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A

THE POETRY AND THE LIFE OF

HENRIETTE DE COLIGNY,

COMTESSE DE LA SUZE

by

Cheryl D. Hall

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

1998

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INTRODUCTION

Madeleine de Scudéry voulait que la poésie touchât le coeur; qu'elle exprimât la mélancolie et des chagrins d'amour. Cependant de son cercle, comme nous l'avons dit ne naquirent que des poèmes d'amusement, des poèmes de passe-temps agréable.

Celle qui exauça les vœux de Madeleine de Scudéry est une femme de la haute société, d'une grande famille de France, Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze.¹

The Comtesse de La Suze was an innovator, she served as a link and she was an enabler. La Suze revived the elegy in France and made of it a long love poem replete with images of death and longing associated with unrequited love. The elegiac form in ancient Greece may not have been--at least not exclusively--connected to death and mourning. The Roman poets endowed the elegy with themes of love, very often erotic in nature. Marot, who introduced the elegy to France in the sixteenth century, wrote love elegies, long epistles on the melancholy aspects of love. Those poets who followed Marot also wrote love epistles; Labé, Ronsard were among them.

Elegies had been written earlier in the seventeenth century. Théophile de Viau wrote beautiful love elegies to Caliste. Saint-Amant followed suit, imbuing his elegies with his own richly descriptive style. And there were others. But Théophile and his generation's poetry were not in vogue when La Suze began writing elegies. And the poets--some very talented--who immediately precede La Suze (Sarasin, Montplaisir, Charleval, Ménage, de Lalanne, de Bensserade etc.) wrote almost no elegies. Lalanne did

¹Yoshio Fukui, *Raffinement précieux dans la poésie française du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Nizet, 1964) 288.

write a few passionate elegies inspired by the death of the young wife he adored. But his elegies are lugubrious; this one could almost have been written by Edgar Allan Poe. It begins:

Affreuses Déités aux noirs crins de vipères,
Phantômes, Visions, Larves, Spectres, Chimères,
Je vous invoque tous du plus creux des Enfers;
Apportés vos serpents, vos flammes et vos fers;
Présentés-vous à moi sous d'horribles figures;²

There were many women who wrote verse before La Suze; Mademoiselle du Val, Madame de Frontenac were two of them but they wrote neither elegies nor passionate verse. Their poetry was destined only to be recited in the salons: chansons, madrigaux etc. As to male poets, Perrault and Segrais were her exact contemporaries and good poets but their elegies are not as good as La Suze's.

Not only were her elegies new but their passion and sincerity were very different from the verse of other poets; most of whom were writing poems of "jouissance" or sterile Petrarchist love poems. Fukui explains how poetry just after the Fronde reflects the frivolity and galanterie present in society. He maintains that, though Voiture had written "des vers badins," it was more original then and he was capable of more profound verse and penetrating insights. With Bensserade, still considered the best poet of the generation following Voiture, Fukui believes "...la poésie est tombée à un niveau tout à fait terre à terre."³ Montreuil and La Sablière did not deviate from light frivolous verse; Saint-Pavin seems to typify these poets' outlook on love

²Pierre de Lalanne, *Poésies* (Paris: Saint Marc, 1759) 13.

³Yoshio Fukui, *Raffinement précieux dans la poésie française du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Nizet, 1964) 276.

with the following:

Aimer avec attachement
Est toujours d'une ame petite,
La defiance du merite
Fait la constance d'un amant.

L'amour craint tout engagement,
Il ne peut souffrir de limite,
Qui veut le captiver, l'irrite;
Il ne se plaist qu'au changement.⁴

Brébeuf stands apart because, though he wrote verse as frivolous as the others, his religious poems are sincere works of great beauty.⁵

Mademoiselle de Scudéry and her followers wrote verse that gave the reading public an alternative to Bensserade's liberal and often cruel poems but they were too often what Fukui calls "bavardage rimé".⁶ Scudéry's merit did not lie in writing passionate verses about love but she may have inspired La Suze--who did write such poetry--in another way. Scudéry's real talent lay in the art of the conversation; interestingly there is a way that this is reflected in the elegies of La Suze. La Suze inspired many women to write, Mlle Certain, Mlle l'Heritier, Mme d'Esche, to name a few. But as Mlle de Scudéry had been so influential for her there was one woman, especially, who was greatly influenced by La Suze: Madame de Villegieu. La Suze's poetry has the passion and melancholy that Scudéry preferred and seemed to be waiting for in

⁴Saint-Pavin, *Recueil complet des poésies* (Paris: Paulin Paris, 1861) 280.

⁵The above two paragraphs owe a great deal to the meticulous research of Yoshio Fukui in *Raffinement précieux dans la poésie française du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Nizet, 1964). His analysis of these and other poets of the seventeenth century is very thorough and though he cites La Suze over and over he never includes an entire poem by her.

⁶Ibid. 284.

her circle of writers but La Suze's verse still has the tension over "pudeur" and "raison". Villedieu seems to start where La Suze left off, her poetry is passionate and melancholy but also includes very sensual-even sexual--images. In 1658 the then eighteen-year-old Villedieu shocked the reading public with her poem, "Jouissances."⁷

La Suze stands as a crucial link between these two literary amazons of the seventeenth century, Scudéry and Villedieu (the only two women of the century to receive pensions from Louis XIV.) Scudéry praises La Suze's writing in *La Clélie*; Villedieu opened up the narration of her novel, *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*, to accommodate the dying Comtesse's last elegy. Villedieu had said that:

Le siècle est amy de la Prose,
Et n'aime les vers qu'en chansons.⁸

La Suze was certainly one writer whose revival of the elegiac genre and the success of her elegies promoted the reading and writing of poetry. One way that it came about was through a phenomenon which started about the same time she began writing.

Editions of poetry comprised of two, three or more poets (recueils collectifs) began to become popular about 1652 with the Chamhoudry volumes. The first edition was so popular it was followed immediately with another. But it was the Sercy Recueils which really achieved long-lasting success. They began in 1653 and

⁷She had been left to earn her own way in life at the age of sixteen. It was in 1658 that she met Antoine de Villedieu.

⁸Marie-Catherine Desjardins, *Oeuvres de Mademoiselle Desjardins* (Paris: 1664) 59.

included the first La Suze poems. By 1663 La Suze was the name listed as the title of these volumes: sometimes Recueil La Suze; sometimes Recueil La Suze-Pelisson. Though these editions of poems by several poets were dying out by the end of the century, the La Suze-Pelisson volumes continued to be reissued until 1741. In this way La Suze enabled many writers--many of them women--to publish and be read. It seems time to make direct contact with the La Suze texts which accomplished all this.

Chapter I

LIFENOTES

A married woman in the seventeenth century envisioned with optimism taking several lovers; to a great extent this was the result of finding herself in a loveless arranged marriage. In this respect the Comtesse de La Suze's life is not out of the ordinary. What is rare is that, quite young, La Suze chose to marry for love; this first husband, unfortunately, died not long after the marriage. Then, forced to marry a man she came to detest, she resorted to the extreme measure of bringing charges of impotence against him; proving the charges meant undergoing a public trial in front of the proper authorities where he--and she--had to perform. He failed and she won her divorce. She had converted to Catholicism several years before which in itself was a "cause célèbre" among the Paris elite; many believed her conversion was effected with an eye to terminating her marriage to the Conte de La Suze. Though she was widely known and respected as a poet in her time these details have eclipsed her poetry. In fact, what can be

said about her elegies could be applied to her life as well. Though the elegies are not written to someone who died they are all written about a kind of death--La Suze's own slow descent toward an emotional death but they are also written about her survival. In this chapter I examine some of her non-elegiac poetry. Surprisingly, she often wrote a poem of circumstance which does not fit with the event or person engendering it. And when one believes that surely she would have written a poem, none exists. She wrote many commendatory poems, celebrating women she knew; in all of them light (the sun, fire) is used as a metaphor of their supremacy. She also wrote one very dark poem about the plight of women, their lack of power until they must make a wrenching decision. This is the very famous-at-the-time sonnet on abortion. It took courage to write what is essentially a moral and social condemnation. Perhaps this is why the poem is written as an elegiac sonnet, dedicated to the child. Indirect or not, it drew much attention.

Chapter II

ORNAMENTS AND FLOURISHES

A reality for women of seventeenth century France was that they could not enter or leave a room without a male's consent. Males, of course, were not confined whatsoever; they moved about--and ordered women about--as they wished. Even the Queen of France was subject to such submission to male authority, in her case the King. In his fine analysis Michael Danahy applies this premise to

La Princesse de Clèves.⁹ After establishing a corpus of eleven of La Suze's long elegies, I analyse how this same reality of women being summoned and dismissed from a space filters into La Suze's poetry. I then find ways within the poems that this lack of power becomes acts of empowerment for the female personae.

Often an impression is evoked in these same elegies of something being distorted, of being off-balance which suggests that at times it must have felt odd, skewed to be writing as a woman in the seventeenth century. Though this corpus of elegies and the two other attributable ones have great merit for their passion and novelty, in the treatment of gender, it is disconcerting to think that La Suze's entire adult life of fifty-five years was devoted to only writing poetry, only poetry about love and, to a great extent, only poetry which fell within the prescribed parameters determined by the males in power.

Chapter III

WATCHWORD

Prose/poetry works were not novel when La Suze wrote "*La Montre*." Years earlier Théophile de Viau had written the first such work where prose and poetry were united with one narrative thread. This genre was not to be used for subjects of a serious vein; it was ideal, however, for works of "galanterie," so popular when La Suze began to write. There are several rather novel things that La Suze did with her "light" prose/poetry work. She played up

⁹Michael Danahy, "*La Princesse de Clèves: A Space of the Future*," *The Feminization of the Novel* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991).

terms that normally have to do with debts and credits/ borrowing and lending.¹⁰ But more than that, the entire work, "La Montre" is a sort of payment that she cagily qualifies simply as a response for a "discrétion" that was rendered.

She may have entertained the idea of different readings of this work. It exists as two texts: one long work, entitled "La Montre" and a shorter version with the last two-thirds of the text - and only the nighttime hours of the watch. (La Suze herself may have performed this displacement and reworking of her text; she almost certainly did do this with regard to some of her elegies, cutting and retitling them.)

Most importantly, her prose/poetry work may not be so light and "galant" as it first appears. She seems to have endowed it with what almost amounts to a secret room with a privileged view.

Chapter IV

A DEATH AND A WAGER

The Comtesse de La Suze and Maurice Scève were both innovative and traditional. La Suze revived the elegy and though she was absolutely conventional as to its versification, imagery and language she made of it a love poem whose lament was truly mournful. Scève employed exactly the same genre that his fellow poets very often used, the dizain, but he turned it into a veritable form of art with his *Délie*. Within the constraints of

¹⁰Words having to do with payments etc. are found abundantly in her elegies. This practice was a commonplace in précieux poetry at the time; La Suze retained this characteristic of preciousness even in her melancholy elegies.

the ten-line poem he was adventurous with imagery and language, creating words that his contemporaries found odd. I compare one of La Suze's longest and most hermetic elegies to what seems to be one of the lighter Scève dizains and obtain surprising results. Examining gaze, space, the shifts or hinges in the poems as well as time and desire I found not only ways to penetrate through to deeper levels but some interesting similarities. I found present in both poems a concern, though expressed very differently, over the vulnerabilty of the text itself.

Chapter V

COMMUNITY OF WOMEN

The last elegy La Suze ever wrote is effectively entombed in Madame de Villegieu's novel, *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*. This could be read as a sad commentary on an aging courtesan's pathetic end while Villegieu's young heroine's existence twirls merrily around her. There is much more to it. The interrelation between the elegy and the novel is complex. The elegy helps to highlight what, at the core of the novel, is not so "souriant" and the novel brings out in the elegy what can be viewed as women, finally achieving a kind of triumph. "Community of Women" applies to a pivotal set of dynamics within the novel (and the elegy within it) as well as suggesting placing La Suze and Villegieu in a context of real seventeenth-century women who, despite having to pay lip-service to male authority, managed to create works--and existences--that were marked by insight, strength and independence. Ultimately these women belong to a larger

context of women who were undismayed by the obstacles thrown in their paths. A disconnectedness typifies La Suze's elegies and this could be said of her life as well but finally she and her work find support and relevance among other women.

STATUS OF THE TEXT

The poetry of Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze, for the most part, is found only in manuscript form and in rare books in archival libraries. Therefore, I have included the works that I discussed in this dissertation in appendix I. In appendix II are the other works by La Suze that I did not examine in this study.

Chapter I

LIFENOTES

It is clear that an author's life and work are related but the relation is never simple: the life does not entirely explain the work, nor does the work explain the life. There is a blank zone between the two, a gap. Octavio Paz¹

The elegies of Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze, are undoubtedly coded so that they addressed or were about her contemporaries: lovers, friends and other writers (male and female). The addressees/subjects--and everyone else--probably knew exactly who she was talking to/about. But rather than try to make what would have been somewhat informed guesses as to who these people were and how they may have been represented in La Suze's life, I have preferred to separate most of her elegies as a genre unto themselves and see how the poems are informed by each other and their own chronology.

Her other poetry, surprisingly, does not consist simply of poems of circumstance. Often, when there is such a poem there is truly a gap, in the sense of an inexplicability, between it and the person or circumstance which ostensibly engendered it. At times, too, when one thinks that she surely would have written a poem, she wrote nothing.

¹Stephanie Merrim, "Toward a Feminist Reading of Sor Juana" from *Feminist Perspectives on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, ed. Stephanie Merrim (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991) note 64, page 36. The above is Merrim's augmented translation of Margaret Sayers Peden's translation of Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana or the Traps of Faith*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1988) 54.

From a distance of more than three hundred years, in the absence of journals or letters of La Suze herself (I do have two letters) family and public documents stand in as an immutable--if cryptic--testament to a life. I would like to use these official papers to recreate her life and to note some of these blank zones between her life and work.²

Henriette de Coligny belonged to an illustrious noble Protestant family; next to royalty, the only family at the time who perhaps counterbalanced the Coligny family in standing was the Rohan family. Gaspard III de Coligny, Maréchal-Duc de Châtillon, was the great grandson of the Amiral de Coligny who was beheaded in the St. Bartholomew massacre. Gaspard III married Anne de Polignac and they produced four children: Maurice, Gaspard IV, Henriette and Anne. There was no reason to believe that the great family would not continue to be so for years to come. A plethora of documents existed for such a family and these have survived, detailing: births, deaths, marriages, divorces, trials, land sales etc. Step by step they chronicle the decline of the Coligny family.

The arrangement of the life of Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze created by these papers suggests a life in three periods with a gap between the second and third. First, there was a long, rather opaque period, from her birth, in 1618, to her first marriage, in 1643; second, a short but very troubled period in her family follows: from her departure from England in 1644 to about

²Relying mostly on family documents does several things: it suggests an orchestration complete with movements and pauses of its own, it is a way to avoid the anecdotal--and unsubstantiated, as much as possible--and it offers up family as context.

1649; interestingly these are approximately the same years as those leading up to the Fronde.³ Then there is a lacuna as the Fronde itself seems to have priority, which it certainly must have, as far as publishing poetry was concerned. And third, there is a period of twenty years from 1653 which marked the end of La Suze's life as a protestant--and the last year of the Fronde--to her death in 1673. It was during these twenty years that she became famous--even infamous--because of three abundantly documented events in her life and that she gained another kind of renown as her poetry began appearing in print.

I

"Nourrie plus vraie de ta chaire"

There are no poems by Henriette de Coligny from her childhood or early youth; at least, none has survived. What has, however, is a very revelatory statement by her younger sister, Anne de Coligny, which gives an idea of the atmosphere of strict religious mores surrounding the children, enforced by their mother, Anne de Polignac, Maréchale et Duchesse de Châtillon.⁴:

³The name "La Fronde" means slingshot and referred to a very dangerous game played by delinquent boys in Paris at the time. The Fronde was a series of uprisings against the crown where nobles and members of parliaments aligned themselves with the people; they lasted from 1648-1653. See Joan deJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) for a thorough discussion of women's roles in the Fronde. DeJean maintains that women gained more power during those years than they had had or would have again.

⁴The Duchesse de Châtillon was extremely virtuous and her husband, Gaspard de Coligny III, Maréchal-Duc de Châtillon, was indifferent--if not opposed--to all the religious fervor expressed by his wife. Nevertheless, documents show that not only did Gaspard III maintain the protestant church at Châtillon-sur-Loing

J'ay receu le Saint Baptisme a Chastillon. J'ay eu pour parin le feu duc de la Force, pour marène ma tante la duchesse de la Force. J'ay receu depuis l'âge de neuf ans toutes les années trois et quatre fois et jusqu'a six fois le Saint-Sacrement de la Sainte Cène. J'ay esté nourrie plus vraie de ta chaire que les enfans ne sont de celle de leur mère ou les nourrissons de leurs nourises.⁵

II

"Borgne, ivrogne, jaloux"

It has been suggested that Henriette de Coligny began writing poems in Scotland around 1643-44. This certainly may have been the case because it does seem that concurrent with the appearance in print of her first poems was her full-blown reputation as a talented elegist. Certainly poems circulated widely in literary circles during the seventeenth century before their publication and, in La Suze's case, reading her poems in their handwritten form may have been prolonged because the Fronde years intervened. Or these years may have constituted her apprenticeship as a poet.⁶ Clearly, what did dominate her young life from 1644 to 1649 was

and maintain its minister, but he did not dissuade his wife from lodging a pastor on her property at Saintonge to whom she paid an annual salary (100 livres). Archives nationales T 125, 18-19, *Testament de Gaspard III de Coligny* and K 1765 dossier I, *Traité de mariage de S. A. S. Mgr Georges, duc de Wurtemberg, avec Sme princesse Anne de Coligny*.

⁵Archives nationales, K. 1765, dossier I: *Testament d'Anne de Coligny*.

⁶Both Frédéric Lachèvre in his introduction to *Le livre d'amour d'Hercule de Lacger: Vers pour Iris* (Paris: Editions E. Sansot, 1910) and Emile Magne in *Femmes galantes du XVII siècle: Madame de la Suze (Henriette de Coligny) et la société précieuse* (Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1908) mention that her early mentors were first, the Marquis de Montplaisir and then, the Sieur Subligny.

death and disappointment and what must have seemed like a betrayal by her family (concerning her arranged marriage): her oldest brother was killed, her young husband died in the same year, she then lost her father, she was forced into a second marriage and, finally, her second brother was killed.

The young Henriette de Coligny met her first husband, Thomas Hamilton, Count of Hadington, on or near her family estates at Châtillon-sur-Loing;⁷ she must have fallen in love with the young Scottish nobleman because she chose to marry him (a rare enough occurrence in France in the seventeenth century). They were married on Sunday, 9 August 1643 and left for England, traveling very rapidly to Oxford where Charles I held his court.⁸ Unfortunately, Hamilton had delicate health and died the next year in Scotland. The young widow had had other grievous news: her eldest brother, Maurice de Coligny, had been killed in a duel with the Duc de Guise, a descendant of the same family which had been involved--if not responsible--for the infamous slaying of Amiral de Coligny (her great-great grandfather) in France during the violence over religion of the sixteenth century.

She hurriedly left Scotland and then England, torn by the violence of the seventeenth century; once in France, she found her family in total disarray. Her older brother was dead; her second

⁷Gaspard III de Coligny also founded and ran a rather famous school in the neighboring town where religious doctrine of the reform was taught. Many Scottish lords sent their sons there.

⁸Hamilton's family was aligned with the king; the English countryside--and London--was very dangerous for the young couple. La Suze and her husband stayed at this court in exile for a while; she reportedly even tried her hand at madrigals. Her English must have been at least adequate.

brother, Gaspard IV de Coligny, had eloped with Mlle de Montmorency much to the consternation of their father, Gaspard III. (He would disinherit his son just before his own death two years later, but not any offspring he might have, wherein would lie great problems for Henriette.)⁹ Her younger sister, Anne, was discovered to be involved with Vineuil, secretary to the king; he had been posing as a pious clergyman, instructing the young Anne in religious doctrine.¹⁰

Less than three years would elapse before Henriette, too, would face an odious event: a marriage was arranged between her and Gaspard de Champagne, Comte de La Suze. He was much older than she and much has been written about him: that he drank heavily, that he was insanely jealous and that he himself was involved in all sorts of debauchery.¹¹ Whatever qualities he may have had, Henriette de Coligny did not want to marry him. Nonetheless, the marriage took place on 26 June 1647.¹²

⁹If Gaspard IV had had no children the inheritance--and it was substantial--was to pass to Henriette's children and then to Anne's. What was left of it did finally go to Anne's children.

¹⁰When he was found out the hapless Vineuil paid for his folly with his life. There is also some evidence that the truly pious Maréchale, believing her youngest child to be pregnant, kicked her in the stomach; in any case no child was born as a result of the affair.

