécution du règlement du 24. d’octobre 1639. Fait à Lyon pour la taillabilité de lad. Province: D’entre les consuls & habitans du lieu de Venissieu, défendeurs en prétendue noblesse. Contre sieur François de Bussillet, sieur de Messimieu habitant la ville de Lyon, demandeur (...) Le sieur de François de Busillet, sieur de Messimieu, officier au Parlement de Dombes, escuyer de la ville des Eschelles n’ayant aucune preuve de sa prétendue noblesse, est condamné à payer la Taille pour les fonds roturiers qu’il possède en Dauphiné.” (<http://www.galaxidion.com/home/catalogues.php?LIB=vivarais&CAT=8422>, accessed on May 17, 2009.) By the date and location in Dombes, this lawsuit could very well be against the Sieur de Messimieu to whom Gaston’s staff had sold the “charge” of *chevalier d’honneur* in the parlement of Dombes. This record thus establishes him as an individual who claims a station and privileges to which he is not entitled by birth, and thus, a “social climber” similar to Fouquerolles.

²⁵⁰ The historic region of Dombes, located in southeastern France, was formerly part of the province of Burgundy, bounded by the Saône River on the West, the Rhône on the East, and the Ain river and the district of Bresse on the North. Its capital was Trévoux, located at approximately 30 km north of Lyon. Montpensier describes Dombes as “le plus beau pays du monde,” run through by the Saone river and covered with large fields cultivated with wheat and surrounded by mountains populated with pretty little houses (*Mémoires*, III, 338).

revenues. Consequently, she saw Messimieu's title as an anomaly in the social hierarchy that privileged *la noblesse d'épée*, whose status had been granted in return for military services to the crown.²⁵¹ That Montpensier finds him "comical" or amusing may be read as condescension toward someone whose social status she considers at odds with his birth. Had he been "naturally" destined to be "chevalier d'honneur" he might not have had such "admirable"²⁵² or remarkable quarrels with his entourage, since everyone would have granted him the respect due to his rank.

In fact, Montpensier's disdain may hide an anxiety caused by Messimieu's title and presence in her circle, an anxiety that she deals with by making the *Relation* a joke that she will share with her friends. Jokes, Freud observes in *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (1989), are sophisticated devices through which we can satisfy our hostility towards others (120). Since the use of abusive language is an "unworthy thing" in refined societies, Freud notes, "we have (...) developed a new technique of invectives, which aims at enlisting this third person [the listener] against our enemy. By making our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him—to which the third person, who has made no efforts, bears witness by his laughter" (121-2).

²⁵¹ Not only was the practice of selling titles necessary to create sources of income, but, as Norbert Elias discusses it, French kings practiced the elevation of the bourgeoisie through the ranks of the government's bureaucracy as a tool against the threat posed by the nobles who resented their subordination to the king. The practice aimed at restricting their power as the descendants of earlier kings or vassals, who were themselves latent rivals to the king (179). Since the sixteenth century, but more so beginning with Henry IV, kings expelled the nobles from judiciary and administrative posts and sold these posts to bourgeois who, by definition, did not have a following, as nobles did, and therefore depended on the kings (180). These sales fostered the upward mobility of the bourgeoisie and created the so-called *noblesse de robe* so despised by the much older *noblesse d'épée*, who saw itself threatened by the increasing power of the bourgeois (*The Court Society*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. NY: Pantheon Books, 1983).

²⁵² Furetière defines "admirable" as "qui est surprenant, merveilleux, qu'on ne peut comprendre (...) On s'en sert ironiquement en cette phrase: Vous estes un homme *admirable*, de vous laisser persuader si aisément ces bagatelles!" (s.v. "admirable"). Montpensier's use of this term is ironic and negative.

In my view, Montpensier's *Relation* represents an aggressive act through which she can reinforce a social discourse of class that separates those of her circle of nobles from individuals like Messimieu, who belong to the bourgeoisie. In fact, she highlights this class distinction when she reports in her memoirs that she decided to write *Relation* immediately after participating in a series of public events that staged her as a sovereign princess of Dombes. These events included her grand arrival to its city, Trévoux, in the company of a royal regiment of guards; and the ceremonious reception offered by the city magistrates and lieutenant-general, who honored her as their ruler by kneeling before her, giving speeches, and having the city's cannon fired in her honor (*Mémoires*, III, 338). In this process, they enacted the rituals that established her above her subjects, and materialized, partially at least, the desires she had of being queen (See Chapter III).²⁵³ Then, when done with this performance, she casts her sight on Messimieu and decides to make him the object of a "farce bouffone" that should fittingly complement her own serious self-staging: "Comme il n'y a point de comédie si sérieuse après laquelle on ne joue des farces bouffonnes, mon sérieux fini, je jetai un regard riant à Messimieux, ce chevalier, qui étoit avec le parlement, et je lui dis: 'vous me devriez une harangue tout seul; je sais que vous m'aimez!'" A quoi il répondit agréablement et me fit rire » (III, 341-2). The reason why Messimieu should be so grateful is that he is waiting to receive the governorship of the island from her. Thus, she

²⁵³ Montpensier writes in her memoirs: « je dinai en public pour me montrer à mes sujets. Je reçus force harangues de toutes les villes et les présents de celle de Trévoux (...) J'ordonnai aux consuls de faire des harangues et des présents à madame de Courtenay et à mademoiselle de Vandy. Après mon dîner, le parlement vint me haranguer en robes rouges; car je n'avois pas voulu qu'ils y vinsent à Lyon de cette sorte, de peur qu'il s'y trouvât quelqu'un de la cour chez moi, et que l'on ne me fit la guerre que j'étois bien aise de me voir haranguee comme la reine et que l'on mît un genou en terre devant moi. Ils le mirent à Trévoux, comme font tous les parlements à leurs souverains, et je leur dis de se lever » (III, 340-1). See more details in my note 40 in Chapter II. Ironically, that she performs as a sovereign on the back of the king's court for fear of being mocked, criticized or reprimanded evokes Messimieu's own desires to perform as if he were in a station to which he is not entitled. Thus, she does here what she criticizes Messimieu of doing, but in her eyes, what is acceptable for her is clearly not so for him.

gives him the *Relation*, but she does so in public, by having it read to him in front of the members of her circle: « Le soir on fit la lecture au chevalier [de la description] de l'île, dont on l'appela depuis *M. le gouverneur*. Cette relation parut assez jolie à ceux qui l'entendirent » (III, 341-2). Indeed, not only is she able to lure him into the ruse of the imaginary island, but since she enlists as her audience the members of her retinue, she creates a complicity—and class bonding—against him, thus separating those who laugh from the one being laughed at. And, as she humiliates Messimieu into realizing that he has been made the object of everyone's laughter, not only can she appease some of that class anxiety, but she also betrays her own sense of entitlement to degrade in public those whom she deems beneath her.

The “farce bouffone” she sets herself to write is what Furetière defines²⁵⁴ as a mockery for the public square and/or the stage. Yet, her staging of herself as sovereign princess, a recurrent theme in her work, is a more “serious” performance. While the first form is deemed a solemn ritual meant to honor her, the farce is but a tool through which to demean him. In the end, despite their differences in form, both performances are practices that materialize a social discourse of class hierarchy.

Relation de l'isle imaginaire can be read as a socially acceptable form of verbal aggression through which Montpensier, as with Fouquesolles, can express hostility towards an individual whom she views as a social climber. In the text, she reinforces this aggression in two specific sections, both of which are brimming with sarcasm: the prefatory letter addressed to Messimieu and the end of the text, which culminates with a portrait of him—a

²⁵⁴ Furetière defines “farce” as “ces petites faceties que donnent les charlatans en place publique pour y amasser le monde, parce qu’elles sont remplies de plusieurs pointes et de mots de gueule. Les Comédiens en ont fait de plus regulieres qui ont gardé le même nom chez le peuple, & qu’ils appellent plus honnêtement de petites Pieces Comique (...) Ce mot vient de *facetiae*, ou plutôt de *farco*, qui en langage Celtique, ou Bas-Breton signifie *moquerie*” (s.v. “Farce.”)

portrait that sharply contrasts with the literary portraits whose vogue Montpensier initiated around those same years (see below). The prefatory letter addresses Messimieu as if he did indeed occupy a high rank, taking an exaggeratedly ceremonious tone, and making up titles that he clearly did not hold: “A Monseigneur DE BUSILLET, Seigneur de Messimieu, chevalier de l’ordre du roi, gentilhomme ordinaire de sa chambre, conseiller de leurs altesses royales monseigneur le duc d’Orléans et mademoiselle sa fille, chevalier d’honneur au parlement de Dombes, et nommé gouverneur de l’isle de ***.”²⁵⁵ Since Messimieu was neither a knight of the king’s order, nor a « gentilhomme » of his chamber, nor Gaston’s or Montpensier’s « conseiller », this prefatory letter becomes a performative tool through which to expose Messimieu’s desire for honors, titles and privileges.²⁵⁶

Montpensier’s aggression against Messimieu resurfaces in the portrait she makes of him at the end of *Relation*, where the narrator wishes the future governor of the island to be:

(...) un homme âgé de cinquante-neuf ans, large d’épaules, d’entre deux tailles, blanc comme un cygne,²⁵⁷ assez frisé pour laisser à juger aux spectateurs qu’il a eu une belle tête, de grosseur à l’avoir bonne ; rouge en visage, de gros yeux bleus un peu hors de la tête, entre doux et hagards, plus souvent l’un que l’autre, puisque la

²⁵⁵ In the prefatory letter, the tone becomes decidedly sarcastic when the anonymous writer explains why the island would be good for him : « Je vous assure, MONSEIGNEUR, qu’après avoir eu l’honneur d’entendre lire la relation qu’on a envoyée à Madame, il m’a semblé que celui qui la faisoit avoit eu l’esprit de pénétrer dans ses desseins, ou quelque connoissance de l’avenir ; car il y a mille choses qui vous conviennent plus qu’à un homme du monde. Il ne manquoit au commencement de cet écrit qu’une lettre qui l’offrit à VOTRE GRANDEUR ; mais, voyant le présent que Madame vous a fait de l’original, j’ai cru vous devoir donner cette marque de ma servitude, de vous présenter la copie avec mes très humbles respects. Je suis bien aise qu’ils soient connus, et que la voix publique aille disant en tous lieux, comme dans la Dombes, que je suis, MONSEIGNEUR, Votre très humble, très obéissant, et très obligé serviteur [*no name*]. De Trévoux, ce dernier décembre 1658 » (9-11, *capitals in the original*). As the titles are written in all capitals, not only do they emphasize how Messimieu wants to be addressed, but they point to what he is not, for “Votre Grandeur” and “Monseigneur” are forms of address whose use is restricted only to Monsieur, princes of the blood and similarly highly ranked nobles. Since Messimieu is not “un homme du monde,” and certainly not “Votre Grandeur” and “Monseigneur,” the result can only be comical.

²⁵⁶ Indeed, as it exposes Messimieu’s aspirations of social privilege, *Relation* prefigures Molière’s *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670), whose Monsieur Jourdain makes a fool of himself for mimicking the nobles.

²⁵⁷ Furetière writes: “On dit d’un homme fort vieux, qu’il est blanc comme un *cygne*, quand il a les cheveux blancs, et la barbe blanche. (s.v. “cygne”).

douceur lui doit être naturelle, et que, quand ils ne le sont pas, il faut qu'ils se sentent de son humeur martiale ; que son nez soit entre le camard et le pied de marmite;²⁵⁸ sa bouche assez commune : enfin, à tout prendre, qu'il ait bonne mine, et qu'il soit bien fait ; qu'il ait l'air fin ; qu'il fasse des mines, selon les occurrences, qui signifient beaucoup de choses. Il me semble que je le vois ; son esprit ne se peut exprimer ; il parle comme un livre, et a la langue mieux pendue qu'un homme du monde ; il écrit comme Nerveze,²⁵⁹ il est un registre vivant de tous les commandements, soit en guerre ou en province (...) Fasse le ciel que ce soit plutôt que l'on ne s'imagine, et qu'il lui donne une dignité ! Si c'étoit le gouvernement de notre isle, je serois au comble de mes souhaits (55-6).

This comical portrait makes Messimieu appear as a very old man with white hair and a red face, an “ordinary” mouth, a flat but turned-up, and non-aristocratic, nose, and large protruding eyes whose look shifts between gentle and bewildered, one eye more than the other. The overall effect points to a physical repulsiveness that is the antithesis of the aristocratic. After that, the remark that the governor should look healthy, handsome and have an aristocratic “air fin” is clearly sarcastic—a sarcasm whose increased sting regarding his manners emphasizes the ridicule of his aspirations. Accordingly, he “makes faces” consistent with the circumstances, tries to sound literate but is pedantic, having mechanically memorized all rules, both civil and military. Again, prefiguring Molière’s Monsieur Jourdain, with the reference to Nerveze, and, implicitly, to his treatises on courtiers, the portrait reinforces this notion of Messimieu as contemptible from the perspective of the nobles.

The import of Messimieu’s portrait can best be gauged within the context of the vogue of literary portraits that Montpensier initiated in the late 1650s and which drew most of its

²⁵⁸ Furetière defines “camard” as “nez plat & enfoncé vers la racine, c’est la meme chose que *camus*” (s.v. “camard”). As to “pied de marmite,” he writes that “on dit qu’un homme a le nez fait en pied de marmite, quand il a un nez dont le bord avance et est retroussé” (s.v. “marmite”).

²⁵⁹ Antoine de Nervèze was the author of *Le Guide des courtisans* (1606) and *Le Courtisan français* (1616). The reference points to the notion of “courtisan,” which, Domna C. Stanton notes, “was devalued as materialistic, grasping, self-seeking (...) “Courtisans” were considered “irritating negotiators rather than people of good company” (*The Aristocrat as Art: A Study of the Honnête Homme and the Dandy in Seventeenth-Century and Nineteenth-Century French Literature*. Columbia University Press, 1980, pp. 47).

conventions from Montaigne's self-portrait,²⁶⁰ and which she eventually constituted as a collection of sixty literary portraits published, in 1659, under the title of *Divers Portraits*. Since the aim of these portraits was to represent their subjects in generally positive terms, they stand in sharp contrast to Messimieu's, particularly Montpensier's self-portrait, in which she describes herself as follows:

Je suis grande, ni grasse ni maigre, d'une taille fort belle et fort aisée. J'ai bonne mine, la gorge assez bien faite, les mains et les bras pas beaux, mais la peau belle ainsi que la gorge. J'ai la jambe droite et le pied bien fait; mes cheveux sont blonds et d'un beau cendré; mon visage est long, le tour en est beau; le nez grand et aquilin; la bouche ni grande ni petite, mais façonnée, et d'une manière fort agréable; les lèvres vermeilles; les dents pas belles, mais point horribles aussi; mes yeux sont bleux, ni grands ni petits, mais brillants, doux et fiers comme ma mine. J'ai l'air haut sans l'avoir glorieux (25).

Certainly, the description here is much more favorable, permeated as it is with terms such as "belle/beau," which recurs six times, "bien faite," repeated twice, and "fort agréable."

Contrary to Messimieu's, her nose is big and aquiline—a trait that points to her relation to the Bourbons, who apparently were noted for their prominent and arched nose. Not only do adjectives such as "grand/e," "fiers," and "air haut" evoke the notion of superiority, but also she casts herself as having extreme self-command, since "jamais personne n'a eu tant de pouvoir sur soi, et jamais esprit n'a été si maître de son corps" (26), a display of self-control

²⁶⁰ Jacqueline Plantié (1994) traces the tradition of literary portraits back to Plutarch, the first to write a "gallery of illustrious" men (36), and Montaigne, the first to write his self-portrait. Not only does Montaigne proclaim the right to make one's own portrait, but he provides a method that can be easily adopted by all those who imitated him in the seventeenth-century. As Plantié writes: "on commencera par la taille, puis par les traits du visage, le regard du peintre descendant du front jusqu'à la barbe, on définira la complexion, on dira un mot de sa santé, puis de l'adresse à tous les exercices, une transition permettra de passer du corps à l'âme" (48). (See Montaigne's *De la présomption*, in *Essais*, II, XVII, esp. pages 641 onwards.) Portraits appear in literary works such as the *Amadis des Gaules*'s novels (Planté 77) and the pastoral *Astrée* (1607-1625), but Planté identifies Scudéry's *Le Grand Cyrus* as "le plus fréquenté de tous les chemins qui mènent à la mode du portrait" (80). The point is to "présenter la personne choisie, insoucieux de tout réalisme, en allant toujours de l'inférieur (ou ce que l'on juge tel) au supérieur, de l'extérieur à l'intérieur, du moins important au plus important, du moins éclatant au plus lumineux. Un portrait, c'est, dans l'hyperbole, une escalade. Cette ascension—ou plutôt cette gradation—permet de se rendre compte que les mérites cités en premier ne sont rien auprès de ceux qui viennent ensuite: une grande naissance n'est rien auprès du mérite personnel, etc." (95). (*La Mode du portrait littéraire en France 1641-1681*. Paris: Champion, 1994).

that sharply contrasts with Messimieu's craziness and inadequacy. Naturalizing social discourses that assign power to those who, like herself, demonstrate self-control, she implies that only people of her class are entitled to rule, as she does the principality of Dombes.

In spatial terms, as in *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolles*, where she associates Fouquesolles with the moon and then fashions the moon in opposition to Saint-Fargeau, Montpensier links Messimieu to an island that is constructed as opposite to Dombes. And whereas she cast the moon as a space of dreadful women, madness, oriental otherness, and death, in *Relation* she projects onto the island two contradictory types of images: on the one hand, the text conflates references to the chivalric, the marvelous, the idyllic, and the New World that make the island desirable; on the other hand, it is permeated with images of the excess and chaos that Montpensier and other nobles feared would result, should upwardly mobile individuals like Messimieu be given titles and positions of power. The island also contrasts with the moon for, instead of ruination and death, it evokes life and fertility, but a fertility portrayed in such excess that it produces a sense of disorderliness in sharp contrast with the tranquil meadows and the orderly principality of Dombes.

Set as the subject of an anonymous traveler's narrative, the island of the *Relation* summons images drawn from a number of different registers: the reference to the palace of Apollidon suggests that this island might be the famous *isle ferme* of the chivalric novels of Amadis of Gaula;²⁶¹ its flora and fauna, portrayed as particularly exuberant, exotic, and even

²⁶¹ *Relation*'s narrator claims that, "par sa beauté il y auroit assez lieu de croire que c'est l'isle Ferme, quoiqu'il n'y reste rien du palais d'Apollidon; mais vraisemblablement il a été détruit faute d'être hanté, personne n'étant digne de pouvoir parvenir à passer le lac des loyaux amants" (15). Not only does the reference to "l'isle ferme" and "le Palais d'Apollidon" point to the *Amadis des Gaules*, and thus to an old code of chivalry meant for the nobles rather than for the bourgeois, but it also points to the symbolism of the « lac des loyaux amants », a test that Apollidon had left in place for those who wanted to approach the magnificent palace. Since only the worthy

marvelous, conjures images of both the Golden Age and travelers' descriptions of the New World.²⁶²

As a result the island emerges as a potential colony,²⁶³ with the clear purpose of stimulating Messimieu's imagination and ambitions, and providing more ammunition to have a bigger laugh at his expense. The narrator emphasizes the island's great potential for profit: "si on avoit le débit [les forêts] seroient de grand revenu, un arbre y croissant en deux ans comme en quarante ans dans l'Europe » (41). As in the Vespucci's narratives, not only do trees grow exceedingly fast and to unseen heights, but the land is equally abundant with the most diverse fruits, grains, vegetables, and flowers (40-3). And while diversity and abundance of the island's flora are encouraging signs for a colonization project, the island's fauna is, at best, perplexing, populated as it is by exotic and marvelous creatures, such as "des poissons d'une monstrueuse grosseur, » « des chevaux marins, des baleines, des

could pass this test, it created a hierarchy between the « worthy » and the « unworthy », not unlike the class hierarchy that Montpensier and her circle of friends strove to preserve (for exhaustive details on the palace of Apollidon and its striking resemblance to Chambord, see Luce Guillermin's recent edition of *Amadis des Gaules*, Livre IV, translated by Nicolas d'Herberay des Essars in 1543. Paris: Champion, 2005).

²⁶² For instance, Amerigo Vespucci portrays the New World as "very pleasant and full of countless very large green trees, which never shed their leaves (...) and produce infinite kinds of fruits excellent to the taste and healthful to the body. And the fields produce many sweet and delicious herbs, flowers and roots (...) what is there to say of the quantity of birds and their plumes and colors and songs and how many kinds and how beautiful they are (...) who could tell the infinite number of forest animals, the abundance of lions [pumas], jaguars (...) linxes, baboons, monkeys of many kinds and many large snakes as well (...) so many wild boards, roe deer, deer, does, hares and rabbits; and we never once saw domestic animals (*Letters from a New World: Amerigo Vespucci's Discovery of America*. New York: Marsilio, 1992, 30-1). Similarly, in *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil autrement dite Amérique* (Lausanne, Bibliothèque Romande, 1972 [1573]), Jean de Léry describes the richly diverse fish population of the ocean near the Torrid zone (45-51), the animals, birds, fish, insects, and "autres bêtes monstrueuses" populating Brazil (122-148) and the diverse trees, herbs, roots and fruits that grow in its soil (149-163). In both accounts, what stands out are the "new world"'s great fertility and abundance, and the novelty of animals and plants never seen in Europe before.

²⁶³ Although colonization of the New World was already occurring by the time Montpensier wrote this piece, the crown did not begin to control the colonies until 1663, according to James Pritchard. (See Pritchard's *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 18).

dauphins, des naïades, et des sirènes » (43),²⁶⁴ as well as camels, dromedaries, and elephants, which mingle with blue, red, and gray horses, pink stags, deer, and rabbits, and mythical satyrs and unicorns (44-5). As with *Histoire*'s population of foreign and savage nations, this disparate assortment of creatures serves to cast the island as a space of otherness. Yet, as these fabulous beings evoke the register of the marvelous,²⁶⁵ they elicit attraction, rather than fear and contempt.

The narrator insists on the island's great potential for cultivation and production in spices, rice, tobacco, and, most important, in numerous mines of precious stones and pearls (49). The only thing lacking, he notes, are people to work, and « dès que nous aurons du monde nous aurons de l'argent » (49). Thus, he requests: « amenez nous de toutes sortes d'ouvriers ; car tout est à faire ici » (49), especially « d'honnêtes gens pour peupler l'isle, des bourgeois, des gentilshommes, et des gens d'église », both jesuits who can establish schools, and jansenists, for they are « laborieux et ne songent pas seulement au travail de l'esprit : quoiqu'ils fassent les plus beaux ouvrages, et que ce soient les meilleures plumes de temps,

²⁶⁴ Furetière describes the whale as “le plus gros des poissons,” which can be found either in the North Sea, in the Mediterranean Sea or in the Americas. He considers it a “monstre” whose body can be used to make cosmetics and oils (s.v. “baleine.”) As to the dolphin, he defines it as a “fish” believed to be “chimérique & qui n'est point en la nature, à ce que m'ont certifié les jurés Vendeurs de marée, qui disent qu'on en a jamais vû en France, quoy que l'Ordonnance de la Marine en fasse mention” (s.v. “dauphin”). As to the naiads, they are “de fausses divinités que les payens croyoient présider aux fontaines et aux rivières” (s.v. “naiades.”) Finally, the “cheval marin,” also known as “hyppotame,” is a “fish” of exotic lands, such as Egypt or Ethiopia, “hyppotame (...) très puissant, et n'a du *cheval* que les oreilles, et presque tout le reste du veau, sans cornes. Il a les pieds d'éléphants, marche sur la terre, où il est presque toujours à brouter & nage à l'embouchure des rivières. Il y a quelques-uns qui le décrivent avec des griffes aux pieds” (s.v. “cheval marin.”) Associated with Africa, this “cheval marin” is perhaps the strangest in this collection of monstrous and mythic beings.