¹¹The words I found most often applied to him were "borgne", "ivrogne" and "jaloux".

¹²Gaspard III, Maréchal de Châtillon, who pushed for his daughter to marry Gaspard de Champagne, Comte de La Suze, died on 4 January 1646. After his death the Maréchale must have been just as insistent that the two be married because later during La Suze's divorce the following document was cited: *Pièces relatives au divorce de Mme de la Suze*: "Et depuis, sur la plainte de ladite dame, proces seroit meu au Chastelet de Paris, où sentence seroit intervenue qui auroit déclaré ledit mariage nul fondé sur ce que

Henriette and Anne's second brother, Gaspard IV de Coligny, was killed in the Battle of Charenton on 20 February 1649.¹³ (A son was born posthumously, Gaspard V, on 13 July 1649.) His widow, Isabelle-Angélique de Montmorency, Duchesse de Châtillon, must not have been devastated by the death of her husband because she began frequenting others so soon after his death that it caused a scandal. An ironic poem was written apropos of her behavior and dedicated to her but not by Gaspard's sister.¹⁴ Henriette de Coligny, now the Comtesse de La Suze, instead, wrote a very commendatory poem to her sister-in-law: *Le Triomphe d'Amarillis*, "Que pour la pompe solennelle," and this was not the only laudatory poem she wrote to her. Surprisingly, another: *Portrait de Madame de Duchesse de Chastillon*, "Cherchons pour peindre Amarillis," was published in 1659 when it was public knowledge that relations had chilled between the two women.

ladite dame soustenoit avoir esté forcée de faire ledit mariage par deffunte Mme la marechale sa mère...", Mss Conrart, tom. XIII, in-fol., p. 573. I also found documents mentioning that the Duchesse de La Force, half-sister to the Maréchale, was influential in arranging the match. A husband was also found for Anne: Prince Georges, Duc de Wurtemberg and Teck; they married in 1648.

¹³La Suze did write a poem when this brother was killed but it has been lost; of the incident Emile Magne states in *Femmes galantes du XVII siècle: Madame de la Suze (Henriette de Coligny) et la société précieuse* (Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1908) 43: "Notre comtesse lui consacre quelques vers pathétiques et navrés." His reference was *Oeuvres meslées de M. Chevreau*, (Paris, 1697) 1 ière part., pp. 1 et s.

¹⁴The ironic poem is listed as *Les Regrets de Mme de Chastillon sur la mort de son cher époux* under Chansonnier, Bibl. nat., Fonds français, Mss. Maurepas, tom. II, p. 149.

III

"Ceste abominable créature"

It is little wonder that the three events which would so mark the life of the Comtesse de La Suze that her name would be synonymous with them were so documented: they stirred such controversy that all of Parisian society took sides. The first was La Suze's conversion to Catholicism in 1653, the second was the public trial on grounds of impotence (involving her second husband, the Comte de La Suze) which took place in 1661 and the third was a series of events--resulting from the death of her nephew, and heir, at the age of seven. These were the battle, and trials, over the Coligny fortune which dominated her life for fifteen years--from 1657 to 1672--almost to her death in 1673. Oddly, there is no elegy--or any other poem--to mark the death of her nephew, and the poems which refer to: 1) her religious conversion, a long and arduous process, and 2) her divorce, are so light in tone that they seem to trivialize events which could not have been anything but difficult and--in the case of the trial to obtain her divorce--humiliating. The poem referring to her conversion to Catholicism is the couplet "Ouy, j'aime Charenton" and the later, light-hearted poem, written following her divorce--supposedly when one among many eager suitors pressed her to marry again--is: "Ouy, je l'ay resolu d'être toujours.....cruelle."

Though La Suze herself did not seem to get involved in the Fronde, many around her did.¹⁵ One of these was her husband, the

¹⁵The only mention of the Fronde I have found by La Suze is the *Epigramme sur les Sonnets de Job et d'Uranie* which she wrote apropos of the somewhat ridiculous verbal battle waged by the

Comte de La Suze, and as a result of his involvement, he had to leave France sometime before June 1653¹⁶ to escape punishment. By all accounts, what would become a long exile in Germany was no punishment for his young wife. Much has been written to the effect that La Suze converted to Catholicism because she intended to divorce her husband but it would seem that her motivation for converting was more complicated; certainly she did not simply decide and act on her decision the following day.¹⁷ Her vacillations are carefully documented and the fact that nearly everyone voiced strong feelings either for or against the conversion must have caused her to hesitate even more.¹⁸ Even Christine, Queen of Sweden, was vociferous that she should become Catholic; she may have strongly influenced La Suze in choosing the path she did. The only surviving poem La Suze wrote concerning her conversion is disproportionately short and simple when compared

précieuses in 1648-49. From all I have read of her, she tended to embrace the causes of her friends to a point but did not really take sides. In any case, she puts all in perspective with her poem which goes as follows:

L'un se pique pour Job, l'autre pour Uranie
Et la cour se partage en cette occasion:
Pleut à dieu toute chose estant bien réunie,
Que la France n'eût point d'autre division.

¹⁶The Comte de La Suze may have left long before that date. I found documents from that date on showing that his wife acted on his behalf in dealings concerning his parents (land sales, etc.).

¹⁷The Comtesse de La Suze at first tried to obtain a divorce on grounds of oppression. It was only when this failed that she began to entertain the idea of using the grounds of impotence which necessitated a public trial.

¹⁸R.P. Léon in *Les trois veritez fondamentales pour l'instruction à la foi catholique de Mme Henriette de Coligny, comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: 1673) 97, 98, says the following: "Jamais, conversion n'a esté plus debattue ni plus embrouillée."

to what was a long and complicated process but there is a note of indecision in it:

Ouy, j'aime Charenton
 Tout de bon;
 Ouy, j'aime Charenton.
 Qui n'en feroit de mesme?
 L'on y vit sans façon,
 Sans jeune, sans caresme
 Et sans confession.

The next incident which would have a great impact on La Suze was the death of her nephew, the little Duc de Châtillon, on 3 November 1657. With his death the still vast Coligny lands and fortune would be sought with an ever growing viciousness by the child's mother, Isabelle-Angélique, Duchesse de Châtillon, while the Comtesse de La Suze and her sister, the Duchesse de Wurtemberg, tried to maintain their own birthrights.

At first it was only the Châtillon lands that were contested but these represented a major part of the inheritance; everything else had fallen to Henriette and Anne. And to complicate matters, an outsider soon began to take an avid interest in the appropriation of the Coligny fortune. To a great extent, this was due to carelessness on the part of La Suze; the outsider was the Maréchal d'Albret.¹⁹

In the midst of these debates over her family's fortunes, the Comte de La Suze returned, in 1660. His wife had been free of him for seven years; she now decided that she wanted to make that

¹⁹One day La Suze, talking with d'Albret, spoke affectionately to his young daughter and--perhaps missing her young nephew--promised her fortune to the little girl. The Maréchal's interest could not have been only for his daughter; she died in 1659. He only became more rapacious in his quest for the Coligny fortune after her death.

freedom absolute. At first, the countess tried to gain a divorce on grounds of oppression and nearly succeeded; Le Châtelet awarded her the divorce. But the Comte de La Suze appealed the decision in Parliament which, apparently to avoid a scandal involving religion, overturned the decision.

The countess had another option: to plead her case in front of the Catholic judges on grounds of impotence, which she did. The Comte, of course, challenged the charge. This necessitated a public trial where he would have to prove his ability with his wife in front of medical doctors and matrons. He failed. After some haggling over financial matters the divorce was granted.

If the Comtesse's conversion had caused a storm of comments, this event unleashed a deluge. She was maligned by many and was even labeled by one person as "ceste abominable créature" ²⁰. A verse circulated widely which goes as follows:

La Suze est justement prude comme Vandy
Pour luy parler d'amour il faudroit estre hardy.²¹

The only words which come from La Suze about this time which attest to her understandable reluctance to marry again is this light and airy sonnet:

Ouy, je l'ay résolu d'être toujours.....cruelle.
En regardant mes yeux vous prenez du.....poison:
Mes dédains sont conduits avec trop de.....raison
Et, recevant vos vœux, je serais.....criminelle.

²⁰This label comes in a letter written by the Marquise de La Moussaye, who was the neice of the Comte de La Suze and fiercely protestant, *Lettre de Mme de la Moussaye à la duchesse de la Tremouille*, reproduite dans Tallemant de Réaux, *Historiettes* (Paris: 3ième éd.) IX, 456.

²¹*Portraits de la cour en contreveritez*, Bibl. nat., Fonds français, Mss Clerambault, Mélanges, p. 405.

Ne me dites jamais que vous me trouvez.....belle,
 Qu'un lieu délicieux pour vous est ma.....maison,
 Que vous ne sortirez jamais de ma.....prison,
 Que vostre coeur ne scait que c'est d'estre....infidelle.

Ah! que j'ay de dépit de voir à tout.....moment
 Entrer dans mon hostel un importun.....amant.
 Tant que je le verray, je seray.....malheureuse.
 De toute passion mon esprit est.....guery
 J'ay pour y succomber l'ame trop.....genereuse
 Et le coeur trop altier pour souffrir un.....mary.

La Suze certainly had detractors at this time but others continued to extol her virtues; in particular, poets continued to write poetry to her and about her.²² Throughout the lengthy proceedings culminating in her divorce--and the much longer ones to decide the fate of the Coligny fortune--La Suze herself was not deterred in her passion for writing.

The quarrel between the Comtesse de La Suze and the Duchesse de Châtillon became more intense and the stakes determined by the trials higher. Aided by an indifference or a naivete on the part of La Suze, the Duchesse de Châtillon and the Maréchal d'Albret--now firmly aligned--seemed to stop at nothing to obtain the rest of the Coligny fortune. The Duchess had already been victorious in the final deciding trial.²³ Now the Duchess' and the Maréchal's

²²In *Oeuvres meslées de M Cotin* (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, 1659) I found an entire section entitled "Aux Beaux Esprits du Temps Pour et Contre Madame la Comtesse de la Suze." Most writers praised her more than ever; Bussy-Rabutin was the notable exception.

²³There is the following anecdote concerning the trial: "...Elle eut un proces à soutenir contre Madame de Châtillon. Les deux Parties se rencontrèrent au Palais, Madame de la Suze, escortée de plusieurs Poetes, & Madame de Châtillon du Duc de la Feuillade. Celui-ci dit à la Comtesse: Madame, vous avez la rime de votre côté, & nous avons la raison. Ce n'est donc pas, répondit Madame de la Suze, sans rime ni raison que nous plaïdons." "Rime" lost. *Parnasse des Dames* (Paris: Ruault, 1773) tom. V, (Bibl. nat., Ye 12489).

plotting and manipulating brought total victory; Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze was left with nothing.²⁴

There was complete silence now²⁵ where before there had been the melancholy voices of La Suze's elegies and the badin sounds of her lighter poetry. Toward the end of her life she became very religious. There are also documents reporting that La Suze became very heavy; certainly she suffered a long illness and in increasing poverty. Apropos of this her friend, Christine of Sweden, said the following: "Il faut avouer que cette incomparable femme a passé assez bien son temps entre l'amour et la folie. A mon avis, elle était un peu trop passionnée pour l'une et l'autre, mais son mari ne méritoit pas de posséder tant de charmes. Ce bel esprit femelle aimoit tant la joye & les plaisirs, qu'en peu d'années tout son bien fut dissipé, & elle mourut fort à propos, n'ayant rien à manger..."²⁶

Her sister, Anne, outlived her by a few years but her end was not happy. She went mad--supposedly from ill treatment by her husband--and died in 1680. Eventually, what remained of the great

²⁴There is another anecdote about officials coming to seize La Suze's furniture. They arrived while she was still in bed; she asked that they withdraw so she could go back to sleep. They did and she slept. Later that morning, she passed them on her way to dine in town. She thanked the leader and said: "Je vous laisse le maître." Titon du Tillet, *Anecdotes littéraires* (Paris: 1752) 51.

²⁵The only poem that La Suze wrote toward the very end of her life--probably about 1672--is the elegy which is encased in the novel by Madame de Villegieu, *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*. I discuss this in chapter V.

²⁶This comes from a letter to Madame la Comtesse de Sparre in *Lettres secrètes de Christine, Reine de Suède, aux personnages illustres de son siècle*, (Genève: Frères Cramer, 1761) 121. (Bibl. nat., M19021).

Coligny fortune reverted to Anne's children. They were what remained of the great family.

IN THE SERVICE OF WOMEN

Kate Lilley talks about the fact that seventeenth-century English women poets tended to write elegies--when they chose to write in this genre at all--about male writers but these same women did tend to write commendatory poems about other women writers.²⁷ It is notable that none of La Suze's elegies is written about someone who died or the victim of such a death--the person who survived. It could be said, though, that they are all written about a kind of death--her own slow descent toward an emotional death and that they are also written about her own survival. Women addressed in her elegies were often deified and always mythologized and this is no where more evident than in these commendatory poems to real women in La Suze's life, most of which were early works. They are panegyrics of praise, including the one to which I alluded, *Le Triomphe d'Amarillis*,²⁸ written to her sister-in-law,

²⁷This is in the chapter entitled "True State Within" from *Women, Writing, History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992) 78.

²⁸Apropos of praise the following poem exists by Saint-Amant:
 Sur l'Amarillis de M.L.C.D.L.S.

Que d'honneurs sont ensevelis!
 Que je voy de plumes confuses!
 Le triomphe d'Amarillis
 Triomphe des plus hautes Muses.
 Mais celle qui l'a mis au jour
 N'a pu triompher de l'Amour;
 Ses beaux vers mêmes en font gloire,
 Et l'on voit bien à leur splendeur
 Que le feu qu'en Pinde on va boire
 N'en a pas fait toute l'ardeur.

Oeuvres complètes de Saint-Amant (Paris: éd. Livet, 1855) tom. II,

Isabelle-Angélique, Duchesse de Châtillon at a time when the Duchess was entertaining lovers almost before her husband's coffin was in the ground.²⁹ Did La Suze always so prioritize pleasure and was she so understanding when other women did the same? Was there a sort of feminist compassion for her sister-in-law since it was known that her late husband and La Suze's brother, Gaspard IV, had kept mistresses in high style?³⁰ The second poem dedicated to the Duchesse de Châtillon, first published in 1659, has a lovely sensual stanza--the third from the last--which is reminiscent of Baudelaire's famous poem, *La Chevelure*. The stanza is as follows:

Que sur l'albâtre de son sein
Tombe négligemment en onde
Sa chevelure vagabonde,
Qui sans étude & sans dessein
Dans ses chaisnes d'ébène engage tout le monde.

Again, where genuine feeling existed, there seems to be something missing in the poetry. And where there should have been ill feeling--if not something much stronger--laudatory poems exist. Le Comte de La Suze had three sisters, one of whom was Mademoiselle de Normanville. La Suze was very fond of this sister-in-law who died quite young. She wrote nothing to commemorate her death; there are only the two madrigals, commendatory, but which pale beside the poems to her brother's wife.

55. (Bibl. nat., Ye 32721).

²⁹That La Suze seemed oblivious to this affront to the family name has a later echo when there is ample testimony that she took as a lover, Henri de Guise, the very same man who had killed her older brother, Maurice de Coligny, in a duel.

³⁰This was another of the reasons Gaspard III de Coligny had disinherited his son, undoubtedly for the high style--and drain on the family fortune--not the fact that he kept mistresses.

It is not surprising that the *Ode à la Reyne de Suede* is such a long, hyperbolically flattering poem. It was terribly in vogue to create works of hagiography for royalty. The fact that this royal personnage was a woman underscores La Suze's penchant for praising women. This particular queen was chosen because Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze, and Christine, Queen of Sweden, were friends; they maintained a correspondance for years.³¹ There are references to a "bon-mot" Christine sent to La Suze on the occasion of her conversion and, apropos of La Suze's divorce, the Swedish queen is credited with saying: "La Suze se fit Catholique après la cassation de son mariage pour n'avoir point le désagrement de rencontrer son brutal époux, ni dans ce monde ni dans l'autre."³²

The *Portrait de S. Altesse Royale Mademoiselle*³³ is interesting for the third stanza where La Suze reveals herself as unsure but hopeful that she can live up to her family name by producing something lasting, i.e., her verses:

Que mon sort sera glorieux!
Si par mes Vers ambitieux
Je fis autant pour ma Princesse
Qu'ont fait mes Ayeuls autrefois,
Par leur épée & leur adresse,
Pour le service de nos Rois.

³¹Unfortunately, I found only one of their letters--from Christine to Henriette--but it shows that they not only wrote about their illustrious acquaintances but they discussed deeper subjects as well.

³²*Lettres secrètes de Christine, Reine de Suède aux personnages illustres de son siècle* (Genève: Frères Cramer, 1761) 121. There is something odd here because the conversion took place in 1653, well before the divorce (1661).

³³I cannot be absolutely certain, but I think this poem is dedicated to the Princesse de Montpensier.

By choosing to address a princess, instead of a king, perhaps she is saying that she hopes her writing may be in the service of women.

CROPPED ELEGIES

La Suze's mentor, Madeleine de Scudéry took conversations which had appeared in her novels and, adding new text to them, published them as *Conversations nouvelles sur divers sujets* in 1684. Toward the end of her life La Suze did something similar. She cut pieces from her elegies, reframed them with new titles and published them as *Sentimens d'Amour*.³⁴ Most of the twenty-two poems are "cropped elegies" but she also added a few new poems for the edition. It is worth noting that as of 1660-1661 she was beginning to be deeply in debt.³⁵ Another writer might have recycled his or her writing in order to sell them for money; in La Suze's case money was sorely needed. I am certain that this was not what happened. As Emile Magne says, Henriette de La Suze was not "un écrivain de métier" but "un écrivain d'inclination"; he does not mention finding any records of her ever selling any of her poems and evidently didn't believe it possible. I don't either. It is very interesting, then, that she decided to cut pieces from the long works and give them titles. The first one has the same title as it did as an elegy--"Absence"/"Sur une absence"; the

³⁴*Sentimens d'Amour tirez des meilleurs poètes modernes par le Sieur Corbinelli* (Paris: Barbin, 1665). Corbinelli issued a second edition in 1671. I found the twenty-two poems in that edition, published in two volumes: (Bibl. nat., Ye 8005, Ye8006.)

³⁵This is verifiable by the increasing number of contracts she signed (land sales, etc.)

effect is quite different than it had as the longer work but it is very lovely. With "Absence" she took the last several lines; with "Sur une jalousie" she took the last lines and gave it the same title (in appendix) and then cropped the first lines from the same elegy and called it "Plaisir".³⁶ It may be what also happened to La Suze's poem/prose work, "La Montre", where the last third of the text appeared separately with the title, "Impossibilite de Dormir"; with it I cannot be sure because I do not have dates or information about the editions. It is also possible with *Sentimens d'Amour* that she did not crop and rename her elegies but, if so, it was done with her knowledge and probably her consent.

One poem that I have chosen which is not from an elegy, "Force d'Amour", (it also appeared as "Colere") is impressive for its use of words that La Suze did not normally use--like "rage" and "haïr"--not in her elegies and certainly not in her other poems. She not only recast her elegies, she recostumed her ideas, allowing the new poems perhaps to reflect more emotions than those expressed in the elegies, emotions she must have felt in those last years of her life.³⁷ From all that I have read of her, my sense, however is not that she was bitter at the end of her life. There is an image of her which I think must be fitting.³⁸ It was her custom,

³⁶This is similar to what someone close to Sylvia Plath once remarked: she recycled metaphors and images, taking them apart and reusing the pieces in other poems.

³⁷She had gone through the divorce in 1665 and was still in the throes of the trials which were robbing her of her lands and--in the end--all her earthly goods.