²⁶⁵ The code of the marvelous or “merveilleux,” points to fairy tales, a literary genre that did not make its formal appearance until the end of the seventeenth century. However, as Michel Stanesco points out, the marvelous was already present since the twelfth century, particularly in the Arthurian romances, which contained fairy-like characteristics (“Le conte de fées et le merveilleux romanesque” in *Réception et identification du conte depuis le Moyen-Âge*. Edited by Michel Zink and Xavier Ravier, Toulouse: Université de Toulouse, 1986, pp. 12-20). Stanesco defines the marvelous as “un concept esthétique” serving to communicate “les qualités d'un monde autre” to the readers, a process that implies “une dualité de la réalité, une polarité entre ici et ailleurs, entre un monde ‘réel’ et un ‘autre monde’” (15-16). Thus, as Montpensier populates the island with marvelous creatures, she fashions it as an appealing “autre monde” to which Busillet could eventually have access.

ils ne laissent pas de s'adonner à travailler à toutes sortes de métiers (49-50).²⁶⁶ However, despite this concern for settling the island with hard-working people, the population soon resembles the island's chaotic multitude of animals:

J'ai vu autrefois à Paris de certaines gens de tout sexe et conditions qui hantoient les honnêtes gens, les uns mélancoliques, et les autres gais, habillés différemment des autres, et parlant de même; parmi ceux-laà il y avoit des rois, des empereurs, des gens de rien, des oiseaux,²⁶⁷ le Saint-Esprit même (...) Comme les cours ne sont jamais sans cela, amenez-en pour divertir notre gouverneur (53-4).

Not only does the dichotomy between the "honnêtes gens" and the "certaines gens de tout sexe et conditions" that frequented them hint at Messimieu's anomalous presence amongst the members of Montpensier's circle, but the mix of kings and emperors with "des gens de rien" (a pun on the ethical ideal, "des gens de bien") and "des oiseaux" conjures an image of chaos, whereby all proper social boundaries have been lost. In that sense, this population evokes the kind of society that prevails when people like Messimieu are allowed to mingle as the equal of "honnêtes gens," such as Montpensier and her circle.

²⁶⁶ Montpensier develops her favorable opinion of the Jansenists in her memoirs when she recounts her visit to Port-Royal-des-Champs, a stronghold of the Jansenists, in 1657. She describes how Jansenius "avoit écrit de la grace ce qu'en a dit saint Augustin" and how the abbé de Saint-Cyran, who shared Jansenius's theory, was incarcerated by Richelieu, "soit qu'il craignît que ces propositions ne fussent nuisibles à la religion, ou qu'il craignît les gens dont le savoir et la vertu donnoient des lumières nouvelles, ou en faisoient voir qui avoient été cachés, le fit mettre en prison, où il a été jusqu'à la régence [d'Anne d'Autriche], que la reine le fit sortir (*Mémoires*, III, 67). Montpensier refrains from approving their doctrine, although she thinks that "c'est un zèle ardent pour la gloire de Dieu qui les emporte, et qui les empêche d'avoir toute la considération que leurs anciens eussent pu avoir" (70). She also admits that "pour leurs moeurs, ce sont des gens admirables; ils prêchent et ils écrivent avec la plus belle éloquence, font des ouvrages merveilleux à la gloire de l'Église et des saints. Ils ont fait une traduction de l'office que l'Église fait du Saint-Sacrement, qu'on dit qu'il n'y a rien qui doive plus convaincre les Huguenots, et prouver par raisons fortes et évidentes les vérités de notre religion à ceux qui seroient assez malheureux pour manquer de foi. Leur dévotion est sincère; retirés du commerce du monde, désintéressés des biens, des honneurs, charitables au dernier point. Si leur doctrine est mauvaise, il faut espérer qu'avec de si bonnes moeurs, ils obtiendront par leurs prières les lumières nécessaires pour le connoître et pour la changer » (69-70). Her favorable opinion is a stark contrast from what Louis XIV would do to Port-Royal in 1660, when he had its elementary schools closed, and, in 1708, when he had Pope Clement XI abolish the convent. Port-Royal was razed in 1709.

²⁶⁷ According to Furetière, "oiseaux" is used figuratively to refer to "des hommes, dont la santé ou la fortune sont ruinées. On dit aussi ironiquement, qu'un homme est un bel *oiseau*; pour témoigner un grand mépris de sa personne." (s.v. "Oiseau.")

Still, this image of chaos corresponds to the disparate genres that converge in the text, infusing it with a multiplicity that, again, contrasts with the generic uniformity of Montpensier's memoirs. For all these various references to travel narratives, chivalric novels, utopias and dystopias, as well as colonization projects, point to the undecidability of the text, as if its form could replicate the chaos of the island, through a textual architecture that points towards multiple directions and is grounded on more than one foundation, thus turning *Relation* into something as undefined as *the* imaginary island whose function it is to host multiple forms of human ambitions and fantasies.

* * *

The Female Kingdom: A Space of Chastity, Knowledge, and Power

If *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolles* and *Relation de l'isle imaginaire* served to construct Montpensier above—and in opposition to—the woman and man they mocked, her two remaining texts—and the spaces they create—function to align her with the ideals of female power and autonomy to which she aspired. These texts are the short novel, *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, published in 1659,²⁶⁸ and the correspondence she exchanged with Mme de Motteville from 1660 to 1661. In both, Montpensier creates imaginary realms in which women rule and live free from the oppression of male-dominated societies.

²⁶⁸ Published in the same booklet that contains *Relation de l'isle imaginaire*. Only two copies of this original edition are currently available: one at the BNF, the other at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Newer editions include its inclusion in Jean Regnault Segrais's *Oeuvres Diverses* (Amsterdam, 1723, v. 2), and an exact reprint of the original (Paris: Renouard, 1805).

In this sense, these two texts represent, if not full-fledged utopias, at least what Fredric Jameson (2005) identifies as “utopian impulses” that, in his words, “govern *everything* future-oriented in life and culture” (3).²⁶⁹ Although Jameson casts the “utopian impulse” in negative terms, at least in what concerns the insidious modern appropriation and exploitation of desires for a better life, this notion of “impulse,” in opposition to a fully developed program, is useful for identifying instances that explore aspirations to a better life in women’s texts.

Consequently, Montpensier’s texts contrast with the utopias written by men throughout the early modern period, where women, as Pierre Ronzeaud has noted (1984; 1974), are almost always defined in terms of “nature” and in their roles as wives and mothers.²⁷⁰ Conversely, her texts resonate with women’s writings that challenged dominant

²⁶⁹ Jameson detects “two distinct lines of descendency from [Tomas] More’s inaugural text [*Utopia* (1516)]: the one intent on the realization of the utopian program, the other, another and obscure yet omnipresent Utopian impulse finding its way to the surface in a variety of covert expressions and practices. The first of these lines will be systemic, and will include revolutionary political practice, when it aims at founding a whole new society (...). The other line of descent is more obscure and more varied, as befits a protean investment in a host of suspicious and equivocal matters: liberal reforms and commercial pipedreams, the deceptive yet tempting swindles of the here and now, where Utopia serves as the mere lure and bait for ideology” (*Archeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. London; New York: Verso, 2005, 3-4.)

²⁷⁰ Ronzeaud observes that: “La femme n’est pas exclue de la vie sociale utopienne, mais elle n’est pas réellement concernée non plus par une vie publique dont elle est pourtant l’indispensable gestatrice. Survalorisée dans son rôle de reproductrice, enrégimentée dans son rôle d’épouse, la femme n’existe en fait, que par rapport à l’homme qu’elle met au monde et qu’elle prolonge par sa descendance. » (« La femme dans le roman utopique de la fin du XVIIe siècle, » in *Onze études sur l’image de la femme dans la littérature française du dix-septième siècle*. Ed. Wolfgang Leiner. Tübingen : G. Narr ; Paris : J.-M. Place, 1984 [1978], 90.) For instance, in Cyrano de Bergerac’s *Histoire comique Etats de l’empire de la lune et du soleil* (1657), women are represented in terms of their sexual roles: priests and doctors select girls for the sexual pleasure and genetic selection of men (Ronzeaud 91-2). In other words, women are never autonomous, neither within the traditional monogamous model nor, as Ronzeaud points out, within a polygamy that evokes both male fears of sharing a woman and fantasies of virile power over a “harem” (81). The only exception would be Gabriel de Foigny’s *Les Aventures de Jacques Sadeur dans la découverte de la Terre Australe* (1676), where the unity of both sexes in the form of hermaphrodites would imply “une réévaluation de son image [de l’homme], comme égale moitié d’un tout parfait” (95). Although most of Ronzeaud’s corpus, except for Bergerac’s text, include late seventeenth-century utopias such as Denis Veiras’ *Histoire des Sévarambes, peuples qui habitent une partie du troisième continent communément appelé la Terre Australe* (1676), Fénelon’s *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (1699), Claude Gilbert’s *Histoire de Caléjava ou de l’isle des hommes raisonnables, avec le parallèle de leur morale et du christianisme* (1700), Person de Lesconvel’s *Idée d’un règne doux et heureux ou Relation du voyage du Prince de Montbérand dans l’île de Naudély* (1706), and Tyssot de Patot’s *Voyage et aventures de*

gender scripts, such as Christine de Pizan's *La Cité des dames* (1405), Marie de Gournay's *De l'égalité des hommes et des femmes* (1622) and Gabrielle Suchon's *Du célibat volontaire ou La Vie sans engagement* (1700).²⁷¹ In fact, Montpensier's works echo some of the elements of *Histoire de Sapho*, a section in Madeleine de Scudéry's *Le Grand Cyrus* (1649-1653, Book X), whose characters, especially Sapho, a respected woman of letters who refuses to get married, dream of moving to the *Pays des nouveaux Sauromates*, a land that contains all the elements of a full-fledged utopia.²⁷² This land has open access to those who reach it but is closed to those who want to leave (X, 2, 569-71); it has a creation narrative in which the founding king, like Utopos, separates the kingdom from adjacent lands (X, 2, 569), and a new religion, in which love is the sole object of adoration (X, 2 574). Finally, its society has eradicated the source of women's suffering: marriage. Thus, the *Pays des nouveaux Sauromates* does involve what Marin calls "a stage for ideological representation," the "ideology" in this case being the foregrounding of a positive image of learned women, such as Sapho, and the condemnation of marriage as the enemy of love and a source of enslavement for women.²⁷³ Scudéry's validation of the woman of letters with whom she

Jacques Matsé (1710), the same can be said of the role assigned to women in one of the earliest early modern utopias, Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), where women are represented only as mothers and wives.

²⁷¹ Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies* is not a utopia but, to the extent that it condemns the injustice of misogynistic representations of women, foregrounds empowering female images, and advocates the betterment of the conditions of women's lives, it points to a desire for social change through which women might emancipate themselves from subjugation. In the same spirit, de Gournay's essay defends gender equality and Suchon's treaty proposes a mode of life for women other than marriage or the convent, in which they could remain single and dedicate themselves to intellectual pursuits. These texts all partake of a pro-women utopian impulse. See my discussion of these writers in the Introduction and in Chapter III.

²⁷² I apply here Marin's model whereby the island of Utopia is closed to foreigners (102), has a creation narrative in which Utopos, the founding patriarch, created Utopia through physical violence and separation from a continent (105). Utopia has a new religion, and its existence is described and narrated by a traveler. (*Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces*. Amherst: Prometheus, 1990).

²⁷³ See my notes 144 and 145 in Chapter III, where I quote Sapho's remarks against marriage as well as a description of how the Sauromates' laws sacralize love and lovers' fidelity. Scudéry takes up the question of

identified herself (she was often called Sapho) is defined by an opposition to Damophile, whose excessive display of knowledge makes her an undesirable pedant (X, ii, 332-341 and 347-352). Thus, Scudéry favors a true, but hidden knowledge above the display of erudition without regard for the appropriateness of circumstances. And, although Scudéry's woman of letters may seem harmless—and therefore somewhat timid, or even conservative—the fact is that she does advocate a woman's right to acquire and enjoy knowledge.

Scudéry's works influenced Montpensier's, particularly her *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, which is also located in a faraway land, a region of Asia Minor. In fact, Montpensier names Cyrus the main male character of her *Histoire*, and renders several of her female characters learned women.²⁷⁴ In her memoirs, Montpensier documents this influence when she recounts how, during a conversation she had in August 1659 with her friend Mlle de Vandy²⁷⁵ and with the salon hostess, Madame de Montausier,²⁷⁶ she drew the title of her text from Scudéry's writings:

[Montausier] vouloit toujours raccommode Vandy avec les comtesses pour les remettre ensuite bien avec moi. Un jour qu'elle parloit de Saint-Fargeau et de tous leurs démêlés, elle dit à Vandy: "Vous êtes bien fière, Princesse de Paphlagonie!" Mademoiselle de Scudéry lui avoit donné ce nom dans un de ses romans; car elle étoit aimée de tous les beaux esprits qui ne bougeoient de chez madame la comtesse de

marriage in *Clélie* (1654-1660), whose ten tomes examine positions against and for marriage, hone acceptable notions of love and its role within marriage, and establish a code for acceptable expressions of love or "amour honnête."

²⁷⁴ Jacqueline Plantié (1994) also documents this connection between the works of Montpensier and Scudéry, but fails to prove her claim that Montpensier "repeats" Scudéry's portraits of Vandy, Maure, Sablé and Fiesques (246).

²⁷⁵ Mademoiselle de Vandy, Chérueil writes, was a member of the household of the Comtesse de Maure and had a reputation for intelligence, beauty and virtue (*Memoires*, II, 357, note 3). Montpensier also wrote her portrait in *Divers Portraits* (1658), describing her as a learned woman.

²⁷⁶ Julie d'Angennes (1607-1671) was the daughter of the celebrated Marquise de Rambouillet. See my discussion of Rambouillet and other salon women in the Introduction.

Maure.²⁷⁷ Sur cela je dis: « La princesse Paphlagonie a une guerre si déclarée contre la reine Gilette! » La comtesse de Fiesque se nomme Gilonne, et au commencement qu'elle fut veuve de son premier mari (...) elle eut un train magnifique, voyoit beaucoup de monde; on s'avisa de l'appeler ainsi (...) [J]e dis à Vandy: « J'ai envie de faire un mémoire de vos intérêts, pour présenter à madame de Montausier. » (...) Je ne croyois faire que cela; mais comme j'avois du temps et que j'y trouvai mon divertissement, j'en fis une petite histoire qui fut achevée en trois jours, à écrire une heure ou deux heures [par jour] (...) Je la montrai à madame de Montausier, qui la trouva jolie; c'étoit une bagatelle (III, 380-1).

Thus, the writing results from a desire to record a quarrel between two women she despises, the countesses of Fiesques and of Frontenac, her ladies-in-waiting at Saint-Fargeau from whom she became estranged (II, 365; III, 2-21), and Mlle de Vandy, a dear friend who had visited her at Saint-Fargeau and since then become a close member of her circle (II, 420-1). As she decides to write a memoir on behalf of Vandy for Montausier's benefit, she defines her memoirs once again as a tool either to justify or to incriminate the parties involved, as though in a trial. At the same time, her downplaying of the amount of time and effort she put into the writing, and calling the text a "bagatelle" should be read as a strategy to distinguish herself from Mlle de Scudéry. Like the aristocracy, and even more, as a princess of the blood, she would avoid being associated or compared with a professional bourgeois writer.

In the preface to *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, Montpensier distances herself from Scudéry when she announces that she will write it "non pas comme elle est dans Cyrus, car d'entreprendre une même chose que mademoiselle de Scudéri, il ne m'appartient pas: ce seroit donner dans un grand ridicule; et, tout grand qu'est cet amour-propre, ma raison est si dominante sur lui que je suis assurée qu'il ne m'aveuglera pas au point de me

²⁷⁷ Anne Doni d'Attichy, comtesse de Maure (1600-1662) was host of a renowned salon (Albert Pauphilet et al. *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*. Paris: Fayard, 1996 [1951]. s.v. "Maure"). In his notes, Chérueil adds that Maure began as a "fille d'honneur" at Marie de Médicis' court, and married Louis de Rochechouart, comte de Maure, who was also the uncle of the future Mme de Montespan. She frequented the hotel Rambouillet and was known in learned and literary circles (Montpensier's *Mémoires*, II, 356, note 2).

laisser faire de si lourdes fautes” (62). While her statement suggests that she has sufficient rationality and control over her own “amour propre” to know that Scudéry’s talent and/or dedication to the craft of writing cannot be surpassed, it implies a refusal to imitate someone so far below her station. But, as Jacqueline Plantié observes, the remark is at the very least ambiguous and hints at a criticism of Scudéry’s novel.²⁷⁸ Indeed, Montpensier slightly reproaches the author of *Le Grand Cyrus*, when she announces that she will write exclusively about women, rather than men, since “l’histoire de Perse fait assez de mention de ses conquêtes [de Cyrus] et de ses armes sans que j’en parle; c’est pourquoi je demeurerai toujours à nos dames” (84). Contrary to Scudéry, who does indeed elaborate long descriptions of Cyrus’s accomplishments, Montpensier will write a history of women who were in charge of their states and who, like men, took arms to defend themselves and their friends against enemies.

As Montpensier sets out, once again, to mock those who, like the countess of Fiesque, live above their assigned station and to defend Vandy, she evolves from merely attacking those she despises (as she did in *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d’Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolles* and *Relation de l’isle imaginaire*) to defending those whom she likes. In fact, traditional interpretations have reduced *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie* to a *roman à clé*, where, as Montpensier notes, the Princess of Paphlagonie stands for Vandy, the queen Gillette for the countess of Fiesque, and the queen of the Amazons for herself, as one could

²⁷⁸ Plantié notices the ambiguity in Montpensier’s comment on Scudéry’s works: “On peut y voir une humilité sincère et l’éloge d’une oeuvre inimitable; ou bien au contraire la condamnation du *Grand Cyrus*. Suivre Mlle de Scudéry serait faire de lourdes fautes, non sans doute qu’on ne puisse l’égaliser, mais on ne peut que se fourvoyer en empruntant sa méthode” (*La Mode du portrait littéraire en France 1641-1681*. Paris: Champion, 1994, pp. 246-7). In my view, however, the “si lourdes fautes” that she wants to avoid can refer both to stylistic matters and to the mistake it would be, for her, to equate her work to that of a professional writer.

deduce by past representations of Montpensier as an Amazon.²⁷⁹ Even more important, in my view, these keys and references to Mlle de Scudéry, Mme de Montausier, the comtesse de Maure, and Mlle de Vandy—all salon women of the time—make their presence in this novel to create an imaginary world in which women’s power has extended to the political sphere.²⁸⁰

The text’s recurring themes are female chastity, knowledge, autonomy, and power, which involve the inversion of gender hierarchies²⁸¹ and thus the exclusion of men. In this world, powerful women are compound figures drawn from both salon women and the female regents, from Louise de Savoie to Anne d’Autriche, who had ruled France in the past hundred and fifty years. These learned female heads of state are unmarried and chaste—a chastity that may be read as the “price” women might have to pay in order to exude worthiness and authority. However, when read against the backdrop of the upcoming wedding of Louis XIV (which Montpensier and the court were awaiting at the time of her writing this text), not only does the text emerge as a tacit comment against Salic law, but it

²⁷⁹ See my notes 185 and 186 in Chapter III where I discuss these visual and textual representations of Montpensier as an Amazon. In addition, Vincent Pitts (2000) speculates that Cyrus is Condé, the Italian prince the comte de Fiesque, the merchant woman Mme de Frontenac, the Princess Aminte Julie de Montausier, and Athéna the marquise de Rambouillet herself (145).

²⁸⁰ In this sense, *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie* illustrates Joan De Jean’s thesis that women turned to literature after the defeat of the Fronde as a mechanism to compensate in their writings the power they had lost in politics. See De Jean’s *Tender Geographies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), especially her discussion of Montpensier’s “intention to replace the making of history with the writing of history” (55) as she decided to write her memoirs while she was in Saint-Fargeau. However, De Jean’s discussion focuses exclusively on *Les Nouvelles francaises*, whose authorship she attributes equally to Montpensier and her secretary Segrais (52-55), and fails to mention *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d’Herbigny*, *Marquise de Fouquesolles*, *Relation de l’isle imaginaire* and *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, all of which, in my view, more fittingly document the desire to transfer onto the paper Montpensier’s power as a *frondeuse*.

²⁸¹ Vincent Pitts (2000) also notices what he describes as “a striking reversal of the usual gender hierarchy, all of the leading characters are women, the various queens and princesses in the story. Even the strongest males (...) are relegated to subordinated role” (145).

also implies a stand against this marriage and royal marriages in general.²⁸² Thus what at first sight appears to some to be the mere settling of petty quarrels, effectively aims to reshape relationships between the sexes and grapples with the fundamental issues of the *querelle des femmes*: the endless debates against marriage and women's right to be learned and to enjoy leadership and authority.

In this *Histoire*, Cyrus, the Persian emperor, has just invaded Paphlagonie, and the queen of the kingdom has just sent her learned daughter to Misnie to protect her from being seduced by him. Once there, the princess develops a strong friendship with the queen of Misnie and princesses Parthénie and Aminte—all of whom are women of letters and heads of their own states. The princess eventually returns to her kingdom, which she rules and defends against enemies—the infamous queen Gilette and her supporters. The powerful queen of the Amazons comes to her rescue, and « tailla en pieces tous ces révoltés [et] chassa les conjurés hors de la Paphlagonie » with the help of her « troupes fort lestes et fort aguerries, » thus leaving the Princess « triomphante de tous ses ennemies » (94).²⁸³ Finally, after many years of a chaste life of extraordinary wisdom, Princess of Paphlagonie is rewarded by goddess Diana and elevated to the sky to live in eternal happiness and glory.

The characters in the novel may be classified in two groups: the princesses and queens who cultivate letters and a life devoid of sexual love and marriage, and the men in general and women who live in excess and chaos. The first group includes the Princess of

²⁸² Needless to say, Louis XIV's wedding to the Infanta of Spain also represented the end of Montpensier's old dream to marry him, and therefore the confirmation that this possibility was never going to happen (See Chapter III).

²⁸³ Indeed, this account of the queen of Amazon's military prowess in defending the princess echoes Montpensier's past as a *frondeuse*, except that in her case she belonged to the party of the "révoltés" against the crown.

Paphlagonie, her aunt, the Queen of Misnie, and her friends, the Princesses of Parthénie and Aminte. The princess of Paphlagonie is described as gaining excellent knowledge in order to rule. Rather than let the fate of her state be determined by heaven, as her mother did: « elle apprit toutes les langues qui étoient à la mode du temps (...) ; et pendant que sa mere étoit dans les temples aux pieds des autels, adressant ses prieres aux dieux pour la conservation de ses états, notre jeune princesse tâchoit de se rendre digne de les gouverner (66-7). Similarly, Queen of Misnie, has “de l’esprit infiniment, un esprit capable, instruit, connoissant, et extraordinaire en toutes choses” (70) ; indeed, she is « éclairée en toutes sciences » (71) and she exchanges letters with her equally enlightened friend, the Princess Parthénie, on various topics, among these, how to preserve their health. Montpensier writes:

On seroit trop heureux si on pouvoit trouver de ces billets et en faire un recueil. Je suis assurée que l’on y trouveroit des préceptes pour le régime de vivre, des precautions jusques aux temps propres à faire des remedes, et des remedes meme dont Hippocrate et Galien n’ont jamais entendu parler avec toute leur science: ce seroit une chose fort utile au public, et dont les facultés de Paris et de Montpellier feroient bien leur profit (73).