³⁸It was her friend, Ninon de L'Enclos, who described La Suze dressing to write. *Mémoires et lettres pour servir à l'histoire de la vie de Mademoiselle de L'Enclos* (Rotterdam: Douxmenil, 1751.)

apparently, to rise in the morning, dress as if she were going out--and in the seventeenth century this was a very involved process--and then to sit down and write in full writing costume.³⁹

AN ELEGIAC SONNET

La Suze wrote another poem--not light, not commendatory--but which shows great compassion for the plight of women in the seventeenth century when they attempted to have the same access to pleasure--and love--with whomever they chose, that men did. This is the very famous sonnet on abortion; I have a photograph of the signed manuscript from the Bibliothèque Nationale. Interestingly, this poem is truly an elegiac sonnet; it is addressed to the victim, the child, but it is also a proxy elegy. That is, it is also directed to the one left behind: the woman/women who had to make such a decision. It seems very possible that La Suze herself may have undergone such an experience, and more than once; it is known that she had many lovers and though her divorce was granted on grounds that her second husband was impotent, he remarried and he did have a child. That I found testimonies to the fact that others in her family circle had children, were thought to have been pregnant, had abortions, but that I found no mention at all about La Suze and children, or the lack thereof, is strange. Married women in seventeenth-century France often gave birth nearly every

³⁹The idea of costuming is interesting. A contemporary to La Suze and someone she must have known, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, by her own admission, strove to create forms of dress that made her singular. This noblewoman also appeared on stage, in a production by her husband, bare breasted with her nipples painted scarlet.

year, as with the well-known case of Madame de Sevigne's daughter, for example. Perhaps the sonnet is what fills the lacuna.

sur mlle de guirchy⁴⁰

Sur un enfant
dont la mere
s'est fait avorter
pour sauver son honneur

Sonnet

Toy qui meurs avant que de naistre
assemblage confus de l'estre et du neant
triste avorton informe enfant
rebus du neant et de l'estre
 Toy que l'amour fit par un crime
et que l'honneur deffait par un crime a son tour
funeste ouvrage de l'amour
de l'honneur funeste victime
 Laisse moy calmer mon ennuy
et du fond du neant ou tu rentre aujourd'hui
n'entretiens point l'horreur dont mon ame est saysi
deux tyrans a la fois ont decide ton sort
amour malgre l'honneur t'avoit donne la vie
l'honneur malgre l'amour te condamne a la mort (1658)

⁴⁰This sonnet is taken from the manuscript, handwritten and signed by La Comtesse de La Suze: Bibliothèque Nationale, Fonds français, Mss 9364. I found two other printed versions of the same sonnet which I include in the appendix. As to who Mlle Guerchy might be, (it looks like Guirchy in the manuscript) I found the following: "On fait ici grand bruit de la mort de Mademoiselle de Guerchy (au mois de juin 1660). C'est sa triste aventure qui a donne lieu au fameux Sonnet de l'Avorton. Le Curé de S. Eustache lui refusa, dit-on, la sepulture, son corps fut porté à l'Hotel de Condé & mis dans la chaux, afin de le consommer plutôt, & qu'on n'y put rien reconnoître si on en veroit à la visite. Sa Sage-Femme, nommée Constantin, qui l'avoit aidée à commettre son crime, fut pendue au mois d'Août 1660, à la Croix du Tiroir. Les Vicaires Generaux & les Penitenciers s'allerent plaindre en même tems au premier President, que depuis un an six cens femmes de compte fait s'etoient confessees d'avoir tué et étouffé leur fruit au sujet du supplice de la Constantin. Le Comte de Grammont dit plaisamment à Louis XIV que ce jour-là il avoit vu conduire au gibet la Sage-Femme des Filles de la Reine." Amelot de la Houssaie, *Mémoires, historiques, politiques, critiques et littéraires* (Amsterdam: Zacharie Chatelain, 1737) (Bibl. nat., Z 20566).

Chapter II

ORNAMENTS AND FLOURISHES¹

Once upon a time there was a countess who
 wrote poetry whose male personae dwelled
 well within space legitimated by society
 while the female personae had to step
 outside the parameters of the on-
 going conversational mode,
 to illuminate the damaging,
 limiting social roles, identities,
 and concepts imposed on women. These
 females chose ingenious ways to appropriate
 space and language for themselves in order
 to show, perhaps, that there was a beyond.²

¹My title comes from a quote by Virginia Woolf. "The history of women is often so hidden by silences or is so marked by ornaments and flourishes as to amount to silence."

²I have reworded a sentence which Michael Danahy uses to enhance his chapter "La Princesse de Clèves: A Space of the Future", *The Feminization of the Novel*. (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1991) 101. His text is as follows: "Once upon a time there was a princess who stepped outside the parameters of the ongoing conversation between men and women and chose to live there, outside--though not beyond--the nomic structures or spaces that legitimized the damaging, limiting social roles, identities, and concepts imposed on women."

Le dix-septième siècle lui-même s'est
voulu théâtre.

Jean-Jacques Demorest

Madeleine de Scudéry voulait que la poésie touchât le cœur, qu'elle exprimât la mélancolie et des chagrins d'amour. Cependant de son cercle, comme nous l'avons dit ne naquirent que des poèmes d'amusement, des poèmes de passe-temps agréable.

Celle qui exauça les vœux de Madeleine de Scudéry est une femme de la haute société, d'une grande famille de France, Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze.³

The above was written by Yoshio Fukui who very aptly illustrates, not only that La Comtesse de La Suze did write the passionate verse Mademoiselle de Scudéry longed for, but that when other poets who were her contemporaries wrote poetry of a similar nature, La Suze's poems were superior.

She also resurrected the elegy, not in vogue for some time, and in resurrecting certain themes, dressed them in a more classic, even heroic mode from the way they had appeared years earlier. And she cast an ineffably sad light on her love elegies. When one looks more closely at the poetry, it is the complexity and originality of her narration which may be the most intriguing aspect of La Suze's elegies. One elegy, "Sur une jalousie," for example, begins with a third person framing technique which gives way to a male disguised, at first, as a female who complains of a man, addressing the woman whom he/she will eventually profess love to, as he metamorphoses into his real male persona. This blurring

³Yoshio Fukui, *Raffinement précieux dans la poésie française du XVIIIème siècle* (Paris: Nizet, 1964) 288.

of gender was certainly not new; in the seventeenth century it began with Urfé's novel, *Astrée*, where a male disguises himself as a female to be close to his beloved shepherdess.⁴ It had many variations; in Villedieu's *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* a female dresses as a man in complicity with her male lover in order to seduce a lady. But La Suze does this in elegiac poetry. She may not have chosen to include this gender metamorphosis without some hesitation and concern for how it would be received by her readership, or even whether her editor would approve. I found a letter addressed to her editor, Valentin Conrart, a very respected and established man of letters, wherein she talks about the inspiration for and the writing of the poem just mentioned, "Sur une jalousie". In the letter she certainly comes across as the "good pupil" vis à vis her older, male colleague and the concern that she expresses over nuancing her creation correctly may include her introduction of such gender changes.⁵

Whether intentional or not, the attention she paid to gender, striking now when one reads her elegies, suggests a much closer analysis of gender in all her elegies. I will create a corpus of poems--eleven of her elegies--and compare them to each other examining gender and how that actually determines how space is appropriated and disposed of in this body of works. In addition I

⁴One scene in particular comes to mind where Céladon (now called Alexis) dons the clothes of his beloved Astrée as she sleeps so that she is forced when she wakes to wear his; what follows is an incredible description of how they then feel.

⁵The letter is in the appendix, under the rubric, Chapter II, "Ornaments and Flourishes".

will look at gaze and its relation to space with regard to these same eleven poems.

That La Suze's spatial dynamics are a reflection of reality--the roles seventeenth century society granted to men and to women--is undeniable. What proves unwieldy--if not impossible--is to try to relate her overall representation of love to a representation of love as it manifests itself in the plethora of love poetry alone, at the time she was writing, leaving aside the treatises on love, the pictorial guide books as well as the novels and the plays about love. Addressing the question of how closely the representation of love in the seventeenth century--if there is a single concept--adheres to reality in the seventeenth century is already a thorny issue.⁶ What is manageable is La Suze's subtle representation of seventeenth century women's identities as they were carved out of male territory for females by her own male personae. The century's love of theatricality: of artifice, of disguise, of metamorphosis, of "trompe l'oeil" suggests both a representation and a representation. Essential to the study (and illuminating it as well) is time itself--the exact date La Suze wrote a particular elegy--because in a century as obsessed with love as the seventeenth, tastes often changed subtly but rather quickly, so that even a year saw palpable nuances in the ways love was portrayed in poetry. In a century where mask and movement are worshipped I will attempt to capture La Suze's poetry in flux, while concentrating on her often

⁶Jean-Michel Pelous, in *Amour précieux, amour galant* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1980) has not only written a monumental work defining and juxtaposing these various representations but, where possible, attempts to answer this very question of mimesis of reality.

masked personae.

To create this reading sequence, I will borrow from the meticulous research done by Emile Magne who catalogued all of La Suze's poetry according to the date each elegy (in fact, all of her poetry) was first published. They may not have been written in exactly this order and the dates may be approximate but Magne's system provides at least a frame through and around which much can be said. The eleven elegies discussed in this chapter group themselves, interestingly, in what can be described as three cycles: two elegies were first published in 1653, followed by two in 1656, a hiatus of seven years, then one in 1663 and two in 1665, a hiatus of three years ending in the publication of four elegies in 1668. (The other elegies are: "Cruel persecuteur...", dated 1662 and "Il est enfin parti cet homme incomparable" which has to be dated late 1672/early 1673, given Madame de Villegieu's inclusion of and preface to this elegy within the narrative of her novel, just before La Suze's death.)

In order to get some insight into the tastes of the lettered public, and thereby see how love was portrayed and how that portrayal changed in a relatively short period of time, it is useful to cite two of the most successful *plays* of the century. They are not by Jean Racine or Pierre Corneille, but by Pierre's brother, Thomas Corneille, and Philippe Quinault: respectively, *Timocrate* which began its run in 1656, three years after La Suze's poems first began to appear in print, and *Astrate* which opened in 1665, three years before the last cluster of La Suze poems. In Corneille's *Timocrate* the hero triumphs, against all odds, and

succeeds in arranging peace and marrying the princess he loves. Timocrate himself sums it up at the play's end:

Et bénissons le Ciel qui fait voir en ce jour
Que la plus forte hayne obéit à l'amour.

(It depends, of course, whose love we are talking about; the happy resolution in *Timocrate* would not have been possible without the self-sacrificing actions of the character, Nicandre, who loves the princess as well, but the point is that the hero is triumphant.) Nine years later, in Quinault's *Astrate*, what should have been the triumphant moment sees the hero helplessly paying for a pathetic victory--which he doesn't see because he has fainted--the payment being the death of the queen he loves and values above any political triumph.⁷ *Astrate*, when confronted with the revelation that he is the son of the king, massacred by the present queen's father and whose dynasty was persecuted by the queen, without a second's hesitation, offers himself up to her as expiatory victim. With *Astrate* we no longer see only tears, sighing, and abandonment, we are also witness to love undoing itself and the tragic consequences. Racine, of course, will masterfully and eloquently exploit this tragic irony even further.

If one looks at a line or two from a La Suze elegy and one from either *Timocrate* or *Astrate* they are so alike as to be indistinguishable. But the La Suze elegies read as a corpus contain both the triumphant and the tragic with aspects of the

⁷Jean-Michel Pelous has called this particular change in the representation of love, this gradual but inevitable slide: "de l'amour glorieux au laxisme tendre." He defines "laxisme tendre" as that where "tout est permis pourvu que soient respectés les droits souverains de l'amour." *Amour précieux, amour galant* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1980) 123, 125.

heroic, certainly the "tendre" and even the "galant". This is all³⁸ the more true because I am suggesting a reading which combines both diversity and unity. That is, I will attempt to see how these elegies evolve. It will not be so far removed from a sonnet sequence where each sonnet can be read as a stanza or, if there is narration, as episodes.

The text in the shape of an hourglass on the cover page is my salute to a portion of text from Michael Danahy's book⁸ in which he makes a persuasive argument as to the way space in Madame Lafayette's novel, *La Princesse de Clèves*, reflects "genderized" space in the everyday life of the nobility (and of royalty) of the seventeenth century. Even Her Majesty the Queen of France was not mistress of her movements: she did not have the liberty to come and go at will nor could she control the access that others had to her, namely males; His Majesty exercised absolute control over his own space and hers. Holding dominion over space and thereby controlling the space of the other person is to have ultimate power over that person. Men exercised that power. Danahy illustrates how the narrator in Lafayette's novel has three ways of acquiring personal or private space: first, making an entrance into or taking one's leave from a designated setting, like a room; second, turning one's back without leaving an actual area, creating psychologically, a private space, however small; and third, withdrawing bodily to a new location. One remembers how in *La*

⁸Michael Danahy, "La Princesse de Clèves: A Space of the Future", from his book, *The Feminization of the Novel* (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1991) 101.

Princesse de Clèves the princess experiences her own mother turning away from her on her deathbed to drive home her point as to her feelings about her daughter's attraction to Nemours and the way, later, the princess employs the same device to turn away from Nemours to hide her face and her feelings, thereby creating a sort of wall, a modicum of private space. Danahy also shows how language mirrors, and rounds out, the picture of the way men take space to use as they wish.⁹

SPATIAL HE(A)RSAY, THE UNLYING "I" & BEYOND

"Sur une absence"

In the La Suze poems, too, space is used very differently, depending on whether it is a male or female persona narrating. A male persona addresses a female directly, summoning her onto the stage, as it were. He, and he alone, has the power to leave and to take leave of her. In "Sur une absence" it is a male persona all the way through: he talks of leaving, of distancing, of moving away from his beloved, albeit sadly, but he is always master of his movements. "Faut-il donc me resoudre à m'eloigner des lieux (1)/ Quand ie le veux resoudre à ce triste depart(10)/ Ie ne sçaurois quitter mon aimable Silvie (12)/ Pour m'ordonner après que ie m'eloigne d'elle? (16)/ Je vay donc vous quitter, adorable Silvie, (31)". It becomes evident even from these few lines how language, too, will be affected by who is narrating. A pattern begins to develop if one looks at the lines where I is prominent. For

⁹Ibid. 109.

example, here, where it is a male narrator, the verbs, and the nouns, coupled with the first person pronoun are direct, decisive signifiers of "moving away": "m'éloigner", "ce triste depart", "quitter" and again "m'éloigne" and "quitter". Two of the above lines, when juxtaposed, create an interesting effect:

Je ne sçaurois quitter mon aimable Silvie
Je vay donc vous quitter, adorable Silvie

Though it is a male narrator, the language of the former line (12) is more typical of a female narrator: the force of the verb "quitter" weakened by the negative and the conditional, patterns common to female narration, though here it is the knowing and not the leaving which is nullified. All this is overridden, decisively, in the latter line: "Je vay donc vous quitter, adorable Silvie," (31). In this elegy, not only does the male narrator summon the female, in essence allowing her entrance, but he banishes her, in almost the same breath. The two lines above evoke a certain insincerity as well--from "I wouldn't know how to leave my dear Silvie" to "I am therefore going to leave you, adorable Silvie"--the "I" here knows how to lie! (Later I will contrast this with the female narrator's "I".) What he does leave her with is the condescending "aimable Silvie."

Echo is mentioned in line 50; the emphasis, however, is on the male side of things. He complains that it is no small thing to have to suffer and to have to hide one's suffering. He does choose, though, both to speak and to do so softly. Echo/the female is doubly disenfranchised here; she cannot initiate speech, of course, but she cannot even repeat what the male has said because he speaks so quietly that she cannot hear. Traces of the myth of

Narcissus and Echo remain on into the elegy as the point of view continues, on the second page, to be from a male perspective. It is true that he uses verbs like "Je crains..." (57) which, again, is typical of female parlance, but it is his *rivals' language*, that of other males, that he fears; males need fear only each other. That males have the right to dominate space and initiate language; that "male" language is powerful is stressed by the persona's vision that they hold the female with this language. She is a captive of their language. If he, absent, sees himself as weakened due to other males' powerful and damning comments: "Un absent est bien foible, & bien-tost abattu." (74) what position can the female occupy, who is doubly absent? The poem ends with thirteen lines (91-103) that appear elsewhere alone as a lovely haunting little poem with the title "Absence" wherein he makes a plea to her, his beloved, that he will move away, begin his sad voyage unless she calls him back with a word of hope. Putting those last lines back into the context of the elegy, how can she? He has chosen to speak so that she cannot hear! He dares someone who is neither privileged enough to hear nor even to be present to arrest his imminent departure/self-effacement.

"Sur une jalousie"

In "Sur une jalousie" the narrator will be male but disguised, at first, as a female. While a female she talks a lot of "lovely movements", "Je ne l'y ressens plus par ces beaux mouvements," (11) but looking more closely, she is not moving. Her male lover will do the moving, and invading of her space: "Ne reviendrez-vous plus dans mon coeur amoureux?" (8) And when he invades she will talk of

wanting to leave but often, as here, she is disembodied: "Mon coeur devroit sortir d'un si rude esclavage,/ Mais ce foible captif n'en a pas le courage". (25, 26) In fact, not only is she invaded but she gives, offers up from inside her private space: "Aussi je n'offre plus sur ces fameux Autels/ Que des larmes de sang & des soupirs mortels" (15,16). She is disembodied and what emanates from her while she is in such a state is not only unexpected but abnormal, eerie: blood tears. Her components have been repositioned. The female persona complains of her treatment to Iris and talks of being penetrated (again, a part of her) by a poisonous snake: "Il glisse dans mon coeur un horrible serpent" (43). Then, with "Mais déjà mon silence, ô beaute que j'admire!/ Vous en a plus appris que je ne sçaurois dire (57, 58) the narrator begins to metamorphose into the male. It's as if the male has been standing there watching the proceedings and with his entrance the female narrator is expunged from the text and Iris, who had been the confidante is now the addressee. His very presence, his silence, has been enough to supplant the female narrator. In fact, in lines 57-70, the disguise has been compromised but the male has not totally revealed himself yet. One begins to guess by the use of male gender adjectifs that it may be a male speaking: "languissant" and "rêveur". but the male persona, in a sense, is still clothed as a female. For it is still with these female trappings/language that he says: "Sans mouvement, sans voix, ne faisant qu'écouter" and "Mécontent près de vous, sans pouvoir vous quitter". The language is still that of the female; is that of the receptor. The reader, here, is asked to suspend his/her

perceptions as to the plausibility of what is happening much the same way the spectator was asked to collude when the hero, Timocrate, was disguised as the fictitious Cleomène in Corneille's play. In this La Suze elegy, once the male persona addresses Iris, all traces of language typical of the female disappear; he asks Iris a question, does not give her a chance to answer, but answers it himself. It is noteworthy that, after the metamorphosis, wherever the male persona speaks in the first person, and there are a plethora of these, it is with force: "je sçai..."(75), "je ne suis point"(79), "je ne puis souffrir..."(80), "Je ne veux point..."(81), "Je consens..."(87), "Je vous satisferai..."(93), "Je suis marri..."(95), "Je laisse" (100), "Je méprise....et ne veux" (102,103).

"Belle et sage Daphné..."

In "Belle et sage Daphné, merveille de nos jours." where a female persona is the narrator, the line where she first mentions the male's name is not a summoning, is not a direct address, but instead: "C'est le jeune Tirsis qui lui fournit des traits" (18). She has already confided in Daphné as to this god who has taken up his most powerful arms to bend her to his service. Now she gives this god-conqueror a name. She embodies his characteristics with a name. Whereas the female often becomes disembodied when the male narrator invades her space, the female narrator serves to embody the male in a name which she cannot even use to enter into his space or order him into hers. Thus: "Défends ma liberté, ma Daphné, je combats/Un Dieu dont j'ai souvent méprisé les appas" (13,14) and four lines later: "C'est le jeune Tirsis qui lui

fournit les traits" show the female introducing the male as divine and announcing, in effect, his inviolate space. For this male dominion over space was looked upon as a God-given right. It is also a glance behind the scenes, revealing that the concept of love is there first, Tirsis is the name which furnishes the humanness to embody this love. At the bottom of page 1, the female persona is disembodied, or at least *metonymized*, when she says: "Quand je verrai Tirsis plus fort que mon devoir/Me faudra-t-il resoudre à cesser de le voir?" And two lines later: "Dois-je priver mes yeux d'une si chère vue?" Should she, can she, extract his image from her field of vision? At stake here is not a part of her but an extension of a part of her, the space outside her created by the functioning of her eyes and yet very much belonging to her. This is what she has control over, but in fact only when the male is not there. She can re-create his image, thereby allowing him entry or not into her own private space, not unlike the way the "Princesse de Clèves" turned away from a male to create space that is hers when she had no other way to gain privacy. In the elegy, the female puts the male into her field of vision when he is not present and in the novel, the female takes the male out of her vision field when he is. In both, she has empowered herself by removing herself from his. In fact, even the disembodiment is a way of creating private inner space, that is, the male cannot dominate her if she is not corporally intact. The female continues in this way with: "Je ne puis, ni ne veux l'arracher de mon coeur." (46). His invasion of her has been such that she cannot extract him, cannot even tear him loose from inside her. The following two

lines show how aware she is and Daphné is, too, that in all places this boy will torment and press her. One gets the impression of overall futility: she cannot remove his image from a place which is her own inner space, an integral part of her "corps", her core, her timepiece, that which makes everything move inside her (her heart) and he is master of her, of course, in every exterior space.