Not only are queen of Misnie and the Princess Parthénie knowledgeable in medical remedies, which could be of enormous use if disseminated, but their exchange of ideas on how to preserve their health is both an affirmation of self-care and an incursion into the male-dominated field of medicine. As these women surpass even Galen and Hipocrates, their letters are also a model of the art of letter writing: “Si on trouvoit leurs lettres, on en tireroit de grands avantages en toutes manieres (...) on apprendroit toute la politesse du style, et la plus délicate maniere de parler sur toutes choses (...) auparavant on n’écrivoit que les contrats de mariage, et des lettres il ne s’en entendoit point parler: ainsi nous leur avons l’obligation d’une chose si commode pour le commerce » (73-4). Now, when Montpensier casts Misnie and Parthénie as the inventor of the epistolary genre, she confirms Katharine

Jensen's (1989) observation that seventeenth-century discourse on letter-writing ascribes to women the letter "as a social art" (27), but as a cultural capacity from the heart rather than from the mind (Jensen 30-3); thus, authors such as the Abbé Cotin (1669) and La Bruyère (1688) could claim that women's letters were imperfect, due to linguistic errors.²⁸⁴ Not only are Misnie's and Parthénie's letters models of style and subtlety, but they are *not* about love and, most especially, about suffering and abandonment, as male representations of women's letters claim. Indeed, what Jensen identifies as the trope of female suffering due to male seduction and betrayal, a trope that bestows sexual privilege to men and willing self-victimization to women (33-41) has no place in the letters of queens Misnie and Parthénie.

In fact, these women exclude men from their conversation since men are neither the addressees of their letters, nor the subject of their concerns. In sharp contrast to male representations that viewed women's letters as imperfect samples of the artistic genre, albeit as love letters, Montpensier casts them as models of epistolary perfection. Indeed, *Histoire de la Princesse de Paplagonie* can be read as a representation of the atmosphere of the salons and of the role salon women held as arbiters of language, style, taste, and knowledge. In this sense, one can but agree with Domna C. Stanton's thesis, in "The Fiction of *Préciosité* and the Fear of Women" (1981), that such roles spelled "the loss of phallic primacy" (108), and

²⁸⁴ In *Des ouvrages de l'esprit*, 37, La Bruyère emphasizes female letter-writing as the product of the heart, and therefore instinctively "natural" and incorrect: "Je ne sais si l'on pourra jamais mettre dans les lettres plus d'esprit, plus de tour, plus d'agrément et plus de style que l'on en voit dans celles de Balzac et de Voiture; elles sont vides de sentiments qui ont n'ont régné que depuis leur temps, et qui doivent aux femmes leur naissance. Ce sexe va plus loin que le notre dans ce genre d'écrire. Elles trouvent sous leur plume des tours et des expressions qui souvent en nous ne sont l'effet que d'un long travail et d'une pénible recherche; elles sont heureuses dans le choix des termes, qu'elles placent si juste, que tout connus qu'ils sont, ils ont le charme de la nouveauté, et semblent être faits seulement pour l'usage où elles les mettent; il n'appartient qu'à elles de faire lire dans un seul mot tout un sentiment, et de rendre délicatement une pensée qui est délicate; elles ont un enchainement de discours inimitable, qui se suit naturellement, et qui n'est lié que par le sens. Si les femmes étaient toujours correctes, j'oserais dire que les lettres de quelques-unes d'entre-elles seraient peut-être ce que nous avons dans notre langue de mieux écrit » (*Oeuvres complètes*, Paris: Gallimard, 1967, pp. 76).

triggered fears that led certain male writers to satirize salon women, starting with Molière, who (coincidentally?) performed his *Précieuses Ridicules* at the court on November 18, 1659, two months after Montpensier published *Histoire de la Princesse de Paplagonie*.

Furthermore, Misnie and Parthénie's knowledge, far from being limited to either medicine or style, extends to political issues, specifically the ability to initiate and stop quarrels to assist their friends:

Il n'y a rien dont elles n'aient eu connaissance : elles ont su les affaires de tous les états du monde, par la participation qu'elles y ont eue de toutes les intrigues des particuliers, soit de galanterie, soit d'autres choses où leurs avis ont été nécessaires ; tantôt pour apaiser les brouilleries et les querelles, tantôt pour les faire naître, selon les avantages que leurs amies en pouvoient tirer (73-4).

Their intelligence thus includes the cleverness and cunning necessary in politics, a tool for affirming their power. And while this power might appear limited to personal quarrels at first sight, this was a period of absolutistic monarchy, where, as Norbert Elias reminds us, there was little separation between personal and state affairs.²⁸⁵

Images of female power translate into spaces dominated by female figures: Not only do women rule their states, but some of them, like Parthénie, decide to leave their court to live with "un nombre de vierges qui s'étoient retirées pour servir aux dieux" (84), a kind of female monastery where Parthénie nonetheless "conversoit quand elle vouloit avec ses dames, et quand elle vouloit aussi, elle voyoit ses amies" (84).²⁸⁶ Moreover, in these

²⁸⁵ In *The Court Society*, Elias observes that the court of the *ancien régime* originates in the patriarchal authority of the master of the house and that "the king's rule over the country was nothing other than an extension of and addition to the prince's rule over his household. What Louis XIV (...) attempted, was to organize his country as his personal property, as an enlargement of the household." (41-2).

²⁸⁶ Parthénie's choice echoes the lives of aristocratic women of the time, who had homes near monasteries, where they nonetheless led comfortable social lives. This was the case at Port-Royal and also with Anne of Austria, who built an apartment for herself behind the church of Val-de-Grâce, which she commissioned in gratitude for the birth of Louis XIV. In literary works, the practice reappears in *La Princesse de Clèves*, who, in the end, spends half of her life in "une maison religieuse," the other, at her country estate.

kingdoms, religion does not serve a male god but rather focuses devotion on the goddesses Athena and Diana, both of whom uphold ideals of female chastity.

This emphasis on chastity contrasts with the excess and chaos associated with women who indulge in gambling and love. For instance, Queen Uralinde is such a compulsive gambler that her vice even determines her hygiene and dressing habits: “elle est quelquefois quinze jours sans changer de linge, avec une robe grasse, des rubans sales, les cheveux dans la même négligence, faute de se peigner, et le tout de peur de changer sa fortune au jeu: son scrupule étant si grand qu’elle fait garder jusques aux épingles dont elle étoit vêtue le jour qu’elle a gagné” (115-6).²⁸⁷ And although gambling, as critics have noted,²⁸⁸ served as a substitute for warring combat through which nobles could show their courage, Uralinde is far from maintaining the detached, aloof countenance that Furetière identifies with « le beau joueur. »²⁸⁹ Her fear of losing is further compounded by her other eccentric habits, such as sleeping in the attic (119) and eating extremely heavy food, fat and spices, both of which contrast with the moderation and frugality of Princess of Paphlagonie.

²⁸⁷ Georges Vigarello shows that cleanliness of clothes is “the hallmark of the courtier and the man of distinction” (*Concepts of Cleanliness: Changing Attitudes in France since the Middle Ages*. Translated by Jean Birrel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 64; originally published in French as *Le Propre et le sale: L’Hygiène du corps depuis le Moyen âge*, Paris: Seuil, 1985).

²⁸⁸ I am thankful to my colleague Tim Wilson, who shared with me his research paper, “Warrior, Gambler, and King: The Noble Gambler in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century France,” dated December 12, 2008. Wilson draws from the literature of the period and recent studies on the connection of gambling and sports with the nobility of early modern France. He shows that the “jeu de paume” (an ancestor of our tennis game), for instance, evolved from jousting exercises and was a way to “perform” one’s physical prowess. Similarly, gambling is a metaphor for the battlefield, even though it could also be a source of income for the impoverished nobles. As V.G. Kiernan noted, “A man had to be able to hazard his fortune on a turn of the cards as coolly as his forefathers risked their lives on the luck of battle. Card-tables at Versailles, where millions of livres were yearly staked, offered a new tournament ground for blood to show its quality” (*The Duel in European History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 45-81). In other words, gambling is a tool to show the courage and liberality of the aristocratic gambler who also garnishes prestige by displaying detachment for the money at stake.

²⁸⁹ Furetière writes: “on appelle beau joueur, celui qui joue gros jeu, qui tient tout ce qu’on met au jeu, qui donne revanche, qui joue paisiblement et honnestement” (s.v. “joueur.”)

Similarly, Gelatille, the queen of a barbaric realm, a savage foreigner who was raised away from civilized Paphlagonie and Misnie (76), has « un air fort étourdi qui faisoit juger aussi bien que sa conduite de son peu de jugement » (76). She represents otherness in the form of chaos, since in her quarters, “On y vivoit sans respect” due to “son déreglement qui faisoit que tout alloit chez elle dans un grand desordre” (77). She marries an Italian prince who dies a few years later and leaves her in the dubious company of a merchant woman who persuades her to marry her former lover, a chevalier now reduced to being a bandit (88-9). They end up sowing a rebellion amongst the subjects of Paphlagonie, until they are defeated by the Amazons (93-4). Gelatille and Uralinde are both heads of their own states, but they are clearly cast in opposition to the moderate, wise, orderly, and chaste Princess of Paphlagonie and her friends, Misnie and Parthénie.

In addition to undesirable women, the text depicts men stripped of their dominating role and characterized in negative terms. These include a chancellor who makes a fool of himself by falling in love with Gelatille (77-8); a cousin of Gelatille, who acts only out of self-interest for the money he can inherit from her (79-80); Gelatille’s husband, the passionate Italian prince for whom she is only one object of compulsive pursuits (80-3); and an unappealing, uncivilized king of Damas, who marries a Celtic princess by force (108-9). These men are mere objects of the passions of women like Gelatille.

The fear of male seduction leads women like the queen of Paphlagonie to send her daughter away to protect her from the charms of Cyrus, an *honnête homme*:

Lorsque les Perses vinrent dans la Paphlagonie et que Cyrus s’en rendit le maître, tout le pays eut de la terreur et de l’effroi des conquêtes d’un si grand capitaine, si honnête homme, et si bien fait. La reine de Paphlagonie craignit que les charmes de ce conquérant n’en donnassent dans la vue de sa fille, ou qu’il ne ressentît lui-même les charmes de la princesse; et, comme ce n’étoit point des intérêts de leurs états que

l'union de ces deux maisons, la bonne femme de Paphlagonie envoya la princesse sa fille chez la reine de Misnie sa tante (65-6).

Cyrus's power, both over the lands of Paphlagonie and over women, make him an objectionable husband for women like the Princess of Paphlagonie and her friends, who dwell in a state free from male domination. The fear to fall victim of his charms leads the young princess of Paphlagonie to develop an aversion even to the word "amour":

Un jour un cavalier, en lui racontant une histoire, nomma l'amour: à l'instant il lui vint un vermillon aux joues beaucoup plus éclatant que celui qu'elle y avoit d'ordinaire; ce qui fit remarquer à la compagnie que le cavalier avoit dit quelque chose qui avoit blessé sa pudeur. Il s'arrêta tout court (car le respect l'interdit jusques à lui faire perdre la parole), et elle remédia à cela de la manière du monde la plus ingénieuse et la plus nouvelle. Elle reprit le discours en lui disant : Eh bien ! l'*autre* qu'a-t-il fait ? Ne voulant point nommer l'amour, pour lui apprendre à se faire entendre sans prononcer une chose qui lui déplaisoit. De sorte que depuis on ne parla plus que de l'*autre*, et l'amour fut banni des conversations de la princesse aussi bien que de son cœur (68-9 emphasis in original)

Like the men and women with which it is associated in the text, love is now defined as "the other," to exclude, even banish it. Reversing gender norms that privilege male speech, the young princess makes the cavalier "perdre la parole" while "elle reprit le discours," silencing the man and keeping the power of speech for herself. Still, the princess's aversion to love may appear excessive and comical, even prefigure what Molière satirized a few months later in *Précieuses Ridicules*. But far from ridiculing her friend Vandy as Molière did women of letters in his play, *Les femmes savantes*, Montpensier is merely teasing her, a kind of "taquinerie" among intimate friends. If anything, Montpensier aligns herself with the princess's position, since, as I show in the next section, she too refers to love as *l'autre* and equates it to what she saw as undesirable others in the letters she exchanged with Mme de Motteville.

Formally, *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie* is the fictional text that most resembles Montpensier's memoirs. Although of a different genre, its structure is far removed from the chaotic, disparate and fragmentary form of *Histoire de Jeanne Lambert d'Herbigny Marquise de Fouquesolles* and *Relation de l'isle imaginaire*. On the contrary, it adopts the memoirs' narrative linearity and thematic unity. Further, not only does it echo many of the themes of the memoirs, but its reference to the letter-writing of Queen Misnie and Parthénie prefigures what Montpensier will fully develop a year later, as she begins to exchange her own letters with Mme de Motteville.