In this elegy a sort of prosopopeial frame¹⁰ is now presented as the link she will have with her beloved: one hundred witnesses who, at any hour and in any place, can carry to her his sighs, his desires, his passion, his fears. She is less privileged than these one hundred mysterious, genderless beings. And this is how she knows of him. With "Et d'un air languissant me redisent ses plaintes;" (51) it's as though one hundred echoes resay what he has said.¹¹ On the middle of page 2 there are the lines: "Enfin, il suit partout la trace de mes pas,/Et je le trouve meme où je ne le vois pas," (53, 54) where the feeling is that of a shadowy chase where, when she does move, it is because he has caused her to, has chased her. She is not seen moving nor is she even seen intact, embodied. What is seen is the mark a part of her body has made while in movement: "...la trace de mes pas," (53). The unreality and unreliability of her own vision and her own movement in space is further carried out with the next line: "Et je le trouve même où

¹⁰This comes from the Greek "prosopopeia" which is a figure of speech where an imaginary or absent person is represented as speaking. Images borrowed from rhetoric were still very much in favor in French poetry at this time.

¹¹The female in "Sur une absence" could not hear because the male spoke too quietly; the female in this elegy can hear him but at a remove: she hears one hundred echoes.

je ne le vois pas."¹² But, while the overall feeling is one of impotence for the female, she has left her mark, her trace and in this way she *is empowered*, here an avatar for the end of the poem where she talks of writing. Toward the bottom of this page the frame is again visible: this time one hundred beauties can attest to the sad adventures that befall women. This, too, seems to announce the end of the elegy; how would we know of the stories of one hundred courtesans if they had not been recorded, had not been written. The resolution at the end of this elegy becomes a crucial one: "Et perdant tout espoir, ma Daphné, je t'écris,/ Non pour chercher la fin de mon malheur extrême,/ Mais pour me satisfaire, en te disant que j'aime" (90-93). The female persona is unable to really move, unable to speak to her beloved, unable even to receive communication from him except through this exaggerated number of witnesses who *replay* him. Even as a receptor, she needs a message magnified one hundred times! She can and she does, however, write what she feels. And she is a faithful recorder, a chronicler; no detail is lost on her; it is all there. Here she has truly found a means of *empowering herself*.

Language in "Belle et sage Daphné, merveille de nos jours," is indicative of that of elegies with a female narrator. Again, a reading where attention is paid to lines with a salient "I" suggests the following categories: Past Reflexions, Interdiction, Imaginings, and Indirection. For an example of Past Reflexions, on the top of page 1 there is: "J'ai toujours découvert mes secrettes

¹²In "Gaslight" directed by Alfred Hitchcock the heroine, due to the lack of power with which she actually can negotiate her own space, becomes less and less sure of what she actually sees.

douleurs". (6) Here it is the confidence in the wise Daphné as trusted coffer, the one safe place where she has always deposited her word (coffer could be said to change into coffin, when one looks at the ending where Daphné is a less than satisfactory confidant.) A few lines further there is "Un Dieu dont j'ai souvent méprisé les appas," (14) and further still: "Et je n'avois pas cru l'amour contagieux," (29) and in the middle of page 2: "J'évitois ses regards comme un charme fatal;" (57). In all these there is a lack of conviction; these are inner vacillations, inner movements which will lead away from, not toward, any real decisiveness or any real movement. Interdiction, or one could say, Interdiction and Inability, can be seen in "Je ne puis ni ne veux l'arracher de mon coeur." (46). Here it is inability, in the sense of "I couldn't be so bold", dictating to desire. If it had been a male persona speaking it would have been "je veux" and he would have dominated space as he does first person narration. For Imaginings once more the line "Et je le trouve même ou je ne le vois pas" (54) can be evoked. The following line is telling: "Quand il vouloit encor disposer de mon âme," (55). One could as easily read where as when, wherever, in whatever space he wanted to use her soul or going further, he could even invade her soul if he cared to, when the spirit struck him. And this has been often, judging from the "encor". And, finally, when there is movement it is Indirect: "Je ne résiste plus, las! que pourrai-je faire?" (84). This is not a forceful direct verb, she is not charging into space. One has the feeling she is almost being coerced, being dragged into a decision, into moving. "What else can I do" smacks

of apology that she is finally moving, albeit in a kind of capitulation to destiny's demands, therefore is she really even making a move, a decision?

"Le Printemps rappelloit les amoureux désirs"

In "Le Printemps rappelloit les amoureux désirs" the female narrator states: "Quand il est près de moi....Si-tôt qu'il est parti". This is the other side of his invasion of her, here she describes, from her perspective, the lack, the "vide" which is created once he has vacated her. He, as the agent, is so empowered that even when she is alone, her private space restored to her, she feels incomplete due to the lack of him. In this elegy there is a difference: the female does move, even talks of pleasure, but is this really pleasure? There is the strange line: "Je prens même plaisir d'irriter ma blessure" (40). She is, in effect, a victim of her stasis, moves, but within herself: she *bores into herself*.¹³ Here, obviously it is not a "blessure propre" either. In fact the female confesses that she finds pleasure in her inner torture; she finds satisfaction in the only movement she is allowed--within her own wound. There is an ingenuousness in this line. Hélène Cixous talks about preferring first person narration to third person; she trusts the "I" that is embedded in the text: "I trust I. It's not that I trust myself in a narcissistic way, but I, me, I, the first

¹³This is like the movie "Mélo" where one of the characters pleads with another not to relate certain facts about a woman who has committed suicide to the grieving husband, to leave him with a "blessure propre".

person that is rooted in my own flesh, doesn't lie".¹⁴ In the La Suze elegies this confessional "I" that has just been seen rooting around in its own flesh in this line about pleasure/pain could be called THE UNLYING I. (This female "I" doesn't--cannot lie--as opposed to the "I" who was male and who lied to his Sylvie in "Sur une absence".)

This elegy is a *confessional* hymn to what could be called "l'Heureuse Obscurité" as in *Astrate*,¹⁵ a will, even a delight in feeling melancholy and worse, as noted already, perhaps in order to remain whole and *feeling* :

Couvrez bien mon ennui de votre obscurité, (13)
 La douleur que je sens redoute la clarté; (14)

 Je ne sçai quoi de doux se coule dans mon
 âme; (28)
 Je trouve tant d'appas dans mon propre mal-
 heur, (29)

The female persona seeks out a refuge, "un repos" among sister shadows (11), in somber retreats (12), and loves solitude (38), perhaps here because she feels she has no other choice. But with the mention of Tirsis "Au seul nom de Tirsis je change de couleur," (45) and once again it is with the *name* of Tirsis, not the real person, that there is a shift. The female still does not summon the male, or move freely into his space but she assumes a

¹⁴Hélène Cixous, "The Two Countries of Writing: Theater and Poetical Fiction", *The Other Perspective in Gender and Culture: Rewriting Women and the Symbolic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) 206.

¹⁵"Laissez, laissez-moi fuir cette fatale gloire,
 Laissez-moi, s'il se peut, tâcher de n'en rien croire,
 Repousser de mon coeur cette affreuse clarté,
 Et garder de mon sort l'heureuse obscurité." *Astrate* , act IV,
 scène 2.

new courage: no longer does she confide in feminine shadows nor is she a shadowy female but she starts to confess (though forced) publicly that she loves: "Puisque vous me forcez de confesser que j'aime," (68) and bolder still, there is first person narration and it is quite direct, beginning the line: "J'aime, & ce que je sens ne peut être qu'amour." (70). But other females can--and do, as the divine Climène does here--undo aspirations as to equality in language by reasserting the supremacy and artistry of male language: Son adresse en cet art n'eut jamais de pareille,/ Il sçait comme on attire une âme par l'oreille;" (83, 84). Once again, not only is there no equal as to the artistry and cleverness of the male language, but the male is the sole successful emitter, he need not really be a transmitter: sound/language emanates from him; success does not depend on the other's (in this case the female) return volley. It is a male server, confident of his force and ability to hit into his targeted area and disinterested in the idea of an exchange; it is his game. The female can target another female, giving voice to her lament that Climène did not warn her *in time*.

A pattern in the representation of time as it relates to gender can also be seen in the other three elegies (already examined) in this cycle. (In order to see how this plays out a sampling is needed: in this cycle, there is, as noted, one elegy narrated by a male, a second by a male but disguised at first as a female and two by female narrators.) When a male is narrating there is a consciousness of time and it is finite. The power to act is there, though he may do so sadly or tragically. For

example, there is the last line of the poem, "Sur une absence": *Je n'ay pas le pouvoir de le sur survivre une heure*. The persona, confronted with perhaps an unfortunate set of options, does have options and has the ability to set a time limit or, as here, knows how long he can stand something; there is an end to suffering. He can choose to end it, albeit with death. The male persona's space, and here his language attests to this, is *within time*, that is, his existence is not beyond time in some netherworld as in Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman" where there is deathless wandering. In this vein there is the line "Et traîner loin de vous une mourante vie:" (middle of page one) which the male undoes in the last line, negating his endlessness, his deathlessness. The persona in this elegy is aware of time, feels the passage of time, has moods and feelings, changes rapidly and drastically.

In dramatic contrast to this, in "Sur une jalousie," while the narrating persona is still female, in a passage which is reminiscent of Dante's endless hell, the persona, though disembodied, is horrifically invaded, the venom pervading her body even to her soul, illuminating with an oxymoron ("Il y porte la glace au milieu de la flâme,") how inexplicably, but powerfully, the female can be penetrated. As a result, she languishes, deathless:

Il glisse dans mon coeur un horrible serpent (43)
 Dont le venin fatal dans le coeur se répand,
 Traverse le repos & des sens & de l'âme,
 Il y porte la glace au milieu de la flâme,
 Et leur antipathie y cause des combats
 Qui font languir ma vie, & ne l'achèvent pas: (48)

Once the persona has shown himself to be male within the elegy, his language is quite different: "Mais je ne puis souffrir qu'ils

ressentent mes maux," (80), "Je ne veux point. qu'on m'aide à supporter mes chaînes; (81), Hélas! c'est bien assez de souffrir mon ennui," (83). And the elegy ends much the same way the previous one did: the male persona wants (demands) to have the "honneur" to die for her, that is, to end: "Et ne veux, belle Iris, que disputer à tous/ L'honneur de soupirer & de mourir pour vous" (103, 104).

In "Belle et sage Daphne, merveille de nos jours," time expressed as "toujours" or "jamais" occurs four times in the first ten lines. Then on page two there is the passage:

Hélas! en tous endroits tu sçauras que sans
cesse (47)
Cet aimable garçon me tourmente & me pres-
se,
Cent témoins diligens à servir mes désirs,
A toute heure, en tous lieux, m'apportent ses
sopirs,
M'expliquent ses désirs, ses transports & ses
craintes,

This hyperbolic entourage is supposed to serve her desires but these seem to get subsumed in a terrible sense of being always surrounded and of her surroundings bearing down on her in a hideous sameness. There is, too, a dizzying inescapable circular symmetry. She is encircled by the hundred witnesses/servants, the "I" encircled even in the double circle that is 100. She has nowhere to go, nowhere to look. She, on the other hand, is being "eyed" by one hundred pairs of eyes (not unlike the way women in the seventeenth century must have felt). She must hear everything in all places and at all hours. This is the ultimate disembodiment, in one sense, but, in another, she receives every look, every sigh, every feeling. As noted, on her and in her all is recorded,

nothing is lost, as with the reader. She is not THE UNLYING EYE but rather THE UNLYING EAR. And arriving at the end of the elegy all this has not been in vain: she will write. The always and never, the all or nothing, being enclosed in two circles or in two zeroes--this is adynata where the impossibly implausible elements cancel each other out. She is neither inside nor outside, neither here nor somewhere else, she is not in time, neither is she really outside time, she is exempt from time, beyond time. Writing, ultimately of course, can be erased by time but can just as easily be untouched by time. This latter is more than being outside time, it is *beyond*.

The preceding passage lends itself to a slightly different interpretation, as well, but one which ends with the same tie-in with writing. Instead of an impression of a claustrophobic symmetry it is possible to view the lines as not suggesting symmetry but disproportion: that is, the number one hundred can also be viewed as a disproportionately high number. There is then a different, though equally as disquieting a feeling, this time of being odd, off-balance, distorted as with anamorphic art, so popular at the time. It must have felt, at times, odd, skewed, to be a woman and to be writing in the seventeenth century. The description applies, too, to the focus necessary in the act of writing at the expense of the other aspects of one's life, the disproportionate attention one must give to writing. Along this line, the amplification of sound in the passage, down to the registry of even sighs, corresponds, in writing, to what can be experienced as an overattention to some inner voice one tries to

capture on paper.

SWALLOWED WHOLE;

THE HOLE IN THE TEXT

"Tristesse, ennui, chagrin..."

According to the dates established by Magne, there is a hiatus of seven years between "Le Printemps rappelloit les amoureux désirs" (1656) and this next elegy: "Tristesse, ennui, chagrin, langueur, mélancolie," (1663). Very early in this first elegy of the second cycle, narrated by a female, language (the first person pronoun and the verb coupled with it) is more indicative of male narration: the verbs are in the present tense, consequently, they are direct, they are verbs of force. Spatially, too, the female makes a break through: there is movement: "Je viens dans ces déserts cacher mes soupirs & mes larmes;" (5). But she comes here in order to hide her sighs and tears. (His sighs were magnified by one hundred and replayed to her in the elegy "Belle et sage Daphné"!) And two lines later there is: "Je puisse en liberté dire mes sentiments." It is significant that it is a desert where she can freely move and where she can be mistress of what she says because not only is perfect solitude granted but there is nowhere to hide. Nothing can be obscured (neither from others nor from oneself) and there is vulnerability in a desert. She is hidden and private only so long as another does not encroach upon her. And these elegies have been about males encroaching upon females. One could say that here the female person confides in thin air; space (her own private, unlimited space, at least for the moment) is prized and even

elevated to a persona: "Déserts, soyez témoins des peines que je sens:" (8).

Absence/presence plays an important role in this elegy. In the lines: "Je ne puis voir Tirsis que je ne sois émue,/Je rougis de paroître interdite à sa vue;" (25, 26) it becomes evident why she feels she has to hide her feelings and articulations in solitude: she cannot see Tirsis without feeling but she *blushes* at seeming forbidden to him. The interesting word here is "paroître". She blushes at *seeming* forbidden to his eyes, his field of vision. Is she invisible? If so, she blushes in total absence, there is no one to see her. If she is visible then it is stranger still: she blushes at *appearing* to be forbidden. To whom does this seem to be the case? Tirsis? One way to resolve this is to say that space and power are in a period of transition, that is, she is no longer totally bereft of power: here she is not disembodied and she sees the real Tirsis, (though the presentation is very indirect with the double negative). She certainly does not summon him into her space but at the same time he does not have total visual access to her. There is some play here as to whether she will be freely exhibited to his gaze and she has something to say about it. She blushes at the very idea of seeming forbidden to his eyes; this is stated passively but if one looks for the agent, it has to be *she* who is obstructing his view, exactly as the "Princesse de Clèves" created private space by turning her back.

A little further, but still early in the elegy, though she tries to leave "l'objet" (Tirsis), it does not leave her; she is obsessed by this spectral object:

Dans le trouble facheux que l'absence me cause, (33)
 Ma raison incertaine à soi même s'oppose:
 L'objet que j'ai laissé ne me sauroit laisser,
 Tous les autres objets ne le peuvent chasser.
 Incessamment, Tirsis occupe ma pensée:
 Sans le voir je le vois, & mon ame blessée
 Se trace nuit & jour ce phantôme plaisant,
 Quoique loin de mes yeux, il m'est toujours
 présent:

Like the hundred echoes who repeated everything to her in "Belle et sage Daphne", something unknowable and inexpressible has told her more than a *thousand* times to love him. The female chooses to follow "cette belle ombre", sees it/him everywhere, addresses the shadows; this time they materialize into Tirsis who she succeeds in addressing. That which was unnameable and undefineable in line 43: "Et ce, je ne sçai quoi, qu'on ne peut exprimer" was so because it emanated from the female and was therefore *unspeakable*. The female, though not entirely empowered, since she is overtaken by an object that she has left, does attain a degree of power in deciding to follow a shadow (she moves) and the shadow turns into the male whom she addresses. It is a verve that she has allowed herself to have, a will and though, as yet, it remains unnameable it has found voice, within her more than a thousand times.

Interestingly, given the beginning image of a desert, there is real communication in this poem, already in lines 29/30 there is: "Le feu de ses regards par qui son coeur s'explique,/ Etincelle de joye, & me la communique:" And then, on the last page she actually tells him to speak no more: "Ne parlez plus, Tirsis..." (105). She seems to be holding him off, delaying his entrance, setting up the scene; she is the director. There is, too, an abundance of the first person plural imperative: "Unissons...", "Contentons...",

"laissons parler..." (108, 109). (This is particularly significant, she had told him to speak no more, now she, in a sense, speaks for both of them.), "Jouissons...", "Aimons-nous...", "chérissons..." (110, 112). She is joining together their spaces, inviting him into hers, which becomes theirs. But ultimately it is actually Love which gets prioritized above all else, it is to Love that she says "Viens triompher...". (119). And putting this imperative back in its context: "Viens triompher, amour, de mon coeur & de moi." she is whole again. She is whole when she invites love into her space.

This is a poem on the threshold of having an empowered female persona: the female persona is becoming her own person, is acting as an agent, is moving, is initiating and arresting speech and is addressing the male persona directly. In short, she has some control over her space and her language: "spatial hersay". It is also the first poem where joyous passion really begins to break through.¹⁶ In "Tristesse" there is tone of equality, of sharing achieved with the use of first person plural imperative.

"Fière et foible Raison..."

"Fière et foible Raison, qui par de vains combats", the second elegy in this second cycle and the shortest of all the elegies, is also written by a female persona and continues the idea of a more empowered narrator. The female narrator doesn't mention

¹⁶The elegy "La nuit se retiroit..." listed in the appendix--which I believe to be La Suze's though I lack absolute proof--would make a good companion piece to this; in it passionate love, both emotional and physical, is detailed. There is real equality; the male speaks, the female takes over, not only completing his thought but adding her own original ideas.

Tirsis till 2/3 of the way into the poem, having linked "Raison" eventually with "Pudeur", stating that finally they are no match for "Love", evoking the God (of love), destiny and even nature (the night) in the process. When he is named he is inseparable from the God of love and she addresses him directly (he does not address her at all):

La pudeur à l'amour derobe de plaisirs, (26)
Tirsis, & que souvent à tes désirs rebelle,
Secrètement mon coeur a murmuré contr'elle!

And then four/five lines later she fears that her words will be carried away on the wind but to her great surprise Tirsis comes and offers himself to her eyes. The implication is that her words had some power and the description of the way Tirsis appears is less intrusive than the way male personae appeared in the first cycle of four poems, though it is to her eyes, not to her as a whole that he presents himself:

Je croyais que les vents emportoient mes paroles, (31)
Mais las! je me flattois d'espérance frivoles,
Quelle fut ma surprise! Et que devins-je, o Dieux!
Lorsque soudain Tirsis vint s'offrir à mes yeux: (34)

This female is ambivalent about the power to summon her words may have. She asks what she has become. The word is significant. This is a poem about liminality, about something *about* to be. Is her fear that she had become whole and as such that she had become too much like a male? That her words uttered secretly against "pudeur" had the power to call him up, much like wishing brought forth the genie from the magic lamp.

The twist at the very end is telling: it is unmistakably Tirsis before her, she knew him; she recognized him but with the

last line: "Mais je le connus mieux au trouble de mon âme" the ambivalence has ended: Tirsis will be swallowed up again, swallowed whole. He will be embodied, not disembodied like the female. But he will not be placed back into a lamp. Instead he will be taken back into her. It is more like isolating someone but instead of being without as on a distant island the isolation is within, deep within another being. (In the next poem, "Jalousie", it will be more carnal; the male narrator imagines the female saturated with his blood.) This short elegy comes between two longer elegies: "Tristesse, ennui...", where a woman has broken through spatial and linguistic constraints and has, in fact, gone beyond them and "Jalousie", where a man has, in a sense, been trapped, not so much within certain spaces dominated by the opposite gender as seen with the female persona, but underneath the layer inhabited by the opposite gender, in this case, the female. So that, when one talks about the male being encased within the female's soul (in "Fière...") he is, in a sense, in a period of gestation, he is being engendered, though this is an encumbrment that simply happened, we are in medias res and we stay in medias res.