* * *

The Retreat: A Space of Freedom

Thoughts on love, marriage, knowledge, and power continued to preoccupy Montpensier, particularly during the period 1659-1661. As she writes in her memoirs, less than a year after she published *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, Montpensier was still in the south of France, attending Louis XIV's wedding with the Infanta of Spain, when she began conversing with Madame de Motteville about life in solitude, set in a "désert,"²⁹⁰ or retreat away from court and its agitations. The conversation led her to initiate a

²⁹⁰ See my discussion of "désert" in Chapter II. In its association with exile, it meant the social death of courtiers. Here, Montpensier is using the term "désert" as a synonym of "retraite," which denotes a voluntary withdrawal from the court and its worldly extensions, and is usually associated with the pursuit of an ideal 'repos' or spiritual peace (See Domna C. Stanton's "The Ideal of 'Repos' in Seventeenth-Century French Literature." *L'Esprit Créateur* 15:1-2 (1975): 79-97; and Bernard Beugnot's *Le Discours de la retraite au XVIIe siècle: loin du monde et du bruit*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1996.

correspondence with Mme de Motteville in which both women reflect on the shape that such a retreat would take (*Mémoires*, III, 452-4).²⁹¹

As Montpensier announces to Motteville, this retreat would be populated by both men and women, who, convinced of the superficiality of social relations at court, would exercise their right to choose an alternative lifestyle in retreat on their own free will: “Premièrement, Madame, il faudrait à mon avis que les personnes qui voudraient se retirer de la cour ou du monde s’éloignassent de l’un et de l’autre sans en être rebutées, mais par la connaissance du peu de solidité qu’on trouve dans ce commerce et même parmi ces amis” (26). Secondly, these prospective members would make decisions together, including that of determining the retreat’s location and immediate surroundings. She writes:

Il serait bon de concerter tous ensembles du lieu de l’habitation et de délibérer si on choisirait les bords de la Loire ou ceux de la Seine, quelques-uns aimeraient les bords de la mer (...) chacun ferait bâtir sa maison à sa fantaisie, les uns dans le fond d’un bois, les autres au bord de la rivière. La situation que je choisis pour moi laisse de quoi choisir à tous les autres (28).

In choosing its location together, there would be no clear hierarchies among the members of this retreat. A sense of collective participation permeates the text, not only in phrases such as “concerter tous ensembles,” “on choisirait,” and “quelques-uns aimeraient,” which emphasize communal choices and preferences, but also in the general use of the conditional

²⁹¹ In her memoirs, Montpensier recounts how she began writing these letters: “Un jour en regardant par la fenêtre de M. le cardinal [de Mazarin], d’où l’on voyoit la rivière [et] les Pyrénées, madame de Motteville étoit avec moi, nous nous mîmes à causer sur la solitude, le désert, et combien on y pouvoit mener une vie heureuse, [loin de] l’embarras et la fatigue de celle de la cour, les injustices de la fortune (...) En me promenant donc sur le bord de la mer, il me passa force choses dans l’esprit sur le plan d’une vie solitaire de gens qui se retireroient de la cour sans en être rebutés. Je m’en allai toujours courant chez moi; je pris une plume et de l’encre et j’écrivis une lettre de deux ou trois feuilles de papier à madame de Motteville, que je fis copier et que je lui envoyai par un inconnu. Je ne voulois point que dans ce désert on y eût ni galanterie ni même que l’on s’y mariât » (III, 452-3). This account of her letters, the retreat she imagined and her stand against marriage, all of which she imagined against the backdrop of the ocean (a powerful image of freedom) points to a desire to reinscribe the fantasy of freedom she created in the letters, and thus emphasize the importance these letters had for her.

and subjunctive modes, rather than the indicative, which denote wishes and possibilities, rather than facts and mandates. Indeed, even the choice of letters—instead of a univocal narrative or a manifesto—as the genre for exploring with someone else the ideal retreat reinforces this notion of collaborative thinking and consensus.

The choices for the location of the retreat are multiple: it could be near the Seine, thus, near Paris, it could be near the Loire, thus near the royal chateaux of that region, or it could be near the ocean. « [P]our moi qui n’aime pas naturellement l’eau, » Montpensier declares, « j’aimerais la vue de la mer et des rivières un peu en éloignement, et que ma maison fût située dans le voisinage d’un grand bois, que l’on y arrivât par de grandes routes où le soleil se ferait voir à peine en plein midi » (28). The desire to live in the woods evokes the dwellings of the female figures in *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, especially Athena’s grotto away from the sun (103), and, thus implicitly points to a life of reclusion and chastity. But even if Montpensier isolates and protects herself in the woods, she would still surround her house with trees and gardens, a prairie, fountains and rivers:

Je voudrais que cette maison fût environnée de jardins, et que le terroir en fût propre à produire les plus excellents fruits. Je prendrais un grand plaisir à faire planter et à y voir croître tous ces arbres différents; s’il y avait de quoi faire des fontaines je n’en serais pas fâchée, mais j’aimerais mieux la vue que l’eau (...) au bas de la côte où je m’imagine cette belle forêt et d’où l’on pourrait se faire une si belle vue, je prétends qu’il y aurait de grandes prairies et qu’elles seraient coupées de ruisseaux d’une eau claire et vive qui en serpentant sur l’herbe irait gagner la rivière (28).

Moreover, the house would be built “de la plus agréable manière que je pourrais l’imaginer, les dedans seraient de même, propres et point magnifiques non plus que les meubles, car il ne convient point quand on méprise tout et que l’on veut paraître au-dessus de toutes choses, d’avoir la faiblesse de s’attacher à la superfluité » (28). Such simplicity almost evokes religious austerity—quite a shift from Montpensier’s earlier insistence on asserting her royal

rank through architectural devices that marked her status, as she did at Saint-Fargeau. Understanding, perhaps, that those royal connections are also a burden, a source of duty, Montpensier now sees simplicity as a means of freeing herself from some of the responsibilities of a royal princess.²⁹²

Beyond living in the woods, in a pretty but simple house, and watching her plants grow, Montpensier ensures that this retreat would not be a space of exile for its members, nor would it be closed and remote, like traditional utopias: « On ne romprait point le commerce qu'on aurait avec ses amis de la Cour et du monde », she states (28). Instead, the retreat would be an accessible site, located in France, and in open communication with the court. The active lifestyle of its members would include designing and outfitting the interior of their houses, painting, drawing, and read. Members would each have a library and would receive all the new books, both in prose and in verse, which they would share with one another. They would write to their friends at court, and some of them would even publish their literary works, each according to their talent. Some would sing, others would play musical instruments. They would put a violin ensemble together, teaching music to the few servants who would come with them (28-30). Of all these activities, however, the most pleasant would be conversation: as Montpensier writes to Motteville, the retreat members would “parler de toutes choses dans la conversation, qui à votre goût et au mien est le plus grand plaisir de la vie, et presque le seul à mon gré” (28). Motteville agrees with Montpensier:

²⁹² Montpensier casts her life at court as a duty but she recognizes the need for moderation and accommodation to norms of sociability: “Je ne trouverais point à redire que lorsque l'on serait obligé d'aller à la Cour ou aux grandes villes, soit pour affaires ou pour rendre quelque devoir de parenté, on ne s'en dispensât point. Je ne voudrais pas que l'on fit les farouches en disant je ne veux assister à nulle fête, je ne ferais pas une visite pour mourir, et quand j'y serais je voudrais m'accommoder aux autres et me rendre commode. Néanmoins je crois que je m'ennuierais fort, et que j'aurais grande joie de retourner, mais je ne le témoignerais pas de crainte que cette affectation me fit haïr, ou ne m'exposât à la raillerie d'autant plus dangereuse qu'elle est bien fondée et qu'on se l'attire par des façons ridicules” (30).

“C’est avec raison, Illustre Princesse, » she writes, « que vous avez (...) établi[t] (...) le plaisir de la conversation, qui assurément est le seul estimable parmi les honnêtes gens » (38). These praises of conversation as the ultimate pleasure of *honnête* society, echo views of writers from Montaigne to Scudéry and La Rochefoucauld.²⁹³

To maintain this idyllic lifestyle, however, the members of this retreat would have to renounce marriage, love, and, by implication, sexual relations, and content themselves with an acceptable form of « galanterie » that Montpensier defines as a polite and agreeable way to interact with one another:

Cette belle galanterie qui se peut souffrir parmi nous est assurément bienséante, l’air galant peut convenir à tout et puisque l’on a souvent dit que Sainte Thérèse avait l’esprit galant, qui ne le voudrait point avoir? Puisqu’on voyoit le même air dans tout ce que faisait l’Infante Isabelle, qui ne voudrait pas que sa manière d’agir imitât la sienne ? Enfin cette galanterie générale et sans objet est ce qui se peut permettre parmi nous (...) et les louanges véritables se peuvent donner par un esprit de cordialité et d’amitié que j’aimerais fort, aussi bien que les soins et la complaisance qu’on aurait les uns pour les autres (...) Je voudrais que les hommes eussent pour les Dames ces déférences que les honnêtes gens doivent avoir, et qu’ils fussent toujours devant elles dans un esprit d’honnêteté et de galanterie, ce que ne font point ceux qu’on appelle les galants du temps, car ils n’ont nulle civilité pour les femmes. Je ne voudrais pas qu’ils en usassent tout à fait comme ces galants qui sont décrits dans les Romans, mais j’en voudrais quelque chose. Je prendrais de tout un peu pour perfectionner nos habitants de l’un et de l’autre sexe (46).

In opposing « la belle galanterie, » « la galanterie générale et sans objet, » « l’ air galant, » and « l’esprit galant » to « les galants du temps » and even « ces galants qui sont décrits dans les romans », Montpensier tries to draw a line between what is acceptable and desirable for civilized interaction between men and women, and the undesirable behavior of the

²⁹³ See Montaigne’s “L’ Art de conférer” in *Essais* III, viii, Scudéry’s *Clélie*, and La Rochefoucauld’s *Oeuvres complètes*. Not only do they praise *conversation* as the highest form of pleasure, and as, Montaigne put it, a “fructueux et naturel exercice de notre esprit,” but they also see *conversation* as “profitable” to the extent that it is a form of knowledge production. See Elizabeth Goldsmith’s “*Exclusive Conversations*”: *The Art of Interaction in Seventeenth-Century France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988. For a study on the art of conversation as a system through which the *honnête homme* could construct himself as belonging to the elite, see Domna C. Stanton’s *The Aristocrat as Art: A Study of the Honnête Homme and the Dandy in Seventeenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980, 139-156.

uncivilized « galants,» who do not hide their sexual intentions when addressing women.

Alain Viala (1997) documents this dichotomy between “a *galanterie* of distinction and a *galanterie* of debauchery” (12), the first associated with polite and charming manners and a desire to please, the second with “sexual allusions” (12, note 4).²⁹⁴

Even when Montpensier welcomes “a little bit” of the second kind of *galanterie*, she wants women in the retreat to observe “une conduite nette et sans reproche, et contre qui la calomnie n’eût pu faire d’impression” (46). Thus, she would allow neither sexual *galanterie* nor lovemaking, “car cela ne me plaît point” (30). Despite Montpensier’s emphasis on freedom and self-determination, the retreat should be populated only by those who have vowed to adhere to reason and the good sense (“le bon sens”):

La raison et le bons sens seraient notre seul vœu et nos seules obligations. On considérerait ce penchant [l’amour] et sa douceur pour plaindre ceux qui s’y laisseraient tomber et pour n’y pas glisser soi-même (...) [L’amour] est défendu, son commerce est honteux, il est volage et inégal, sans foi et sans probité, c’est un Enfant sans raison et qui ne la connaît point. Il ne cause que des inquiétudes, des embarras et des jalousies. Si on pense l’avoir arrêté il échappe, et les pleurs et les gémissements ne le font point revenir : enfin sous quelque prétexte que ce soit il ne me semble nullement propre à demeurer avec nous, car c’est un impie, il se moque du sacrement, il n’en use que comme ces Turcs qui sont aux Galères lesquels pour quitter leurs chaînes se font baptiser et puis s’en retournent en leur pays plus Turcs que jamais. (44).

Prefiguring Lafayette’s *La Princesse de Clèves*, love is a “fall” from reason and good sense for Montpensier. Indeed, she personifies it as a child and depicts it as a shallow, volatile, irrational, disloyal, deceptive, and shameful state that only produces agitations, worries, jealousies, and tears. Her remarks evoke Scudéry’s *Clélie* and its “tablettes de l’amour”

²⁹⁴ See Alain Viala, “*Les Signes Galants: A Historical Reevaluation of Galanterie.*” in *Yale French Studies, Exploring the Conversible World: Text and Sociability from the Classical Age to the Enlightenment*, ed. Elena Russo. 92 (1997): 11-29. Similarly, “galant” registers two opposite meanings: when used as an adjective, such as in “air galant” and “esprit galant,” it is associated with “la belle galanterie” of distinction (20) but when used as a noun, as “un galant,” it denotes “an individual lacking in seriousness, perhaps even a swindler, a thief, or, or more specifically one who robs his victims of virtue” (19).

where love is described by the negative signs it produces in the individuals who suffer from it: trouble, agitation, despair, disorder, and “*inquietude de l’esprit*” (III, 405). And, in identifying love with a stereotyped image of deceitful Turks, she turns love into a contemptible barbaric emotion.

Members of this retreat, Montpensier stipulates, would need to be either widows and widowers or to have “*renoncé à ce sacrement [de mariage], car on dit que c’est un embarquement fâcheux*” (28). In other words, married couples would not be allowed. Beyond banning sexual *galanterie*, this is the most remarkable constraint of the retreat, and evokes the tropes against marriage from the *querelle des femmes*. In fact, it aligns her with the views of other seventeenth-century women writers who stood against marriage. In her response, Motteville wonders if Montpensier’s requirements are realistic: “*j’ai grand-peur que cette loi si sage et si nécessaire ne fut mal observée, et comme en cas vous seriez contrainte d’y apporter du remède. Je pense qu’enfin vous vous trouveriez obligée de permettre parmi nous cette vieille et légitime coutume qui s’appelle mariage* » (38). Presenting marriage as an old, and, in fact, wise, legitimate and necessary custom, Motteville does not think Montpensier’s rule would find many supporters. However, her opinion elicits Montpensier’s extreme surprise: their retreat should be a corner of the world where women would free themselves from marriage, which, she reminds Motteville, is the source of men’s supremacy and women’s subordination:

[C]e qui a donné la supériorité aux hommes a été le mariage, et (...) ce qui nous a fait nommer le sexe fragile a été cette dépendance où l’usage nous a assujetties souvent contre notre volonté et par des raisons de famille dont nous avons été les victimes. Enfin tirons-nous de l’esclavage, qu’il y ait un coin du monde où l’on puisse dire que les femmes sont maîtresses d’elles-mêmes, et qu’elles n’ont pas tous les défauts qu’on leur attribue et célébrons-nous dans les siècles à venir par une vie qui nous fasse vivre éternellement (46-48).

Unwilling to give in to Motteville's calls to be "realistic," Montpensier denounces marriage as slavery and, suddenly deploying the imperative mode, she exclaims: "tirons-nous de l'esclavage," thus calling for the liberation of women and the creation of a space in which they could live as mistresses of themselves. Certainly, she admits, not everyone has the willpower to overcome the desire to marry, which, in her view, is a flaw from "nature." Thus, she would allow that "ceux qui auraient envie de se marier nous quittassent plutôt que de rendre notre solitude une habitation de gens sujets aux imperfections de la nature, [car] tout le monde n'a pas la force de la surmonter » (42). To these imperfect individuals, she opposes the examples of the Marquise de Senecé, the Comtesse de Randall and the Comtesse de Fleix, as well as some of the women from the town of Randall, who all preferred to remain unmarried once they became widows.²⁹⁵ Further, she cites her own position against marriage: "n'aurais-je pas lieu de croire que l'autorité [de mon exemple] pourrait détruire dans nos déserts cette erreur qui s'est tournée en bienséance [?], » she asks Motteville. In her view, the desire to get married is nothing but an « error » that she hopes to correct or eliminate through her own example. This error can result either from love, which she is glad to banish from their retreat, or from ambition, which, to her, is a disease from which one can heal (42).

²⁹⁵ Montpensier writes: "La Marquise de Senecé m'a dit que dans le village de Randan en Auvergne jamais une veuve ne s'est remariée et n'en avait témoigné la moindre envie à quelque âge qu'elle eût perdu son mari, par ce que feu la Comtesse de Randan en a usé ainsi, et apparemment la Marquise de Senecé et la Comtesse de Fleix ne feront pas changer cette bonne coutume" (42). The Marquise de Senecé (1588-1677) was the governess of Louis XIV, and her daughter the Comtesse de Fleix (d. 1680) never remarried (*Against Marriage*, 42, note 5). To be sure, as Nicole Pellegrin and Colette H. Winn's collection of essays on widows, *Veufs, veuves et veuvage dans la France d'Ancien régime* (Paris: Champion, 2003), suggests, widows were less inclined to remarry than widowers; they had more rights than married women; and many of those who lived in convents did so in religious orders that allowed them to maintain an active social life, "[des] congrégations féminines non cloîtrées, plus orientées vers la vie active que contemplative, [des] ordres à vocation hospitalière, sociale, enseignante comme les Filles de Notre-Dame, les Filles de la Charité, les Visitandines et surtout les Ursulines" (17).

Little did Montpensier know that a year later she would enact what she proposes here: she refused to marry the king of Portugal in order to remain mistress of herself, even when this refusal meant being exiled from court again (See Chapter III). And in a third letter written in 1661, Montpensier refers to an unnamed marriage proposal that gave her much anxiety.²⁹⁶ Eventually, Montpensier triumphs over those who wanted to deprive her of her freedom. As she writes to Motteville in a letter dated August 1st, 1661, she can now let her know about the “calm,” “tranquility” and “profound peace” in which she finds herself, after the months of “anguish,” “regrets,” “trouble,” and “agitation” that she had suffered, and she informs her: “je demeure triomphante de tous les ennemis qui me persécutaient (...) je les appelle ainsi puisqu’ils me voulaient captiver (66).²⁹⁷ From Forges, a health spa that she frequented regularly in those years, she describes her daily routine as though it were already the type of life she had imagined in her previous letters:

je fais presque ce que je ferais si nous étions déjà dans notre retraite, je lis et je travaille à mon ouvrage, je cause le matin avec tout le monde qui va à la fontaine, et l’après-dinée je reçois des visites (...) mais je passe mes plus agréables heures à rêver

²⁹⁶ Montpensier’s letter to Motteville reveals her struggle and her apprehension: “La tendresse de ma conscience ne me permet pas d’être sans remords quand je songe qu’après les beaux projets que nous fîmes l’année passée à Saint-Jean de Luz, j’en ai écouté de si différents et même de si opposés sans m’entretenir avec vous. Hélas il est vrai que les années se suivent et qu’elles ne se ressemblent pas (...) Tant qu’il n’est question que de traiter les chapitres en général on a cette pleine et chère liberté tant aimée de moi, mais quand on est sur le point de la perdre les avant-coureurs en effraient et l’ôtent quasi avant qu’on l’ait perdue, la crainte de l’évènement fait que je ne me sens pas libre de dire tout ce que je pense et tout ce que je sens, soyez pourtant assurée que je ne me dédirai jamais de ce que je vous ai écrit, je suis toujours dans les mêmes sentiments, mais les premiers devoirs ont sur moi-même un tel pouvoir qu’ils m’ôtent celui que j’ai sur moi-même, ainsi ils m’ont obligée d’écouter ce que je n’eusse jamais eu pensée ni dessein d’entendre. Le temps me mettra en état ou de continuer dans le dessein que nous avons fait ou de me soumettre à la rude destinée qui m’expose à un autre sort, ou de le défendre du mieux qu’il me sera possible (...) il faut craindre cette maudite étoile qui entraîne tout le monde cette année et le force à se soumettre aux tyranniques Lois de ce sacrement si ennemi de la liberté, je ne veux pas dire de la joie puisque j’en vois tant d’autres qui en ont beaucoup de s’être laissé captiver (60-2). Marriage emerges as a familial duty that has a priority over the “duty” or goal she had set for herself to maintain her freedom. Montpensier’s choice of words to describe what her “tough destiny” would be should marriage prevail casts marriage as a prison, a submission to someone else’s tyrannical laws, and a state of captivity against which she intends to fight to preserve her freedom.

²⁹⁷ One unnamed « enemy » seems to be Charles II of England, who had courted Montpensier in her youth, and then again, in 1661 (See Chapter II).

à notre dessein, à louer Dieu de ce que les obstacles qui s'y pouvaient opposer par le passé sont enfin levés et ne m'en laissent point prévoir à l'avenir. Je me trouve comme ces petits oiseaux qui ont été longtemps en cage qui sont si aises de voler où il leur plaît et de n'avoir plus que les champs et les bois pour prison. Je respire l'air avec un plaisir nonpareil quand je songe que c'est avec une pleine et entière liberté et que je ne me vois quasi pour jamais hors d'état de la perdre (68).

Having defeated the obstacles that threatened her ideal retreat, Montpensier is able, at least partially, to enact the lifestyle she had imagined, and to visualize her project even further. At Eu, the chateau she had recently bought and in which she spent her second exile, from 1662 to 1664, for having refused to marry the king of Portugal, she materialized this project in a lifestyle that emphasized the pleasures of an autonomous life.²⁹⁸ Thus, she congratulates herself on having preserved her freedom, and, as the birds in the metaphor she deploys, she can finally open up her wings and soar with unparalleled pleasure over the open spaces of the “full and complete” freedom she has finally conquered.

It would take Montpensier ten years to have a change of heart, and to decide that freedom, after all, was not enough. Despite the agitations love produced, one had to enjoy, at least once in a lifetime, « la douceur de se voir aimée de quelqu'un, qui valût la peine que l'on l'aimât » (*Mémoires*, IV, 92). Her lengthy and tormented liaison with Lauzun, whom she thought worthy for a long time, would eventually begin yet another cycle of affirmation of her freedom and autonomy.

²⁹⁸ See my discussion on Eu in Chapter II.

CONCLUSION

Opening Doors: Writing on Women, Space and Architecture

In the early modern period, privileged women enlisted architecture to establish their control over the spaces in which they dwelled, and, through this control, they asserted their active roles both in the household and in society at large. In the process, these women used representational devices whose shapes architectural discourses construct as “feminine,” such as the curls of the Ionic and Corinthian Orders. But this did not preclude women from using so-called “masculine” forms. In my view, the very fact women used both forms contests general assumptions that women’s castles must be, by definition, more “feminine,” or that their contribution to architecture must result in its subsequent “feminization.” In fact, the association between “feminine” and “women” is so strong and pervasive that, more often than not, many of those who have heard aspects of my research assumed automatically that women must build “differently.” Thus, to the collective unawareness produced by centuries of erasure from textbooks of the contributions made by women to the built environment, must be added the simplistic assumptions that if women ever built anything, their projects must have been “different” from those of men. In my view, such assumptions derive from a conceptual conflation between architectural representation and space distribution that can be traced back to Vitruvius, when he declared that temples built with the Doric order ought to be dedicated to “masculine” gods, and those built in the Ionic and Corinthian orders ought be dedicated to deities associated with nature and fertility, the commonplaces of the “feminine”.

By making such an alignment between representation and the usage of spaces, Vitruvius inaugurated a long tradition, in architectural discourse, that simultaneously associates straight lines invoking strength with men, order and power, relates curls

suggesting fragility to women, chaos, and weakness, and extends such gendered notions to the assignment of particular spaces. Serlio reproduced this alignment when he translated Vitruvius's dedication of buildings to the ancient gods into a dedication of each Order to gendered figures of the Christian system. He considered the Doric order appropriate for a temple dedicated to Christ, Saint Paul, Saint George, and other such saints, "because they partook of the manly and the strong in sacrificing their lives for their Christian belief" (qtd in Onians 273). In the same spirit, he thought the Ionic order fit for temples dedicated to "those saints whose life was intermediate between the robust [*robusta*] and the soft [*tenero*] and also to those female saints who led a matronly life," while the Corinthian corresponded to temples dedicated to "the Virgin Mary (...) and all those saints, male and female, who led a virginal life" (273). In addition, he prescribed the Doric for buildings intended for "any military or strong person," the Ionic for buildings occupied by matronly women and "men of letters, or those who lead a life of repose, being neither robust nor soft," and the Corinthian for convents and monasteries (273).