Do these last seven lines of "Fière..." refer to the physical being housed inside the female or to the thought of him she carried inside her soul before he was created? If, in the prior elegy, "Tristesse...", where the female persona talks of uniting: "Unissons... Contentons... Jouissons..." there is conception..(the coolness and distance of the first melancholy words warming to pleasure and even joy in a sort of euphoric abandonment to love, a coupling) then in "Fiere et foible..." it is

gestation that is evoked but it is enigmatic: it is a pregnancy where the female can choose to never let it come to term. This is not so different from what was seen in the first cycle where the female's existence was deathless; the important factor here is that she seems to have a choice.¹⁷ Here a woman chooses when and even whether a man can make his entrance--his very existence is suspended *inside*. The resolution of the poem--to straddle the creative process--was announced already halfway through the poem in form with the coupling of a double oxymoron: "Qu'un mal qu'on trouve doux, met de trouble dans l'âme!/ Et que d'un feu qui plaît, aisément on s'enflâme!" The tension throughout the poem: strong and weak Reason, to love or not to love and finally to grant existence or not is poised in perfect symmetry on a tightwire: falling on one side would assure superiority for the male, falling on the other the female would be supreme. The brooding decision at the end is neither abdication nor seizure of power; it is like trying to forestall and postpone at the same time: to thwart something before the fact and to put it off till after. There was no middle ground where females could co-exist equally with males. They could only contemplate what should be. This is a female narrator; females give birth. That this power was turned against them does not belie their own potential power but it does cause the narrator to pause; contemplation is all that is possible now. Whether it is the procreative or creative process there is hesitation. There is a balancing again in the possibilities of "Un

¹⁷This is reminiscent of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*: there women could become pregnant at will; men wander through irrelevant existences outside.

mal". It can be evil or pain as physical or emotional, it can be a disturbance as when the integrity of something is compromised. With this latter the process of carrying another is not so different whether one thinks of it as a miniature being existing in the body or a miniature work existing in the mind, like a poem. Like the offspring which cannot sustain life for itself until it has developed sufficiently and has enough details i.e.: until it is born, the work of art cannot be until it is written or painted.

In this elegy, "Fièvre et foible", instead of the delight there was in unification and abandoning oneself, a looking forward, an opening up as in "Tristesse..." there is, instead, a sort of ambivalence all the way through and with the ending, a desire to move backward, a consecration to oneself around a precious (in both senses) image; a folding back around the being/creation. These first two poems are the beginning of a cycle about a cycle: the first touching upon conception and the second upon gestation. How does the third poem fit into this cycle?

"Jalousie"

In "Jalousie" the male narrator's initial appearance is one where he is seen engulfed; enflamed, first, in anger and then love. He bursts forth, explodes out of the text: "Quand Tirsis enflâmé de colère & d'amour," (7). Two lines later his beloved is slipped in; is *inserted* into the description of Tirsis' entrance not so much with contempt as with such understatement as to demean her even more: "Ni l'indigne mépris de l'ingrate qu'il aime". Indeed, her contempt is the only mention of his beloved until line 31 when his "Rival" is introduced after which Iris is named.

There is nothing shadowy or indecisive about this male persona. He is angry and tortured and articulates these states clearly. The first instance of first person speech is "Je ne vois que l'horreur"; it is a simple statement of fact: he sees and he sees only horror. In this elegy the male persona does not intrude into the female's space nor does the male summon her to appear before him. For him, she is in absentia and, though it is always at one remove, he is very direct in inculcating her as the cause of his misery. There is nothing indirect either in his imaginings about his rival's interaction with her nor with his pleas to the Gods that she intoxicate herself in his own blood, in line 80.

In this poem she is named (Iris) only four times and never directly. She is the impersonal camera before which his rival holds forth joyfully: "Etable aux yeux d'Iris sa joye & mon tourment.," (32) or so the tortured narrator imagines. It is interesting that she sees nothing other than what the narrator envisions that she see. In line 35 it is within her arms that his rival satisfies his glory. She is again a machine, a vehicle for the now very carnate male desires. But this is the narrator's rival so she is still an "ingrate" and easy: "L'ingrate cependant facile à ses désirs, ". She is pictured in line 58 as unjust and false and by the end of the elegy, the last time she is named, she is portrayed as not only an unjust being but the male imagines her delight at the death of her two suitors. She goes from an unfeeling--how could she feel, she is absent--mechanistic being (not whole though) whose space is not so much invaded as whose very person is penetrated. Following this she is again named

"l'ingrate" and becomes an unjust, vicious, conniving She-God who revels in her power to inflict suffering and even death. There is something almost cannibalistic about her portrayal, like the female praying mantis who eats the male after they have mated.

In both "Fière et foible Raison..." and "Tristess, ennui..." there was closure. In the former there was a folding inward; in the latter there was a an opening up but in neither closure is there real inclusion of the male. In "Tristesse, ennui..." he is the one she addresses with "Unissons...Contentons...Jouissons..." but she amends this slightly with her final tribute to Love. It is to Love that she raises her glass. And in "Fière et foible Raison..." she retires deep within her to her, albeit, agitated soul but one senses that it is there and only there that she can gaze upon her beloved with tranquility. In this third poem, "Jalousie" it is very different. Plaguing him and therefore towering over him are his images of his rival's behavior. But certainly towering over his rival is the female, the *beloved*, who becomes less and less human and more horrific until finally there is the Poesque announcement of a double suicide. She remains dominant, he neither distances himself from her--though she is never really present--nor does he go beyond her. He remains firmly in her hold. Or he remains firmly in his own *hold* for he has said: "Je ne vois que l'horreur" (26). In this third elegy his gaze is on hold, static, it is predetermined; he becomes a victim of his own narrow, unchanging vision. Iris was represented as making the wrong choice, choosing the false lover, mixing things up, getting it all wrong, *elle chamboulait*, while his was the view that is

figé. But it is this petrified, solidified view which is wrong. He has aligned himself with his vision, immobilizing himself; he has not evolved. Fixity of gaze here seems tied to condemnation and to annihilation. The male persona locks himself into only looking in a certain way and he is also the only one looking. The female has no vision--how can she help but mix things up--other than the scenes the narrator imagines that she sees (and must endure) which, of course, she is upbraided for, such as the rival satisfying his glory. In the other two elegies in this cycle there is change and therefore movement of a sort. There was "trouble" and this results in movement. In "*Fièvre et foible Raison...*" there was the image of the troubled soul but even here the persona returns to find solace within this moving, passionate soul; the gaze has looked without and has turned within. The female persona in "*Tristesse, ennui...*" is troubled but finds a way to move ultimately *beyond* the male; her gaze has shifted, also, away from not only the male and herself but away from the constraints of the poem itself and outside its parameters. It is not unlike the way the female moved beyond time in the first cycle; here she moves beyond the immediacy of this particular elegy into the thematic, untethered to either time or narration.

This elegy, "*Jalousie*", is a far cry, too, from the earlier "*Sur une Jalousie*" where there was the enamored, respectful, awed male lover worshipping his goddess and considering it an honor to die for her. In "*Jalousie*" this is an angry lover who himself cannot bend but who is bent on doing himself, and his rival, in in a hateful blaze of glory. And all this to spite his *beloved*. This

elegy could have been entitled "Revenge". At the same time there is real passion here, in fact, this is one of the characteristics that distinguishes the second cycle from the first: the emergence of raw passion. "Fièvre et foible Raison..." had a very muffled cry of passion but the female persona in "Tristesse, ennui..." stands with arms flung wide to welcome love's passion and in "Jalousie" it is a dark, obsessive, tortured kind of passion at work.

"Sur une jalousie" in the first cycle had had an image of blood tears: "Aussi je n'offre plus sur ces fameux Autels/Que des larmes de sang & des soupirs mortels." When these words are uttered, the persona is still female; she has nothing more to give than blood tears, she is drained, she is, as she has stated, being devoured. These tears are all that is left, all that she can offer up as an animal being sacrificed is offered up, offers up its blood. The female was sacrificed in this poem: offered up and displaced by the male persona who takes over as narrator of the elegy. The blood image in "Jalousie": "Faites que dans mon sang elle soule sa haine" (66) is quite different. The male pleads to the Gods that they act in such a way that she intoxicate her hate in his blood, that her hate partake of his blood to the point of senselessness, that she be rendered senseless, (she was already inhuman and without vision). In exchange, he gives up his blood, but remains whole. She, on the other hand, was represented as eyes and as arms but only to see and hold what he places in front of her. She, who was never whole or even wholly present, is now forced to commit an act of *implosion* to render her hate impotent.

The persona who shed blood tears was at the edge of what she could endure but she could still feel, in fact she felt intensely before being displaced. This persona is made to implode her hate in his blood so that she will be without feeling, since hate is the only feeling the male has allowed her. He offers up his blood, is embalmed; she must allow her hate to drink his blood to the point of and beyond saturation: she bursts within!

This bloody drinking scene has some interesting quirks. There is a Dracula-like quality about it, except that she is the one who must gorge her hate on his blood. The blood might have been suggestive of the rawness of the birth scene except that it is his blood she is soaked in and this is a caveat of death not birth. There is no wound; this is the other side of the Scevian "bloodless wound": here blood issues forth from no wound at all. This whole deformation was suggested by the word "fléchir" in the preceding line: "Et puisque rien n'a pu fléchir cette inhumaine," (65). She cannot be bent by ordinary means; things must be twisted to get through to her. One thinks, too, of the word "flèche": she cannot be pierced by ordinary methods. She, in a sense, pierces him and imbibes his blood. In the line or two following, the male thinks perhaps he has succeeded; he has not. In the final analysis, it is he who cannot be bent: he has designed an interminable just-before-dawn semi-darkness in which he attempts to exorcise his beloved's hate by giving up his own blood. But he cannot bend her, curve her into human form; he never meets up with her. She remains, despite his contempt and his envisionings of her defilement, unreachable and unknowable. Concerning the cycle

suggested by the other two poems: "Tristesse..." as a sort of conception, and "Fièvre..." as a harboring, if not actual gestation, "Jalousie" has to be a kind of stillbirth; a refusal to participate, rigidity, a loss of life. There is a sort of gaping hole in the text.

THE "FRAGILE LOVER" RE-MEMBERED

"Ah, qu'il est dangereux..."

Three years have now lapsed (1665-1668) and there is a cluster of four poems, all of which appear in the same year. Ordering them is arbitrary, but since three of the four are narrated by a male, separating them by gender may be a good idea and, of those three, "Ah! qu'il est dangereux quand on a bien aimé" is the lightest in tone which contrasts starkly with "Jalousie", the darkest so far. Clearly, the two poems could have been written in this sequence, with the three year hiatus.

When I apply spatial criteria to this elegy, the male does address the female directly in line nine: "Phénice, vous savez que ce coeur autrefois" and seems to allude to knowledge they are both privy to; there is almost a tone of camaraderie, as though this is familiar ground, almost shared ground. And then he acknowledges both her ability to *move* and to *take her leave* of him in one line: "Vous partîtes, Phénice & laissâtes mon ame" (23). The context for this line is striking for its intertextual suggestion:

Et je vous vis alors abandonner la Cour (21)
 Sans savoir seulement approve mon amour:
 Vous partîtes, Phénice, & laissâtes mon âme
 Avec l'impression de sa nouvelle flâme.

L'Hyver a eu depuis par trois fois ses glaçons,
 L'été s'est couronné de ses blondes moissons,
 Et depuis ce tems-là le grand flambeau du
 monde

A trois fois achevé sa course vagabonde, (28)

In *La Princesse de Clèves* Madame de Clèves dares to leave the court; within the first two lines here, Phénice has dared to leave. And the last four lines can be viewed alongside Oenone's early address to Phèdre where she also talks of a cycle of three:

Les ombres par trois fois ont obscurci les cieux
 Depuis que le sommeil n'est entré dans vos yeux;
 Et le jour a trois fois chassé la nuit obscure
 Depuis que votre corps languit sans nourriture.¹⁸

In Racine's play, of course, the three days seem much longer, harbingers as they are of some ominous, unalterable event about to take place. In the *La Suze* elegy the three years seem fleeting as they serve as the frame for a playful confession.

The number three is also significant in the way it reveals the temporal landscape of the poem. The first third of the poem (24 lines) begins in the present and recounts the narrator "re-viewing" Phénice and then goes into a pluperfect review of his unrequited love for her up to and including her departure three years before. Then, beginning with the cyclical text quoted above (line 25--) the male persona admits that he filled that past tense space with other women! The last third of the poem, beginning with: "Je reviens à vos pieds reprendre tous mes fers," (line 50) is a return to the present and his announcement of his readiness to move, to take up his yoke again.

¹⁸Racine: *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962) Act I, scene 3, 249.

Though the male narrator addresses the female directly in the first third of the poem, there is a difference: she was the one to leave him and, as though to add emphasis to the fact, there is a space of three years to underscore it. It is true that he speaks of the female as object but it is she who captivates/captures: "Et si le bel objet qui captive mon coeur" (45) and it is he who is disembodied and she, in a sense, who goes into his space. And, as noted above, he does enter her space but he does so at the level of her feet: "Je reviens à vos pieds reprendre tous mes fers" (50) and it is to be enchained, in other words, to have his freedom of movement limited.

But perhaps the line which lies between these two typifies his position best: "ainsi toujours à vous, quoique toujours volage," (47). Though the rest of the poem is a quiet one of submission and one reminiscent of the old image of love seen in the first cycle, the tone remains lighter, the suffering much less. There is a detachment to this poem: the word "volage" is apt, it's as though the narrator is floating, not only from woman to woman, but above the very text that he narrates. Progression through time is not entirely linear, either; it floats capriciously from the present to a distant past, to a more recent past and then back to the present proposing a move into the future. The words "soumis(e)" and "fidèle" dominate the last few lines of the poem, certainly attesting to a style seen before, a familiar place; the narrator wants to take up his chains, has come full circle and wants to return. But it is undeniable that there is a lighter touch; there seems to be less at stake. The word "interpréter" in line 68 is

noteworthy. Though its meaning is tight within the two line context containing it, there is an impression that the narrator here is interpreting, re-presenting, re-clocking the image of love as it is now, in 1668; showing how there are similar threads to what it was a few years prior, to say, 1653-56, but the tone is quite different. Though it was used to describe many--often irreconcilable--facets of love poetry in the seventeenth century, the word that comes to mind here is "galant" in the sense of "la galanterie libertine", describing poetry that was light and full of "plaisanteries".

"En vain, charmante Iris..."

If the last poem was galant then this next one, "En vain, charmante Iris, j'oppose ma constance", is nothing if not heroic. Images of imperial Rome, as well as the word "gloire" begin to appear very early on. It is obviously a male narrating and, not only does he move but he, like the epic hero, can effect legendary change as in: "Pour voir finir mon mal aux fameux bords du Tibre;/ Je viens grossir son onde avec l'eau de mes pleurs," (10,11). In this very long elegy the very tissue and texture of his wanderings in Italy and all the treasures "offered" to him (including the most beautiful nymph) are laid out very ornately in order to dramatize that all that is as nothing--in particular the nymph who is "cet objet adorable"-- compared to the love he seeks from Iris. (There had appeared, too, on the first page, a sort of apology that he took his leave of her: "Je songe, aimable Iris, que le courroux des Dieux/ M'a forcé malgré moi d'abandonner vos yeux;" (14, 15) .) She is, however, still disembodied when he speaks of her here.

Movement in this elegy is used to show futility and futility is used as a bargaining tool. That is, from the first two words it is evident that all the male's wanderings have been futile but *if* Iris would love him; *if* she would even respond a little to his tenderness, *if* her young heart could find a way to love, *if* she would look into his heart; *if* she would lose her "rigueur"; *if* she could reward him by approving of his love and zeal; *if* she could encourage his passion and *if* she could give him hope that his tenderness would be reciprocated then she would see in him "Un exemple éternel de constance & de foi" and the poem ends. This elegy is an intermination: Even his wanderings in Italy seem interminable--though rendered in the passé composé and therefore over--were a waste of time and now he proposes the above conditions. *If* they are met then she will see in him an eternal example of sameness. The earlier time is as nothing, he begs her for time and *if* she doesn't grant it he is out of luck and out of time! And *if* she does acquiesce he will be stuck in sameness eternally.

It is true that he sets up a labyrinthine love affair with the onus on Iris. Beginning with the hypothetical statement: *Si vous m'aimez, Iris, les Dieux me sont temoins;/ Qu'en possédant leur sort, je m'estimerai moins*" (50, 51) the male narrator sets up a series of tasks. He will not speak but *if* her heart can see by his regards and by the image of her traced in *his heart* and, in particular, *if* she can negotiate the miroirs: "*Si vous consultiez bien ces miroirs de mon coeur*" (59) then she will be rewarded by knowing his true feelings. One thinks of some of the elegies

narrated by females where she simply says that she loves him, i.e.: "Tristesse" and in the elegy to be discussed later, "O Dieux! seroit-il vrai que l'amour m'eut soumise?" And it is true that she is not really granted space; instead he details the imperial, exclusively male territory and informs her as to the conditions of her mission. Should she choose to accept, on all counts, he will vacate, not give up--the nuance is crucial--this space where she can never enter and he will sacrifice his noble male calling: "J'y bornerai ma gloire & mon ambition:" This knowledge is what she will have in *exchange* for all he asks of her: he will set aside his male exclusivity and in effect create space for her to exist in. But *she* has the power to grant him time, should she choose.

"Iris, tous vos serments..."

As with the elegy just discussed, the next one, "Iris, tous vos serments n'étoient donc que des feintes" has no apparent frame; Iris is addressed immediately, *accused* immediately by the male narrator. This is a succinct poem where the female beloved is next addressed directly in line 20 as "Maîtresse". Along with that word in that line and the one preceding it is the word "seule" which could almost be read as "entière":

Que seule vous faisiez ma joye & mon bon-
heur, (19)

Que seule vous étiez Maîtresse de mon coeur,

When the narrator does refer to her by name he does so in the third person. What is interesting is that in referring to himself he vacillates between first and third person narration: "Garde encor du respect pour son ingrate Iris;...Où dans son jeune sein Iris reçut mes feux:". ((28, 32)). He states that he was her first

victory but he does not address her directly to do it: "J'étois de mon Iris la première victoire,"; (37) where interestingly he is her first victory yet she is demeaningly already packaged as *his*. At the top of page two he reports her as addressing him directly: "Et me disoit, Tirsis, c'est de toi que je tiens" (43) but there is a certain remove, and even a certain nostalgia, as he uses the imperfect. It is not the female who has left him or is leaving him but rather his past fortune: "Mais, las! ou t'enfuis-tu, ma fortune passée?" (45). She is seen leaving him, in a way, six lines later when she dethrones him and "...m'abandonne enfin à la noire pensée" (53). He seems to be the long-suffering, wronged lover but then it is he who summons the courage to leave her, at least to leave her labeled, packaged in a tidy, predictable, ultimately leavable commodity--that of "Maîtresse": "Malheureux, reprends coeur, quitte cette Maitresse, ...Laisse aller cette Iris, puisqu'elle est si volage," (74, 77). Here things are turned around: it is she who is volage and it is he who seeks "repos". She is being dismissed: she is *let go*, but the wording is very important because it implies that she can and will move of her own accord. Her move is being recounted; she has been re-counted. She has been pointed out/pointed at ("cette Maîtresse...cette Iris"); her misdeeds listed. The male narrator himself now seeks rest, peace, stasis. He has disavowed her but by this very disavowal he has granted her status.

"O Dieux seroit-il vrai..."

The fourth elegy in this 1668 cycle, "O Dieux seroit-il vrai que l'amour m'eut soumise?", has a female persona narrating and its

beginning is similar to earlier poems narrated by females. Daphnis is mentioned in the third line; he is not however summoned directly. In the middle of the first page it is she who is enslaved and imprisoned: "En vain je tâcherois d'éviter sa prison,/ Il retient dans ses fers mes sens & ma raison:" (19, 20). Six lines earlier there were the lines: "Si du moindre danger sa vie est menacée,/ Une soudaine peur rend mon âme glacée;" (13, 14) showing a very human persona, one capable of much feeling, not just auto-sensibility. Then at the bottom of page one/ top of page two there are allusions to the myth of Echo: if she speaks to Daphnis and if he speaks to her of his faith she will say back what he says. But the phrase: "...si par malheur il n'a rien à me dire." (45) indicates that if he does not start the discourse, there is none; there is a "vide". Danahy talks of men reechoing women's speech, in *La Princesse de Clèves*, the better to turn it against them.¹⁹ Here she only has the power to re-echo the male's speech but cannot even do that if he does not begin the discursive chain; he alone can initiate language! The line: "Loin de me croire Esclave, il me croît inhumaine" (50) shows her as a slave who must endure not only the indignities of slavery but also being thought of as inhuman. She has insight into her plight, though, stating that if he didn't fear her excessive "rigueur" all could be exposed, everyone made happy. And she does address him directly a few lines later: "Ne crains point, cher Daphnis, de me pouvoir déplaire;...Ah! de grace, Daphnis ne me respecte pas," (62, 64).

¹⁹Michael Danahy, "La Princesse de Clèves: A Space of the Future," *The Feminization of the Novel* (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1991) 110, 111.

This last is relative to her "pudeur" getting in the way but the face value of "...ne me respecte pas" somehow lingers. Here again, once he has spoken she may speak; she can repeat what he has said: "Dès que tu m'auras dit ton amoureux souci,/ Je te dirai, Daphnis, hélas! je t'aime aussi:" (71, 72). His speech is the crucial demarcation (futur antérieur) after which she will be able to give voice to her sentiments (futur) but in essence she will again repeat what he has said. She does have the good lines though. It is she who articulates that she loves. But he is still the director: "Donne-moi le moyen de t'ouvrir ma pensée,/ Ne me refuse pas un signe de ta part," (74, 75); she must wait for her cue and it may not come, without it she cannot participate.

All that follows can continue to be read as a sad commentary on the plight of women in a virilocal²⁰ society. She makes her pleas to the Gods as to how unfair it all is to the "fragile Amante" and asks them to either give her other laws or give her another heart: "Donnez-lui d'autres loix, ou bien un autre coeur." (108). But she resigns herself with a sort of existential courage to what exists saying that she will not compromise the mask she must wear but that her face will one day make known her feelings to her lover. There will be a strange deathly-pale change:

L'étrange changement de mon visage blême
Te fera quelque jour connoître que je t'aime;
De mon teint abbatu la mortelle paleur
Te dira mon amour, sans blesser ma pudeur;

Fragility is the operative word in this elegy: the Gods she beseech are the authors of her fragility, she is the fragile lover,

²⁰This neologism is Michael Danahy's from *The Feminization of the Novel* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991) 105.

and in the lines above there is the image of deathly whiteness, certainly a sign of fragility. But it is this very fragileness which empowers: mention of the word author is significant; she is elevated to lover, albeit fragile; and it is a kind of fragility (her sudden pallor) which will get the message across, despite the mask a woman must wear. And that mask of course is silence. Author, whiteness, silence, death. One thinks of writing: the author, the whiteness of the page, the silence and the fact that once written there is an intractability to the words, a definity as with death. One senses that the process of getting those words written is being compared to the delicateness of a female communicating her love to her lover despite the societal silence she must keep, but once done it is set, like death. Death need not further obscure the communication but may even insure it.

THREE FOCUS SHIFTS

FIRST, A PROGRESSION:

I have demonstrated, beginning with the earliest of these eleven elegies, that when there was a male persona narrating and, therefore, the female was addressed, this was done directly; the male summoned her into his space. Then too, if the male narrated, he not only moved himself at will but he moved her around, often leaving the female as abruptly as he had ordered her entrance. If he spoke, his language was more direct: often typified by affirmative direct verbs of locution or will and often in the present or passe compose tenses. The female narrator certainly did not summon the male nor did she intrude, unbidden, into his space,

instead she often talked of his vestiges in a space he had vacated or she imagined him in the space that is her own mind's eye. Language, too, was more indirect when a female narrated; the verbs tending not to denote action or firmness of mind and they were often in the conditional or couched in the negative. The discrepancies in the way the male persona really filled space; dominated it and the female hovered, phantom-like on its fringes or seemed to be placed, like a cardboard doll, against one backdrop after another was most clearly seen, of course, in "Sur une Jalousie" where a female persona begins the narration and a male persona takes over the narrative. Language in the differently-gendered portions of this and other earlier poems reflected the differences discussed above. But in the course of examining the poems, chronologically, there was a progression, too, as the female (narrator and addressee) became more and more empowered; these were subtle gains, a toehold here, one there, but a progression nonetheless.

SECOND, AN ARRAY:

THE FEMALE ARSENAL

En vain pour se contraindre, on prend un soin extrême;
 Tout parle dans l'amour jusqu'au silence même.
 Astrate, act II, scène 3.

It is useful to reiterate the devices--the turns or turns of phrase--the female finds to avail herself of. Enumerating them highlights the cumulative effect of the array of resources this not so powerful female--a poetic device herself--takes possession of. But first it is important to echo Danahy's reinterpretation of the

ending of *La Princesse de Clèves*. He states that she is not "une personnalité sans étoffe", as some critics have maintained, because she does not marry Nemours and instead chooses to live in a convent six months of the year. Similar to her turning her back when no privacy is granted her, her "refus" is based on her assessment of what is possible: totally free space she cannot have but female space she can; she can be in possession of a space where males cannot gain access to her (in the convent) and, as a widow, she has the freedom to come and go freely in the residence where she spends the other half of the year. She has gained privacy and anonymity.²¹

1) The female in the La Suze elegies begins by listening and repeating like Echo, and though that is all she can do, it is important in light of what comes after: 2) She talks to other women, female deities or feminized ghosts or shadows. 3) She writes to another woman, not to seek an end to her unhappiness but to feel satisfied within herself. The fact that this idea is inscribed within the framework of the poem gives it special significance: a poem is written by a woman to women (it is not unlikely that the intended readers were women), wherein its female narrator writes to another woman; narrators and narratees are all female. 4) She turns into herself, *away from her fractured views and within herself for a true and whole image* though she ends up *boring into herself*. 5) Similarly, she finds freedom and comfort

²¹On the level of language her "aveu" and her "refus" were her ways of changing the order of language but perhaps her silence at the end of the novel was the most powerful manifestation there is of self-assertiveness.

in her soliloquies. 6) Even the fact that she is often disembodied represents a kind of power, like the princess who created walls where none existed to prevent being looked upon, the female persona blocks the male from having total access to her by splitting. 7) In the last elegy as "la fragile Amante" the female achieves a name preferable to "Maîtresse": the name/word is indicative not of being the receptor of another's will and acts but one who possesses power, the power of being an agent of her own life. The word "Amante" seems to stand in relief, made stronger instead of weakened by its companion adjective "fragile". Perhaps this phrase was not intended as an oxymoron, but it reads that way in this poem. And, finally, in the same elegy, the female achieves "l'étrange changement" which results in effective non-verbal communication. It is in this last elegy where the female narrator is the most powerful and the elegy ends in perfect silence, and true to Astrate's convictions, the lover (female here) has placed love above all else, including life. The female persona's attempts at resolution of the inequities were neither meager nor unsuccessful.

THIRD: THE INTERSTICES BETWEEN THE THREE CYCLES

What has transpired between the cycles? From the first cycle of four poems to the second cycle of three it is not only the female who is empowered but the male, therefore, who looks diminished. In "Jalousie", for example, one palpable measure of this reversal is that the male voice can be described as shrill and

strident, two pejorative adjectives which have usually been reserved for describing female characters/voices in literature. In fact, the overall change has been substantial. The old paradigms reminiscent of "amour courtois" i.e.: submission of the lover etc. (to which the "tendre" poetry still played homage) are changing. In the first cycle, though the poems lament, even rather bitterly at times, they do not really question the desirability of that representation of love: male and female both aspiring to love, struggling and becoming a slave to it but never attaining it. The poetry of this second cycle begins to emerge as something quite different.

In fact paradigm suggests another word which may prove very appropriate here. The word *exemplum*, as Robert Lyons has illustrated in his book by the same name, has a second and rarer meaning: a clearing in the forest.²² This second cycle can indeed be looked upon as a sort of clearing, a place where what is familiar has become tiresome; a line in "Tristesse" is apt where the female persona says (18): "Tout ce qui me plaisoit, aujourd'hui m'importune,". Leaving off with the old models leaves gaps and in order to fill them new ideas are tried which may give an impression both of raggedness and of the space not really being filled. All three of the poems in the second cycle were a departure: "Tristesse" started out similarly to the preceding poems but gave rise to a certain joyousness and abandon; "Fièvre et foible raison" though it turns very little, its turn at the end is unexpected and

²²John D. Lyons, *Exemplum: the Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989) 3.

self-reflective and "Jalousie" is nothing if not a bitter writhing against the existing code of love and a twist to avoid the same predictable ending.

There is an extreme "talkiness" in all the elegies of La Suze--arguably the four making up this final cycle may be less so because the narrator and his/her gender need not be deciphered amidst many voices. Certainly all four of these elegies can be labeled "talky" and they begin as though the principal action, such as it is in this type of poetry, has transpired and the poem is a retelling; the reader is engaged to listen to the explanations for what happened. "Ah! qu'il est dangereux quand on a bien aimé," and "Iris, tous vos sermens n'étoient donc que des feintes," utilize past tenses respectively, to recount that since the male narrator last viewed Phénice he has frequented several others but is now ready to take up his chains and, in the latter which is much less light, to retrace a long, meandering path where the male narrator alternates between complaining/seeking redress for his ill-treatment at the hands of Iris and hope that he may be mistaken before finally summoning the courage to leave his beloved. In "En vain, charmante Iris, j'oppose ma constance/Aux douleurs que me cause une si longue absence:" even with the first two words the narrator announces that this will be a tale of a male persona who has suffered a losing equation. With "O Dieux! seroit-il vrai que l'amour m'eut soumise?" there is not so much a feeling of a retelling within this particular elegy as it is the idea of encapsulating the key question in all this poetry and allowing it to be the very first line of the poem.

These poems are united, too, in possessing a certain detachment as well as a directness. These two impressions are often blended in the same lines. The male persona in the poem, "Iris, tous vos sermens n'étoient donc que des feintes," who is not resigned at the end to his lot as submissive lover nevertheless attests to having his feelings diluted:

Iris, si je pouvois avoir autant de haine (61)
Pour votre esprit esprit léger, qu'il me coûte de
peine,

.....
.....

Mais le seul souvenir de notre intelligence (65)
Ne peut me conseiller qu'une douce ven-
geance.

The oxymoron expresses it well, it is a gentle vengeance.

Though a certain "délayage" of feelings may be present in these poems of 1668 the delay in penetrating through to other layers of the poems brought on by wondering who was speaking and of which gender is absent. This delay, this obfuscation, this ridge added a certain texture (architexture, to use Mary Ann Caws' word.)²³ Removing it allows the reader a greater accessibility to the poetry but, as with the announcement of the outcome as of the first line, accessibility and directness come at a price: a dimension is lost. These last poems--with the exception of the one with a female narrator--are more formulaic; they point toward "la galanterie sceptique et libertine" nascent then in poetry, yet they retain more than a pale embodiment of "la galanterie vertueuse ou

²³Mary Ann Caws, *The Eye in the Text: Essays on Perception, Mannerist to Modern*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981) 8-10. Caws also attributes the term to Gérard Genette though the sense in which he uses it is different: "Passage du poème: interrogation au seuil" (CAIEF, no 30, May 1978) 225-243.

fine ou belle".²⁴ Just as the second cycle broke with the romanesque more evident in the earliest four elegies, the elegy "O Dieux! seroit-il vrai que l'amour m'eut soumise?" is a departure within its own cycle.

Is this "last"²⁵ elegy a return back to the earliest poems, in respect to the representation of love? Typical of the directness in this cycle, the female narrator is not esconced in a poem where other personae figure prominently, be they deistic or spectral addressees, or an encroaching male who will supplant her as narrator. As she answers her own question, "Can it be that love will have conquered me?" her voice does not falter in its affirmative reply; it is not, however, that of a victim or a martyr. Moreover it seems to go beyond being a female persona's voice, or a female voice, and it is the strongest example there is of the "Unlying I" (that I spoke of earlier) and may be seen as the culmination of all the voices. This "I" speaks without pretention, without affectation, has no pity for herself and no illusions. And though it may have in common with Astrate its silent, powerful ending, this is not the same voice heard in the earlier poems by La Suze: it is more assured, less dependent, clearer. "L'heureuse obscurité" of *L'Astrate* has been left behind.

²⁴These terms are found in Jean-Michel Pelous' *Amour précieux, amour galant* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1980).

²⁵Reading this elegy as the last is arbitrary since all four were first published in the same year.

STORYLESS

or

ONE STORY LESS

Carolyn Heilbrun puts forth the provocative idea that F. Scott Fitzgerald's wife, Zelda, was *storyless*.²⁶ I will look one last time at the eleven elegies to ascertain whether there is any indication in the text which supports the idea that La Suze was perhaps not storyless but that something was usurped. Was there at least one story that didn't get told?

As the story unfolds in the elegy, "Sur une jalousie", the male certainly usurps the narrative begun by the female. Focusing more on the language, though: in "Belle et sage Daphné, merveille de nos jours," there is the line: "Faut-il donc qu'un *Tyran* usurpe votre *empire*," (68). And in more than half of this corpus of elegies--six out of eleven--there is a variation of this sentence. In "Sur une absence" it is "Que son Empire va jusqu'à la Tyrannie" (67); in "Le Printemps.." it is: "Voilà tous les tourmens qu'on souffre en son empire"(51); in "Tristesse..." there is the following: "Je fléchis sous les loix de ton aimable empire" (117); in "En vain charmant Iris..." we have: "Mais de quelque côté que ce Tyran me meine (25); and in "Iris, tous vos serments..." the line reads: "Il fut de tout mon bien l'indigne usurpateur" (16). Three of these have male narrators; three have females. In all of them is embedded this idea of a tyrannical usurper of empires and

²⁶Carolyn Heilbrun says in *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Norton, 1988) 12, that it was not Fitzgerald who was destroyed by Zelda, but instead she by him, and that the real tragedy was that he usurped her narrative.

in all of them the Tyrant is Love (in "En vain charmante Iris" the tyrant is the rival but the prize is love) and in all of them the empire--what is at stake--could be said to be the narrative. Space was appropriated differently and language, too, revealed inequities depending on whether it was a male or female narrating. But transcending gender there is a thread which runs through all the elegies, be it stated directly with these three key words (tyrant, usurp, and empire) or not and that thread is revelatory of a profound preoccupation on the part of La Suze--that love, whatever its incarnations, *had* to be discussed. And that was all that could be discussed.

It is disconcerting to think that it is possible that an entire adult life--and not such a long one at that (fifty-five years)--was used up writing only poetry and only poetry about love and only in such ways as the century prescribed. That the poetry is innovative and it is good; that La Suze brought back the elegy and wrote verse with real passion; and that even among those contemporaries who also wrote good love poems hers is fresher. better has been ably and thoroughly pointed out.²⁷ But beyond that, the deepest tragedy may not be that the life seemed to have been used up endeavoring, rather unsuccessfully, to find happiness and satisfaction in love. (Perhaps the suffering had to be lived in order for her to write the poems she did.) The real tragedy may be that her narrative was used up on this one note; that it was

²⁷Again, I have not repeated this since Y.Fukui has done an excellent job demonstrating this in *Raffinement précieux dans la poésie française du XVIIIème siècle*.

usurped by an idea, a taste, an obsession.

One senses, upon initial examination, that these elegies, embellished as they are by a talkiness and a capriciousness as to the gender of the narrator, are a testament to what got left out; what was not said. One wants to ascertain what that might be. Just as authors like Madame de Lafayette and Madame de Villedieu have been meticulously reread, La Comtesse de La Suze deserves this same close focus. And the reading which I have proposed here certainly provides a counterpart for the ideas that her life was lived rather pathetically in search of love and that her poetry can be read either as a cover-up of what certain of her contemporaries viewed as a life of debauchery or as a faithful chronicle of the emptiness of that life. Simply putting the surviving attributable elegies in chronological order and including their interstices tells a story. And structuring space and language as to their appropriation within that arrangement provides a reading and a story which goes some distance in filling the lacuna suggested by earlier readings. That deeper story and the poetry of Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze should be privileged as the reasons her name should be adjoined to the growing corpus of feminist works written by women alongside the more well-known drama of her famous conversion to Catholicism and the infamous public trial she had to endure to obtain the divorce and liberation from a husband she loathed.

Chapter III

WATCHWOR (L) D

Lecteur, ie suis encore à naistre.
 Si pourtant tu me veux connestre,
 Ie suis sous toy, ie suis dessus;
 Ie suis à peine imaginable:
 Dans la bourse ie suis un Diable,
 Et quand ie suis, ie ne suis plus.

Ie suis le grand coffre du monde;
 Ma nature fut si seconde
 Que tout fut engendré de moy
 Ie suis le vaste inaccessible,
 Ie suis le point indivisible,
 Et le bien d'une gueux comme toy.

Ce qu'a fait un larron qu'on juge,
 Ce que respecta le deluge,
 Ce qui sert aux Cieux de soustien,
 Ce qu'un recors ne sçauroit estre
 Ce qu'on sçait quand on ne sçait rien,
 C'est, Lecteur, mon nom, & mon estre.¹

"La Montre" the prose/poetry work by the Comtesse de La Suze belongs to a tradition of such works which began much earlier in the century. It was Théophile de Viau who first conceived of the idea of not just blending poetry with prose but uniting them in such a way that they formed one body and one narration. (Prior to that, works combining the two genres had been written but not with the same narrative thread.) Théophile's first integrated prose/poetry work was in his *Immortalité de l'Ame*. It was determined, though, that this "new" genre was not fitting for works of a serious nature which should be written either in poetry or prose. But it was appropriate for works which were "jeux d'esprit"

¹This poem is anonymous. *Poésies de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1653) 188.

etc. La Suze's "La Montre" is certainly a witty work about love which contrasts sharply with the disillusionment, disappointment and despair, suffered at love's hand, depicted in her elegiac poetry. What it does share with the elegies is a preoccupation with terms having to do with debts, payments, creditors etc.; in fact the whole work is a sort of payment.² Its wittiness extends to masking not only the identity of the addressee but the author as well.

"La Montre" is a story of time; my discovery of it presents a story of two texts and two times. I encountered the last third of the work first, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, published as an integral text.³ This shorter version begins with the section entitled IMPOSSIBILITE DE DORMIR followed by several sections all with the word "songe(s)" in them: CONVERSATION EN SONGE, CAPRICESS A SOUFFRIR EN SONGES, JALOUSIE EN SONGE, RUPTURE EN SONGE, RACCOMMODEMENT EN SONGE and SONGES DIVERS. This nighttime/dreamtime text did not seem incomplete or jarring; though it has no introductory framework it does have a tight unity. It was lovely as a separate text and intriguing because of its mystery.

I later found the longer version, with the nighttime text as its conclusion, under the title, "La Montre", in the Library of

²The title "Watchwor(l)d has to do with the fact that the work is written as payment. A watchword is a premeditated reply to a challenge. "La Montre" is a meticulously arranged reply to a challenge and there is the implication that the world it represents is an exclusive one.

³*Oeuvres galantes de M Cotin tant en vers qu'en prose* (Paris: Loyson, 1665) tom. II, 292-307. There are several pieces belonging to La Suze in this volume.

Congress.⁴ The first two thirds of the work gives the opposite impression of mystery: it is meticulously laid out beginning with a preface, an introduction and an explanation of its "hours".

The story which surrounds the attribution of "La Montre" to La Suze involves looking at a work published not by her but written about her by a contemporary: Hercule de Lacger, Sieur de Massuguiès.⁵ Lachèvre touches upon the subject of La Suze's many lovers in his introduction; it is relevant here that she was involved first with Hercule Lacger and then Pierre de Rambouillet.⁶ Lachèvre identifies Iris as the Comtesse de La Suze and establishes that Damon is Pierre de Rambouillet.⁷ The date for *Vers pour Iris* is given by Lachèvre as 1649-1650. The date, therefore, for "La

⁴I found the entire work in the Library of Congress volume: *Henriette de Coligny, comtesse de la Suze, Nouveau recueil de pièces choisies contenant lettres galantes en poésie & en prose* (Paris: Editions Trevoux, 1741) 255-307.

⁵This volume is extant in the Library of Congress: *Le Livre d'Amour d'Hercule de Lacger, sieur de Massuguiès: Vers pour Iris (Henriette de Coligny, comtesse de la Suze) publié sur le manuscrit original inédit avec une notice par Frédéric Lachèvre* (Paris: Editions E. Sansot, 1910).

⁶Emile Magne comments throughout his book, *Femmes Galantes du XVIIe siècle: Madame de la Suze (Henriette de Coligny) et la Société précieuse* (Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1908), both on the number and celebrity of the men with whom La Suze was believed to have been involved. He cites the following men as her lovers, in the order they appeared in her life: Le Marquis René de Bruc-Montplaisir; Le Pasteur Bruguier (with whom she wrote a parody on a religious text, scandalizing everyone); Hercule de Lacger; Hacqueville; Henri de Daillon, Comte du Lude; L'Abbe d'Effiat (possibly); Pierre de Rambouillet; Henri de Guise, Duc de Lorraine. Many of La Suze's contemporaries believed she wrote her elegies to one particular lover: Le Marquis de Flamarens, who was killed in the Fronde and may have been for her what Antoine de Villegieu was to Marie-Catherine Desjardins; others believed Raincy to have been the man she wrote to and about most often.

⁷Lachèvre cites the manuscript Bibl. nat., Fonds français, Mss. 19145 as that which proves identity.

Montre" may very well be 1651-1652 (because of a well-documented duel which took place.) Several sources cite Lacger as having been a mentor to La Suze;⁸ writing "La Montre" and addressing it to Rambouillet, lightly coded as Damon, may have been a way not only of expressing affection for someone but of proclaiming herself as a writer worthy of notice. (Incidentally, in her own lifetime, she would have much more fame as a writer than Lacger, or for that matter, Rambouillet.)