Such emphasis on gender hierarchies, in Serlio, was a departure from what Alberti and Filarete had envisioned almost a hundred years earlier: aligning the Orders in terms of social class hierarchies, according to whether they were, in Alberti's terms, "ad laborem aptus," such as the Doric, which was more capable of resisting the weight it supported, or refined, as the Ionic and Corinthian, which were more suited to convey an image of refinement. As Onians observes, in Alberti's system, the "Doric is identified as the working class of architecture," while the Corinthian, by contrast, "is credited with elegance—an upper-class attribute" (Onians, 155). Filarete, too, classifies the Orders in correspondence to the three *qualità* of people, "the *gentili* who are near the lords to serve for support and for ornament;

the *mezzani* [middle] are also both useful and decorative, yet are not so decorative as the *gentili*. The other people who are *più infimi* are for use and necessity and for the service of the lord, and they are not as beautiful to look at as the higher groups.” (*Trattato di architettura*, 56; quoted in Onians, 166). Filarete’s parallelism between the Orders and class, however, differs from that of Alberti: he differentiates the Ionic, “where columns have to work hard supporting a heavy weight,” from the Corinthian, where it can also bear weight, and the Doric, “where they have both to support and to adorn the building but do not have as fatiguing a function as the other two *ragioni*” (166). Certainly, Alberti’s system differs from Filarete’s in that it favors the Corinthian above the others, while Filarete values the Doric and equates the Ionic with the lowest social class. For my purposes, such contradiction matters less than the fact that they, along with Serlio, aligned the Orders with male and female bodies, be they lords, workers, men of letters or nuns. The result is that all three reproduce the gendering of architectural forms initiated by Vitruvius.

Still, to recognize a historically constructed link between forms and gender does not necessarily lead to accepting the suggestion of some critics that there is such a thing as a “feminine” space or an architecture that represents a particular essence of femininity.²⁹⁹ Such

²⁹⁹For studies of early modern spaces, see Sheila Ffolliott’s “Women in the Garden of Allegory: Catherine de Medici and the Locus of Female Rule,” (2001), which claims that gardens are “distinct spaces and, therefore, arenas for different kinds of action” and argues that “thus differentiated, palace and garden assumed gender identification,” for the purposes of her article she links “the garden with ‘female’ nature as opposed to ‘male’ culture” (207). This dichotomy appears in a previous article (1992) where Ffolliott casts “the [Tuileries] palace [as] the real –or male– locus of power; the garden its annex” (249). As I showed in Chapter I, the Tuileries palace and gardens in fact challenge this problematic binary. Still, critics of contemporary architecture argue for an aesthetic that could valorize the “feminine,” such as Teresa Hoskyns, Doina Petrescu and others, in “Taking Place and Altering it,” in *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space*. Ed. Doina Petrescu. London and New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 15-38. Hoskyns et al, propose a feminist practice of architecture that draws from Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva’s concept of *écriture féminine* to propose a shift from Matrix, a feminist architectural group formed in the 1980s, which adhered to Anglo-American feminism. Accordingly, they argue, Matrix “was concerned with ‘making space’ by women who designed in a man’s world and argued that men and women were *equal* architects. ‘Sexual difference’ was something to be argued against, as it placed women within the private realm. It was concerned that space should *include* women by directly involving them in all stages of the design. Matrix found it could make spaces that were more suited to women’s lives, but it

claims must be read with caution, for they perpetuate the entrapments of binary structures and, despite all efforts to valorize the subordinate term, “feminine,” they reproduce the confinement of “woman” to her “difference.” Such claims or notions that: 1) the kitchen, the nursery, and the bedroom are intrinsically “feminine” spaces; that 2) there is a clear-cut dichotomy between private or “domestic” spaces and public spaces; and that 3) women were always confined to these so-called “feminine” or private spaces, need to be nuanced and rethought. That some treatise writers prescribed the use of certain spaces according to gender norms does not mean that their prescriptions were implemented, as some critics have implicitly argued.³⁰⁰ Despite discourses that aim to establish such dichotomies, in the early modern period at least, women and men did not necessarily adopt or accept these gendered scripts. Class hierarchies played a much more important role than gender in the distribution of spaces. For so-called “feminine” spaces were not occupied exclusively by women, and not all women dwelled in them. For instance, the stereotyped image of the kitchen as an inherently female space does not always prevail in the seventeenth-century, for, in palaces

found it difficult to define an aesthetic difference between architectural designs made by women and those made by men, due to the influence of architectural training” (19, emphasis in the original). In contrast to Matrix, whose practice was also informed by concerns over class and ethnic discriminations in London, feminist architects belonging to Taking Place tried “to find out how difference could be enacted in space, in the same way that Foucault demonstrated how power could be directly expressed through spatial relationship. We have started to think of ‘difference’ as ‘power’” (24-5).

³⁰⁰ See Mark Wigley’s analysis of Alberti’s *De Re Aedificatoria* (1450) in “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” in *Sexuality and Space*, Ed. Beatriz Colomina. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992. pp. 327-389. Wigley shows how Alberti prescribes a distribution of spaces according to gender norms: in Alberti’s words, man is to be mobile and dominate the exterior, while woman is to be statically confined to the interior—any mobility reduced to her transfer from the paternal to the marital household (333-34). In addition, Alberti prescribes young men’s rooms to be located near guest rooms “to encourage them to form an acquaintance” while girls’ and maidens’ should sleep in the dressing room, next to the nurse (332-34). And whereas women dwell together in the dressing room, the man of the house is entitled to enjoy privacy within the house in the study, which Wigley identifies as “the first truly private space (...) a small locked room off his bedroom which no one else ever enters, an intellectual space beyond that of sexuality (...) the true center of the house” (347-48). Yet, as I showed in Chapter I, (despite Alberti’s prescriptions) there is a disconnection between discourse and practice, and among historical periods; in Chapter II, I also showed that in seventeenth-century France at least, the study or “cabinet” was not an exclusively male space since many women, too, commonly used it for writing, keeping records, and taking care of family finances and businesses.

and castles at least, it was more likely to be dominated by male “officiers” or butlers than by “cuisinières” who, in any case, played a subordinate role. By the same logic, a princess’s bedroom like Montpensier’s was not to be entered by all women: only other noblewomen and “les femmes de chambre” (and not the kitchen help) could enjoy such privilege.

In other words, more than gender, class or rank hierarchies (even among servants) determined who was allowed in what spaces in a chateau or palace. It was not Montpensier’s place, for example, or that of her ladies-in-waiting, to go to the kitchen, the pantry, or the servants’ quarters located on the ground floor or *rez-de-chaussée* at Saint-Fargeau, Eu or Choisy. Not that she was “forbidden” to do so, but this constraint was part of a script of rank and status that worked in her favor: it would have demoted her to place herself physically in the lower spaces of her house and to address directly those who were stationed beneath her, both spatially and socially. Put another way, the class hierarchies that structured social organization in Montpensier’s times translated, in spatial terms, into a physical separation between those who lived above and those who lived below, in the *rez-de-chaussée*.

In architecture, this script of class hierarchies was embedded in the staircase, a feature that Mark Girouard identifies as “the linchpin of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century chateau” (79). Whereas the English country house established class differences in its great hall (a vast room that served to entertain everyone, from the lord of the house to the servants, all carefully separated from one another but still in the same room), the French country house or chateau had no such hall, and class differentiation was marked as soon as one stepped into the chateau, whose main entrance led directly (or almost directly) to the staircase leading to

the upper rooms, leaving the lower rooms to the servants.³⁰¹ In fact, as Girouard observes, staircases were so important that they even “took over some of the function of medieval donjons,” (80) tall, slender towers in which feudal lords and their families lived, and whose size served to assert these lords’ political, military, and economic status (35-38). From the late fifteen century onwards, these staircases, “often lavishly decorated with appropriate iconography, or the family coat of arms, became the new status symbol for noble residences” (82). Perhaps the most impressive development of the staircase in French chateaux is that of Chambord, whose donjon’s main feature is a double staircase leading up to the roof, on which lords and visitors alike can survey the surrounding lands and woods (81).

Finally, the idea that women were “confined” to “domestic” or private spaces and forbidden access to public spaces fails to reflect the historical practices of early modern upper-class women in France.³⁰² The lives of queens, regents, princesses, noblewomen, and upper bourgeois who held a salon—a space both private and public—demonstrate that, quite to the contrary, it was common to see women everywhere, both in positions of power and in social gatherings of major cultural significance. To be sure, these women were present even in open public spaces, such as the still existing Jardin des Tuileries, commissioned by Catherine de Médicis, who used the space for her magnificent *fêtes*; the Jardin de la Reine

³⁰¹ See in Figs. 7, 10 and 11 in Appendix B pictures and floorplans of Saint-Fargeau, where the main entrance leads directly to a staircase to the second floor (or *premier étage*) where the living quarters of nobles were located. Similarly, the main entrance of the chateau of Eu opens directly onto a staircase leading to the second floor (See Mark Girouard’s *Life in the French Country House*. New York: Knopf, 2000, esp. pp. 79-86 for further descriptions of many chateaux and country houses whose entry was characterized by such staircases.)

³⁰² See Maité Albistur and Daniel Armogathe’s *Histoire du féminisme français* (Paris: Des femmes, 1977), which adopts Foucault’s thesis on « le grand renfermement » of beggars, invalids, and the mentally ill in the mid-seventeenth century, and claims that women also suffered such a confinement. In fact, Montpensier’s observation, in 1677, that one of the reasons she decided not to marry the king of Portugal was that women lived in dire confinement (see her *Mémoires*, IV, 562 and my note 175 in Chapter III) attest to a contrast in the lifestyle of Portuguese women and French women. It implies that women in France were, indeed, not confined to their homes.

Marguerite, which comprised both a now disappeared private garden and a public park near Marguerite de Valois's *hôtel* on the rue de Seine, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain; the Jardin du Luxembourg, which Marie de Médicis commissioned along with the palace that now houses the French Senate; and the *Cours-la-Reine*, an esplanade made of one main *allée* flanked by two narrower *allées* along the Seine. Built by Marie de Médicis, this *Cours* began at the southwestern edge of the Tuileries gardens and continued until what is today the Place de l'Alma. Historians describe it as an urban spot where the wealthy came in their carriages to see and to be seen.³⁰³

To a very strong degree, the ubiquity of privileged women contests the dichotomy between private and public spaces, which promotes the image of women as victims trapped in the obscure and confining rooms of the "private." In the seventeenth century, this separation was not so clear-cut: the bedroom, for instance, served in many cases as a social space; the *ruelle*, or space between the bed and the walls, functioned as a site for social and cultural interaction. While such a dichotomy may partially resonate with the rise of the bourgeoisie and the moralistic discourses of the eighteenth century that aimed to confine women, the previous two centuries were less oppressive, for not only were some women not segregated, but they even had control over the spaces in which they dwelled and which they built according to their desires.

Still, these critics' claims can be useful for they provide the background against which feminist scholars can re-write the histories of women and emphasize their roles as subjects rather than objects, as deciding agents rather than victims. Further, the effacement of women from architectural history leaves a relatively unexplored field populated by fascinating

³⁰³ William O. Goode's "Moving West: Three French Queens and the Urban History of Paris." *The French Review*, 73:6 (2000): 1116-29). See also my note 109 in Chapter II.

women, ranging from Anne de Bretagne to Renée de France, Diane de Poitiers, Catherine de Médicis, Marguerite de Valois, Marie de Médicis, and Mlle de Montpensier, to mention just a few. Although some work has begun in this direction, new venues of research are available for those interested in uncovering how women ignored or resisted male prescriptions for proper female patronage, and how they used architecture to affirm their status and rank within certain social (and gendered) discourses.

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