Attribution in seventeenth-century France involved more than simply assigning a work to an author; it engendered a discussion of what it meant to sign a literary work, or in some other way, of making it known that the work belonged to a particular writer. Coyness lay at the heart of the issue; an author often withheld his or her name, at least for a while. The reason was often to create intrigue but even that was something of a farce.⁹ Writers' identities were widely known in their small, tight circle; not only did everyone know what everyone else was doing but he or she knew who wrote what and with whose assistance. Authors could afford to be coy about claiming a work; the fact that they often were did obfuscate authorship. For women, creating doubt--especially hinting that a man *may* have authored a work--could improve its

⁸Subligny and Montplaisir were the other two writers rumored to have helped guide La Suze's earliest writings.

⁹Only 10% of the population of France at the time could read and write. Of that, a smaller percentage of nobles were literate Parisians; not all of these persons were intellectuals. And only some of those Parisian intellectuals were writers.

reception.¹⁰ Salon collectives and literary partnerships were common practice; there existed an astonishing tolerance, by today's standards, for aiding and being aided in one's literary creations.¹¹ Traceable or not, authors often chose to veil their authorship.

Perhaps the most famous incidence of this playfulness is the following by Madame de Lafayette as to whether she authored *La Princesse de Clèves* wherein she 1) disclaims herself as author 2) praises the work 3) admits she is a privileged party, hinting that she may be the author after all:

For myself I am flattered that people suspect me and I believe I would acknowledge the book, if I were assured the author would never ask for it back...There is nothing farfetched (romanesque) or laborious about it; in fact it is not a novel: it is properly a memoir, and that was according to what I have been told, the title of the book, but it was changed.¹²

Does La Suze manifest the same playfulness as Lafayette concerning her own authorship? I have not found letters attesting to that but in the text of "La Montre" itself--written in the form of a letter--there are two instances worth noting. In the first,

¹⁰This obfuscation of authorship in the seventeenth century ultimately worked against the author, particularly with poetry; there are many poems which are attributed to two or more authors and many are attributed to no one. The one at the beginning entitled "Enigme" is anonymous.

¹¹Joan deJean discusses salon collectives and attribution at great length. It is she who cites the following from a 1663 letter to Madeleine de Scudéry from La Rochefoucauld: "You so improved some of my last maxims that they belong to you far more than to me." Joan deJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 98.

¹²This is from Madame de Lafayette, *Correspondance*, 2, p. 63. The translation is Joan deJean's from *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 99.

it is her use of third person narration which cuts away to first person and then back to third and all within the same sentence. The reader's attention is caught by the capriciousness of the narration in this sentence which appears in the opening paragraph, a sort of preface to the introduction:

Iris différoit toujours, & Damon ne se laissoit point de demander; mais comme je ne prétens pas ici raconter leurs aventures, ni rapporter tous leurs Billets, on n'y trouvera que La Montre que cette charmante fille lui envoya.

What impression do we get from this vacillation? Is this "je" suddenly the author permitting "herself" identification rather than remaining the omniscient unnamed narrator? The impression is rather that of a third person(a) intruding into the text, distinct from "Iris", the name we know to be the narrator of the text--even that Iris is sometimes seen from without, as here--and Iris, the pseudonym for the Comtesse de La Suze. By its very emergence "je" acts as a wedge, further separating "Iris" (in the text) from Iris (La Suze). This is not unlike the separateness--and blurring of Proust's Marcel, the narrator, and the first person narrator and, of course, the author whose name is also Marcel. Though not as layered, the sudden appearance of this "je" is also like the main character in a film, through whose eyes the film unravels, who suddenly looks at the camera and creates, in essence, another persona.¹³

The choice of the word "ici" implies that elsewhere this same "je" will divulge more; but this is the last sentence of the

¹³An example of a film where this happens is "Eden et Après" written and directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet.

preface. There will be a further bifurcation of "je". The first person narrator of the introduction and the work orchestrates; this one relates. This "je" seemed to emerge as through a magic wall in the course of the preface, not unlike the sconces/heads in Cocteau's "La Belle et La Bête". And like the heads, this narrator seems to indicate that there is an exclusive world (là) and that (she) alone may or may not grant entrance.

The second instance occurs in the next section, entitled IRIS A DAMON which is the introduction to the work, written in first person narration and in the form of a letter. La Suze begins to play with narration and attribution, not unlike the way Lafayette did in the earlier passage. Suddenly--in the midst of speech by a first person narrator understood to be "Iris"--comes the introduction of a third person, "l'Ouvrier", followed by first person narration once more:

La considération de l'Ouvrier vous doit faire estimer l'ouvrage; et bien que ce ne soit pas un chef-d'oeuvre, vous me devez sçavoir quelque gré d'avoir travaillé pour vous. Il est vrai que je ne sçaurois me vanter d'avoir été seule à l'achever...

This statement enlarges the frame of reference; it seems to be made not only to the fictional addressee in the letter, Damon--as well as the real person and writer--but to the reader. The statement of modesty in the passage is similar to Lafayette's: the work is not a masterpiece; that is mitigated by the next sentence which says if it is a great work she/"je"/l'ouvrier cannot claim to be the sole author of such a work. In the first instance ("Iris differoit...") there was an intrusion of not so much an "ouvrier" as a privileged extra character. But in the passage above it *is* the artisan/writer

and once "je" is mentioned there is a sort of doubling: one of them certainly steps outside to comment on the work (she) has just laid claim to.

The complexity of narration, this emergence of what almost amounts to another persona in the preface and this worker within and without the work in the introduction to "La Montre" may not be so dissimilar to what happens in La Suze's poetry. In poetry there are no interstices, at least not like those into which the narrator/author steps to comment¹⁴ as just seen in "La Montre" or in a novel like Villegieu's *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* where Sylvie embroiders between the letters. But in La Suze's elegies the narrative shifts (and the way a persona metamorphoses into another, of another gender) also give pause to the reader and hint at the presence of the author manipulating the text.

The passage at the end of the IRIS A DAMON section, explaining the parameters of the work, goes as follows:

Mais je dois vous expliquer ma Montre. Elle marque les vingt-quatre heures qui composent le jour & la nuit. Au-dessus de chaque heure vous trouverez écrit ce que vous devez faire durant cette heure-là. Toutes les demi-heures sont marquées par des soupirs; parce que le propre d'un Amant est de soupirer jour et nuit, outre que les soupirs sont des enfants qui naissent à toute heure. Toutefois afin que ma Montre soit juste, il faut que l'Amour la conduise & que le mouvement soit enfermé dans votre coeur.

Here again, the "vous" in the first sentence seems to address not only Damon, the narratee in the text but Damon (Pierre de

¹⁴Maurice Scève's dizain 332 is interesting in this aspect: the narrator--a sort of director--then steps into his own poem as an actor.

Rambouillet), the narratee outside, and the reader. The next impression is one of enclosure and of temporal demarcations, with indications linked to each of these. All is quite classical: very symmetrical, controlled. The word "mouvement" is not used here in the Baroque sense of being unleashed. This is a movement which will be imprisoned twice; it is enclosed inside an organ (the heart) which already lies encased within a body. The text specifies that in order that the watch be accurate love must be the guide and the movement must be thus interiorized. In the preface there was another sort of interstice, an ellipse, with the mention of the "discrétion" that Damon had asked of Iris. The narrator's comment is "I wouldn't dream of recounting their adventures or reporting all their letters; one will find only 'La Montre'." With the mention of "La Montre" the narrator characterizes the work as love encapsulated in a time-piece but also time pressed onto the pages of a text.

Either way it is a very *calculated* work. Terms having to do with debts, creditors, payments are sprinkled throughout most of La Suze's poetry; in "La Montre" they begin with the second sentence of the introduction, IRIS A DAMON: "Créancier, vos dettes, insolvable, sortir d'affaire, pour vous payer."¹⁵ With the clause: "Je veux enfin sortir d'affaire, je suis fille de parole..." she

¹⁵It is implied that this whole work is a payment for a "discrétion". The idea of payment by poetry is interesting. L'Abbé Cotin, who had long had relations with the La Suze family, befriended the Comtesse de La Suze and published some of her poetry; one day he borrowed her carriage and as payment wrote two madrigals and one sonnet for her. *Oeuvres galantes de M. Cotin tant en vers qu'en prose* (Paris: Loyson, 1665) tom II, 256-257.

wants to close their books on her debts by giving him a "Montre" (a watch/how-to manual) which "servira moins à vous montrer les heures, qu'à vous enseigner comment vous devez les employer." Important to her is the idea of following some preordained order of time and of filling a preordained absence. But it will not be an amorphous space because first it will be divided into manageable, metered out spaces which will then be filled completely.¹⁶ Space and time come together; time is used to fill space. The next sentence is telling: "Vous y verrez tout ce que vous devez faire pendant mon absence, & je ne l'ai faite enfin que pour servir de règle à toutes vos actions." The obvious expression referred to is "régler une (sa) montre"; its natural extension would be "sur celle de quelqu'un" with the implication that something exists as a model and someone has created it. The next sentence is "La considération de l'Ouvrier..." where there is a consciousness about the writing--the work and the worker--the author. There is a space, an absence, a *vide*, pages waiting to be filled and Iris sends a (time) piece, whose rules Damon must set himself to. One writer is writing to another. Michel Foucault has a passage that is apropos:

Writing unfolds like a game [jeu] that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits. In writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears.¹⁷

Or appears. And, of course, this slippage of the body writing is what cannot be calculated.

¹⁶This is space managed very differently than in her poetry.

¹⁷Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?", *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984) 102.

It is important that directly following this self reflexion comes the short sentence, "Peut-être, Damon, vous dites déjà en vous-même:" followed by the first of the poetic inserts. There is a sort of symmetry here: inside/outside. Beginning with the sentence "La considération de l'Ouvrier..." we see a movement from the outside inward, from the creator to the created. As we move inward there is an augmentation of value, the worker adds value to the work: "La considération de l'Ouvrier (capitalized) vous doit faire estimer l'ouvrage;" (lower case). There is manifest a certain modesty, though it may not be a masterpiece, the addressee should feel a certain obligation. We move back outward again with "Il est vrai que je ne sçaurois me vanter d'avoir été seule à l'achever."; the work has now become paramount and the "Ouvrier" has turned back into the simple "je". This transformation from third person to first has re-valued, has upgraded the work.

And now we are really outside with the projection onto the addressee's thoughts: "Peut-être, Damon, vous dites déjà en vous-même." Then there is the first poetic insert with the explanation for why the work--though not a masterpiece--is somehow good enough for the author not to have created it alone: "Qu'Amour m'en fournit le dessein,/Que du fonds de mon coeur il a conduit ma main." The author can claim modesty because the work has become of great value and the element which made it so is love=passion. This element in La Suze's poetry is fresh and different from what her contemporaries had been and were writing. What is in keeping with tradition (Théophile having been the first to write such a prose/poetry work) is that the narrative thread is never lost. In

prose the author suggests to the narratee that he *may* say to himself: "Peut-être, Damon, vous dites déjà en vous même." But what he would have said (to himself) is rendered in first person in the narrator's voice and in poetry:

Qu'Amour m'en fournit le dessein,
Que du fonds de mon coeur il a conduit ma main.

This is then followed by a prose sentence which in effect says: "But you can say what you please..."

The discussion of love is increasingly marked by a certain rigor: "Ce n'est pas un méchant maître que l'Amour...Quand il fait un métier..."¹⁶ and leads directly to the "explications" discussed before: "Mais je dois vous expliquer ma Montre." Love unfettered has a short life; it is soon regulated once again...by a time-piece.

AGREABLE REVERIE & DESSEIN DE NE PLAIRE A PERSONNE

This section is an envoi to the nighttime third of the text which involves sleep and dreams where there will be a sort of *rapprochement* of the narrator and the addressee as there is a coming together of time(s):

Afin de vous entrnir [entretenir]
De votre passion ainsi que de la mienne,
Faites dans votre esprit que le passé revienne,
Et rendez présent l'avenir.

Maurice Blanchot has evoked the idea of two beings who do not exist in the same time; his example is from *La Prisonnière* where Marcel never feels so close to Albertine as when she is sleeping: "Le narrateur...n'était jamais aussi proche que lorsqu'elle dormait parce qu'alors la distance...permettait une communication idéale,

¹⁶In her elegies love was indeed "méchant" and a "maître".

il est vrai seulement idéale, réduite à la beauté vaine, à la pureté vaine de l'idée."¹⁹

In the next section, in the last poetic insert, one phrase announces the concept of "le mal de l'absence" which comes on the next page. Here it concerns love whereas when it next appears it is followed directly with an allusion to writing:

Que par une effet du destin
 Qui rend l'absence un mal extrême,
 Dès qu'un Amant ne voit pas ce qu'il
 aime,
 Il voit tout avecque chagrin.

As often happens throughout this work, writing gives way to love or love gives way to writing. Here the latter: "qui rend l'absence un mal extrême" changes to "le mal de l'absence est souvent charmé...par ces aimables caractères..." which is in *LECTURE DES BILLETS*. As with two beings in separate realities who really achieve true communication love's disappointments can be recharacterized, reinscribed in writing to achieve a new truth.

LECTURE DES BILLETS

With the paragraph immediately following the poetic insert, beginning: "La lecture de mes Billets peut vous occuper une heure..." there is an impression that the narrator could just as well be saying: "La lecture de mon oeuvre peut vous occuper une heure..." When she talks of Damon reading the letters with care: "vous devez les lire avec attention, en peser même tous les mots." she may also be worried about how her words are weighed by her readers. It becomes a suggestion and an invitation to see beyond

¹⁹Maurice Blanchot, *La Communauté Inavouable* (Paris: Minuit, 1983) 64, 65.

the face of things--beyond the face of a watch. With the words "qu'elle auroit bien de la peine à lui écrire," she is also talking about how difficult writing itself is; with "Que de plaisirs que vous gouterez" (after the insert) she may be confessing that her hope lies in the pleasure the text will bring to the reader. There is also the hint that the writer has taken pleasure in her own text.

HEURE A ECRIRE

The sentence "Celui qui a trouvé le moyen de se communiquer les pensées hors de la portée de la voix, étoit quelque chose au-dessus de l'humain." is reminiscent of the lines from one of her commendatory poems (in chapter one). In those lines La Suze was conscious of the legendary high standing of her family--and how this had been achieved--and hoped that through her verses she could reach such glorious heights:

Que mon sort seroit glorieux,
Si, par mes Vers ambitieux,
Je fais autant pour ma Princesse,
Qu'ont fait mes Aieux autrefois,
Par leur épée & leur adresse,
Pour le service de nos Rois!

In "La Montre" she so values writing as to say it can lift the writer to heights beyond her own mortality. Following this declaration are the lines: "Pour moi, quoiqu'on en veuille dire,/Je crois que l'amour seul a trouvé l'art d'écrire." This is her explanation of how good writing is possible; she may be talking about her choice of love as the major theme of her life--and her poetry--and she may be talking about the love of writing as essential to the art of writing. Again, as in the introduction, if her writing is good, real passion is the reason. There is Proust's

thought that it is art (writing) which will transcend the pain of love and finally even life. For La Suze it is love which can ferret out the "art" of writing. With Proust art/writing will emerge as though at the end of a long tunnel, justifying the vicissitudes of the journey--or a climb upward out of a vertical shaft (there is his imagery of people on stilts.) With her, the image would be that love is the key to unlock the door--but the task is almost insuperable--there is a chaos of innumerable, identical doors. At least, that would be the case in the elegies.

The "mal de l'absence" is not only that of the loved one but has to do with the art of writing. The image of a blankness--a tabula rasa--is apt but, instead of the image of a fresh beginning, there is something ominous, a sense of facing the blank page alone and feeling the onus of having to fill it. In Isak Dinesen's story "The Blank Page" the white unsoiled linen fragment is culpable. Here the darkness of the absence is brightened by "ces aimables caractères", the letters on the page. But the implication is that the blankness of the page is overcome with great difficulty by women, writing. The sentence "C'est un art trop ingénieux pour avoir été trouvé par les hommes..." is worth noting. The words "ingénieux" and "trouvé" create a labyrinthine image whereby the art of writing is so elusive and deceptive that only women with their wit can uncover it. The thought which follows is that writing with passion is preferable to writing with wit. The narrator's theory on writing, then, says that though it takes the ingenuity of women to uncover the real art of writing, its very existence is only possible through love. After the next insert is

the prose passage "Au reste, un Billet est un merveilleux Agent auprès d'une Maîtresse; il la persuade presque toujours, & il retouche dans son coeur des impressions que l'absence pourroit bien effacer." The word "effacer" is perhaps the other side of the "mal de l'absence", that is, the concern that the writing will not live on. A picture is coming together of the great responsibility of writing, the intimidation of the blank page and the equally disquieting feeling that once the page is filled it may be effaced. In the next poetic insert time is introduced into "le mal de l'absence"; the lover--and the writer--suffers when time forbids him/her from seeing, from speaking and from writing. Time is empowered with the ability to efface what is written but also time had to be consecrated to writing in the first place. We see:

Quand vous y passerez du matin jusqu'au soir,
 Vous n'en recevrez point de honte,
 Le tems que vous mettez à ce petit devoir,
 Et un temps dont je vous tiens compte.

Here there is a lecturette on writing with a special warning about time's role to be factored into one's responsibility--and duty--to write.

Throughout the next four hours (and the next five sections) Damon is to be sociable--but only as far as civility demands--as he, of necessity, encounters others leaving church, has lunch and pays social calls. The titles of the sections, in particular, have a certain rigor: in DEVOIR INDISPENSABLE Damon is to go to church and is not to confuse the act with sociability; in ENTRETIENS FORCEZ he has to listen to that society, portrayed as ridiculous people who talk nonsense: drivel on political matters they know

nothing about and gossip.²⁰ The repetition of hyperbolic numbers in many of these lines: "cent choses..milles nouvelles ridicules...cent diverses personnes...cent affairs" amplifies the impression that these words are on the other extreme end of those which elevate in good writing.

VISITES UN PEU DANGEREUSES

With "Il n'est pas aisé de se gouverner juste en ces rencontres; le moyen le plus sur est que vous vous imaginiez que je lis toutes vos pensées, que j'observe tous vos regards, & que j'écoute toutes vos paroles," there is the desire--and the fantasy--that she has the power to read even Damon's thoughts. This is the reverse of how women were usually portrayed--and must have felt--in literature of the time. In *La Princesse de Clèves* and in *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* women were spied upon from the cover of darkness or from behind bushes and were even invaded in their own rooms.²¹ The implication is that despite women's lack of real power in society, in the domain of writing, women could at least have power over their creations, over the thoughts of the characters they created.²² Here, as in La Suze's

²⁰In Villedieu's *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*, discussed in chapter five, it is that same society--through its greed, jealousy etc.--which heaps misfortune on Sylvie over and over.

²¹Besides the well-known pavillon scene and one where Mme de Clèves is in her own quarters, in *La Princesse de Clèves*, I am thinking in particular of the scene in Villedieu's novel where Sylvie is spied upon from behind bushes in what is now the Jardin des Plantes in Paris.

²²Women still had to write in forms which were thought to be appropriate for them. I talk about this at some length in chapter five. There is also the incident in the life of Mme de Villedieu--alluded to in *Mémoires*--where Antoine de Villedieu tried to sell

elegies, there may be the same concern--and reluctance to relinquish control--once the work is created and it has a life of its own. The sentence which comes before "Il n'est pas aisé..." refers to the issue of infidelity; there is an almost obsessive desire for power in that domain as well, as though infidelity were a mechanism that could be reconfigured--and by-passed altogether--by reading another's thoughts.²³ The image of the workings of a watch is never far away.

PROMENADE SANS DESSEIN & DEMANDES EMPRESSES

The first section is unremarkable except for a certain lyricism underlined by a dream-like quality, a melancholy promenade during which the eyes are not to really focus on anything but should stare dreamily into space. In many of her elegies, where gaze is so important and its patterns so intricate, not focusing--non-vision--has a nightmarish quality to it instead of a dreamy pleasantness.

The second is a short segment nicely balanced between two poetic inserts and two prose sections. The ideas of speeding up and slowing down time are both present. There is the idea of wanting to know in a minute what one cannot begin to recount in an hour as well as postponing knowing to prolong the "agréable

her letters without her knowledge or consent; it was only because of his sudden death that she found out, and may have edited or deleted some before they were published. She was not able to block their publication.

²³Women--other women--are also presented as something to fear in this section since when exposed to "beauties" even faithful men become unfaithful. It is interesting to compare the treatment of men and fidelity here and in chapter five, both in Villedieu's novel and the La Suze elegy within it.

trouble". In what amounts to a re-creation in a mirror, Iris asks that the messenger *perform* for Damon her reaction to his last missive. This is the only instance where he will "see" her in a sense. And she will see herself split, as herself and her recreated image; she will exist in two times.

FACHEUX SOUVENIR & REFLEXIONS

The feeling of melancholy builds steadily to a crescendo. With the passage "Je ne veux pas toutefois que votre mélancolie soit extrême; vous pouvez être persuadé que je la partage avec vous, & cette pensée doit la diminuer" the accumulation of ennui and pain begins to taper off. Again the narrator as female is powerful; a mere thought from her acts as a balm for pain. The juxtaposition of pleasure/pain is quite evident in this text. Pleasure does not figure prominently in the elegies; when it does it is fleeting or illusory. The passage: "mais toutes les rigueurs que ma severité vous fit souffrir, doivent passer présentement dans votre esprit pour des sujets de plaisir, & vous devez juger du prix de mon affection par les difficultés que vous eûtes à toucher mon coeur," in the third prose passage in REFLEXIONS, is embellished by the poetic insert following which adds memory to the equation. It is memory which turns the pain to pleasure; this is not unlike the idea of writing which can reconfigure "le mal de l'absence."

Within that same section is a delightful segment of the text, and insert where the dance of lovers is marked out:

Lorsque je connus votre feu,
 Vous connûtes celui que vous aviez fait naître;
 Mais ce fut sans mon aveu
 Que je vous le fis connoître
 J'en cachois le secret dans le fonds de mon

coeur,²⁴
 Il est vrai que mes yeux en disoit quelque
 chose:
 Mais sur la foi des yeux un pauvre Amant
 s'expose
 A tomber souvent dans l'erreur.

An interesting choice of words here is "aveu." "Aveu" could be said to combine with "yeux" three lines later to form "un aveu des yeux." We are reminded of the famous "aveu" in *La Princesse de Clèves* which was unheard of at the time; this "aveu" is unheard--and capable of being misread. And, as often happens with the poetic insert and the prose text following, it is the prose details which move the text forward. Where there was only the avowal of the eyes in the insert, in the prose passage, "Je portai...", there is: 1) the eyes 2) the mouth 3) the letters. "Aveu" is picked up there as "avouez." What was wordless--became spoken words and finally written words--has had an effect on time. The silent "aveu" of love moved that story forward; the story of writing is that it confirms the truth of that "aveu."

REPAS DU SOIR & COMPLAISANCE

These two sections are light, like a well-ordered, handsomely furnished room but without any piece which offers itself up to the eye. Complaisance is aptly named; it is nicely balanced: the first poetic insert framed neatly between two prose texts of equal lengths. But beginning with "L'on n'a jamais..." the prose gives way to the poetry with just a line or two of prose remaining to offset the inserts; they are now prose inserts instead of poetry.

²⁴The idea evoked from this "fonds" is very different from that found in line 93 "les plus hideux poissons au fonds des abîmes" of the elegy which begins "Cruel persécuteur de la Terre et des Cieux".

There had been a gradual realigning of prose and poetry--longer poetic inserts and less prose--but until now it was subtle enough not to be noticed. "Complaisance" is apropos, too, in the sense that the watch seems to be winding down for the nighttime hours, and what can be read as a separate work.²⁵

IMPOSSIBILITE DE DORMIR

When this last third of "La Montre" is read as a complete text its beginning creates the same effect as that produced by La Suze's elegies: there is a monologue where neither the gender of the narrator nor that of the person being addressed is known. (The first indication that the narrator is talking to a male comes in the second prose passage with the thought that [he] might look for glory in the military, "Armées"; the narrator's gender is confirmed at the beginning of the next section, "...je suis assurée...".) There is real movement in this first section; a whole story is told. *Someone* may not be able to sleep. (When these sections are read as the ending of "La Montre" the narratee had long ago been established as Damon; the effect is more imaginative and intriguing when the shorter version is read as a separate text.) It is suggested that in his imagination he come to observe her secretly; this is like the pavillon scene in *La Princesse de Clèves* and also

²⁵It is possible that the two texts were written separately and later put together; it is unlikely that this shorter version was written first. I believe the probable scenario is that La Suze wrote the whole work and perhaps published it. Then she may have selected the last third as a piece that could stand alone and published that. (She did the same thing with many of her elegies and gave the newly cut versions titles.) Another possibility is that someone else cut the last third from its context.

like the dreamlike scene in *Villette* where Lucy slips out at night in men's clothing to observe but not to be seen. The intrigue is heightened here by the mystery surrounding the voyeur; [he] is still genderless and nameless.

It is more than gender and identity which are blurred. The [male] addressee--creation turned character--is invited to participate in his own text by embellishing it with scenes the [female] narrator--creator turned character--cannot access but wherein she imagines herself being watched. The creation may even have the power to assure that the creator be bored in his absence ("...il [esprit] prendra garde que je m'ennuye souvent") and this is then carried out in the first poetic insert.²⁶ Then, in the next prose passage, there is the thought that he may not be thinking of her "dans le même tems" that she is thinking of him. It is not so much that the possibility of a *rapprochement* between creator and creation is questioned as that they could exist in the same time: "Mais peut-être que je me trompe, & que dans le même tems que vous occupez tout mon souvenir, je ne suis plus dans le vôtre..." This is a reprise--with some doubt this time--of what appeared sections, and hours, earlier in that other twilight to sleep, AGREEABLE REVERIE. There is a further surprise; she does not imagine that he is thinking of another love but that he may be entertaining thoughts of immortality through the glory of an "ouvrage" or of exploits in war. Glory alone that comes from writing poetry--or from war--is as ephemeral as smoke; chance

²⁶The poetic inserts often function like a chorus, concretizing, detailing what was presented in the preceding prose passage(s).

created and may destroy it just as easily. Love has to accompany that "gloire"; they have to exist in the same time to achieve immortality, to exist out of time. She may be saying that real passion must be in the writing--as the subject of the poems as well as the love of writing.²⁷

The beginning of "La Montre" is punctuated by the ticking of a clock--the instructions so precisely laid out--that the reader feels laden with time. With the nighttime sections (beginning with IMPOSSIBILITE DE DORMIR) the sense of time and text begins to change. Just as now there is some doubt as to whether two beings can exist in the same time, the idea of slippage is again introduced, a slippage of time and a shifting/slipping in the text. This presages what will happen within the next two or three sections when there will be a violence in--and to--the text.

CONVERSATION EN SONGE

The narrator encroaches into her character's very dreams in this section, ruled by symmetry. As to form, there is a fairly long prose passage and appropriately long poetic insert and then a shorter insert. The impression is one of equality, too, as to the feelings, effort and words of the two lovers. This is very different from what is found in the elegies. In La Suze's last elegy, in chapter five, she says "Mon coeur veut tout un coeur, mon

²⁷There is intertextuality here with the third stanza from one of her commendatory poems, "Portrait de S. Altesse Royale Mademoiselle":

Que mon sort seroit glorieux,
Si, par mes Vers ambitieux,
Je fais autant pour ma Princesse,
Qu'ont fait mes Ayeuls autrefois,
Par leur épée & leur adresse,
Pour le service de nos Rois!

ame tout une ame"; she did not find what she wanted.) The addressee may wake and therefore straddle two states, waking and sleeping. If he wakes he will also be able to separate himself, momentarily, from the text; he will watch his own text. "Ce bien mensonger" describes the unreal feeling of seeming to belong to both the waking and sleeping world and to part of the text and yet to come out of it.

CAPRICES A SOUFFRIR EN SONGES & JALOUSIE EN SONGE

The narrator orders her character to picture her as capricious and with that she "sees" what he will say; this is rendered in the first poetic insert:

Ne contentez pas votre envie,
N'accablez pas en songe un misérable Amant:
Helas! j'aimerois mieux veiller toute ma vie,
Que de tant souffrir en dormant.²⁸

The narratee is told his suffering while dreaming is already plotted out; he may, however, be ingenious as to how he tortures himself. Starting from the beginning of the nighttime/dreamtime text the directions were: *If he were awake, then he would rather be awake and now he must not yet think of being awake.* The narrator gives her character some lead, imagines that he will take it, and then pulls him back in again, firmly.

With the introduction of jealousy in the next section we are reminded of the long scenes of tortuous jealousy in Proust, especially the scenes of Swann's self-torture about Odette. There is something almost musical, orchestral about the passage. There

²⁸This is close to what the characters in *Huis Clos* must feel, for they cannot close their eyes; here the character pleads that he would rather endure eternal wakefulness than suffer so in dreaming.

is the word "frenesie" in the first poetic insert; in the prose text which follows is "& que je n'aurai point d'attention pour tout ce que vous me direz *tout haut*, afin d'écouter ce qu'il me dira *tout bas*." Then in the last prose passage is the word "tumultueux" and this is followed by the poetic insert: "Elles [la colère, la haine & la vengeance] y regnerent malgré tout votre amour, Tantôt *toutes ensemble*, & tantôt *tour à tour*."

The image of a watch--its exacting, mechanistic, unstoppable move onward--had already been compared to a heart (the narrator's) going from man to man as one suggestion to elicit jealousy in the lover:

Que mon coeur jamais ne s'arrête,
Et qu'il court d'Amant en Amant;
Que loin de se donner lors même qu'il se prête,
Il ne se prête qu'un moment. (CAPRICES A SOUFFRIR...)

It is interesting to juxtapose one of the phrases from the beginning of "La Montre": "Toutefois afin que ma Montre soit juste, il faut que l'Amour la conduise, & que le mouvement soit enfermé dans votre coeur" with one from JALOUSIE EN SONGE: "...& que je vous ai arraché mon coeur pour lui en faire un present." There is a certain violence to the text: one heart will be ripped from the other which has been entrusted with the *movement*. The movement ties in with the musical motif mentioned above, but also has to do with time. The very heart of the text, its movement, its time is violently being transferred to another. The text, one's writing, may be torn from the designated reader in whom it had been entrusted and placed mechanically elsewhere, perhaps in another form. (This could be what happened to this last third of the text; an editor or publisher may have torn it out of its original place

in "La Montre" and printed it alone.)

After the crescendo of JALOUSIE EN SONGE came RUPTURE EN SONGE, emphasizing again by its title that there has been a ripping of the text. With the two remaining sections there is a sort of closing over of the text, first the love motif is sealed off and then in SONGES DIVERS a completely different tack is taken. The narrator gives Damon advice as to how to divide his allegiance between his mistress and his monarch; again, attention must be split. This is probably an obligatory statement of respect for the king.

Within these few sections alone the reader is witness to a duality of movement of the work. One circles the face of a clock, staying to the surface and recounting love's demands, more its trials than its sweetness; the other certainly is a movement down into the intricate, labyrinthine workings of a watch or the complex workings of writing itself. At the end of this segment--also the end of the longer version--is something typical of the writings of La Suze: a lack. This marvelous watch--by its *raison d'être*--is designed to regulate the very thoughts of the lover during the absence. But it has one flaw: it precludes that auspicious hour when lovers actually meet: "l'heure du Berger".

Oui, cette montre est des meilleurs,
Damon ne doit point la changer:
L'on y trouve toutes les heures,
Excepté l'heure du Berger.

The work ends with that missing hour, with a lack but one which points to a secret space, an inviolate space to which everyone will not have access. In CONVERSATIONS GENERALES there was the following sentence set off by poetic inserts: "J'ai

toûjours crû que le secret étoit un des plaisirs de l'amour: on doit le garder inviolablement: & puis tout le monde ne juge pas sainement des choses." This is the mysterious territory referred to at the beginning of "La Montre": "...je ne prétens pas ici raconter leurs aventures, ni rapporter tous leurs Billets..." The first two thirds of the work ended with an avowal; this last third ends with what is "inavouable", what is beyond telling.

The work as an avowal exists on several levels and the tone is one of both lightness and deference. On one level it is a thinly disguised communication from Iris (La Suze) to Damon (Rambouillet); on another it is a treatise on love, a sort of temporally laid out geography--a new wrinkle in Madeleine de Scudéry's precedent as amorous cartographer. As the latter, it is a manual of what to do when and how far to go, even to the point of thoughts and dreams--this is perhaps the best part of the text. At times it almost comes close to some of the more humorous "dictons", which circulated at the time, such as the following by Saint-Evremond: "Si vous voulez sçavoir en quoy les Prétieuses font consister leur plus grand mérite, je vous diray que c'est à aimer tendrement leurs amans sans jouissance et à jouir solidement de leurs maris avec aversion."²⁹

It is about writing on another level; the tone is not so light here. Early in the work, "je" becomes very important. Apropos of this, Maurice Blanchot says "Tout est décidé par un Vous initial, qui est plus qu'autoritaire...on dira que c'est le vous du metteur en scène donnant des indications à l'acteur...le Vous biblique qui

²⁹Saint-Evremond, *Oeuvres choisies* (Paris: éd. Gidel) 109.

vient d'en haut et fixe prophétiquement les grands traits de l'intrigue."³⁰ In "La Montre" instead of a "vous" it is "je" who is more than authoritarian. There is no question of power in this text; Iris' domination is absolute, with the slight deference to God and with the larger deference to the king at the end. But, in another the sense, the whole text defers to writing.

On the last level "La Montre" is a work about time which ties in with writing--and reading. There is a proximity between "aveu" and author. "Avouer" also meant "reconnaître une chose pour sienne"; author comes from the Latin "auctor" meaning "the master of a thing, [he] who can prove that the domain and its possession belong to him."³¹ The narrator (Iris) has claimed the addressee (Damon) as hers; she does so by publicly avowing him as her love object--as creator she also has dominance over her creation. Aveu and auctor come together as Iris is the master of the thing, the master clockmaker (Ouvrier) who expects perfection from the addressee as well as the creation. But this is not a static creation, it will justify itself by its very performance. The movements of a clock constitute a performance which will be repeated again and again, like reading. Each rotation is the same but by its cumulative aspect it is more. Each reading is not the same so that by its cumulative aspect it certainly is more. This is a circular text layered one reading upon the other to form something

³⁰Blanchot refers to Duras' *La Maladie de la Mort* in his book, *La Communauté Inavouable*, (Paris: Minuit, 1983) 59.

³¹Joan deJean has shown the proximity between these two words/concepts in her chapter, "What is an Author?" from *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 121.

solid, symmetrical--almost a platform--upon which to stand to give a performance.

The performance over, time no longer metered to the face of a watch the narratee (contemporary and modern) is left to wonder at the ellipsis, at "l'heure du Berger." What is "inavouable" exists on more than one level also. From the viewpoint of that one hour on a tiny watch the "auctor" seems to still have exclusive rights to the expanse beyond. Elizabeth Goldsmith has the following to say: "'Le monde', the seventeenth designation for elite society, suggests a notion of restricted exclusivity that is at the same time all-encompassing, it encloses everything (of any importance) within its boundaries. She quotes Michel de Pure who says:

"On voit, mais clairement, dans une ruelle, le mouvement de toute la terre; et trois ou quatre précieuses, débiteront dans un après-midi tout ce que le soleil peut avoir vu dans ses divers tours de différentes saisons."³²

La Suze certainly tries with her watch to convince the reader that she as a woman and a writer--and a select few like her--has an exclusive view, all the while enticing the reader into desiring access to "le monde". But she may have transgressed, slightly, violating the rules for what a prose/poetry work should be in the seventeenth century.³³ The world she hints at may not just be elite society but may be something much more important. As a woman and a writer she may be saying that her role is to really "see" the

³²Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Exclusive Conversations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) 7.

³³It was the same Pelisson, with whom she published so many editions, who had decreed that the prose/poetry work should deal only with light works of "galanterie."

world in the sense that Proust asks the question--and takes thirteen volumes to answer--"How does one see the world?"

Chapter IV

A DEATH AND A WAGER:

AN ELEGY BY THE COMTESSE DE LA SUZE

AND A DIZAIN BY MAURICE SCEVE

Dizain 332

Ourant ma Dame au labeur trop ardente,
 Son Dé luy cheut, mais Amour le luy dresse:
 Et le voyant sans raison euidente
 Ainsi troué, vers Délie s'adresse.

C'est, luy dit elle, affin que ne m'opresse
 L'aiguille aigue, et que point ne m'offence.

Donc, respond il, ie croy que sa deffence
 Fait que par moy ton coeur n'est point vaincu.
 Mais bien du mien, dy ie, la ferme essence
 Encontre toy luy sert tousiours d'escu.¹

Scève

Odi et amo: quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.
 nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.
 Catullus

La Suze's elegy, "Cruel persécuteur de la Terre & des Cieux", recounts a death and Scèves's dizain 332 a wager. But each of the poems is about a death and a wager. Beyond any sort of conveyance to a real life person of the depth of feeling and suffering there is or has been--the ultimate suffering is the death of the writer himself/herself in his/her own text--the real wager is that the text will not disintegrate, be pierced, be hollow or lapse into an abyss of silence.

Scève frames his great collection of love poems, *Délie*, with

¹The dizain comes from *The 'Délie' of Maurice Scève*, edited and with an introduction and notes by I.D. McFarlane (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966). McFarlane based his edition on one of the copies of the first edition (1544) which is in the Bibliothèque de L'Arsenal (BL 6454).

the devise/device: "Souffrir non souffrir". The Comtesse de La Suze may have only written enough poems to fill a slender volume while Scève wrote many more but they were both concerned about the survival of those poems. She would be satisfied, I think, being placed alongside Maurice Scève and expresses the same feeling as he, in this poem, of the validity of suffering if it can produce an inviolable work: "Souffre, espère, poursuit" (line 188 of her elegy).

The elegy itself is an enigmatic poetic genre. As Gertrude S. Hanisch ably illustrates, even the origins of the elegy are shrouded in mystery.² She goes on to say that most theorists agree with Horace that the elegy's subject was once death and mourning and that somehow love became the theme but how that came about is not certain. The elegy in ancient Greece may not have been a song of mourning but simply a song accompanied by flute. The themes of Greek elegies were varied, ranging from imminent death to the delights of youth. It cannot be proven that the Greek elegies served as models for the Roman poets of Augustus' time who did write love elegies, often with a decided erotic tone to them. Love epigrams like the above by Catullus were precursors to the elegy, according to Hanisch.³ What is certain is that the Romans copied the unique metric make-up of the Greek elegy: one line dactylic hexameter followed by one of dactylic pentameter which produced a

²Gertrude S. Hanisch, "The Latin Love Elegy and Its Origins", *Love Elegies of the Renaissance: Marot, Louise Labé and Ronsard* (Saratoga, California: Anna Libri, 1979).

³Ibid. Hanisch quotes Robert Halloway who calls these epigrams "miniature elegies". 8.

haunting effect. To illustrate this fact and that the elegy's status was dubious, Hanisch includes Ovid's story in which he encounters two figures in a dream-like forest, Elegy and Tragedy. Elegy is beauty itself and graceful despite the fact one foot is longer than the other (hexameter/pentameter). Tragedy is harsh and overpowering in appearance and begs the poet to abandon foolish love tales (elegy) that make him the brunt of everyone's laughter and write tragedy.⁴

Fifteen hundred years would pass before Clément Morot would introduce the elegy to France. Nearly all his elegies were written in the form of imaginary letters; the difference between the elegy and the "épître amoureuse" was slight in the sixteenth century. Louise Labé also wrote epistles--long poems of longing⁵ in decasyllables--but hers were much more personal than Morot's had been.⁶ Though Ronsard had been advised by Du Bellay--who also wrote elegies--not to imitate Morot, who was considered the master, Ronsard's elegies became epistles as well, written in decasyllables

⁴The wording is mine but the information in the above paragraph comes largely from Gertrude S. Hanisch's *Love Elegies of the Renaissance: Marot, Louise Labé and Ronsard* (Saratoga, California: Anna Libri, 1979) 1-12.

⁵Some of her poems are very ingenuous, having what appear to be details of her own life:

Je n'avais vu encore seize Hivers
Lors que j'entray en ces ennuis divers:
Et ja voici le treizième Esté
Que mon coeur fut par Amour arrêté

Louise Labé, *Les Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Editions P. Seghers, 1962) 73.

⁶Pierre Jourda defends Marot's poetry, saying: "Toute grossiereté a disparu...se substituent l'amitié amoureuse, les inclinations les plus fines et les plus mélancoliques." *Marot l'homme et l'oeuvre* (Paris: Boivin et Cie., 1950) 130.

or alexandrines. Hanisch emphasizes how Ronsard's elegies to Genève, in particular, were typical love elegies for the sixteenth century. She also stresses the fact that form and content defined the elegy of that century.⁷

Early in the seventeenth century Théophile de Viau wrote very beautiful love elegies.⁸ Saint Amant wrote his own realistic descriptive brand of elegy. There were others as well but the lettered public grew tired of the monotony and languor of the elegy. By the time the Comtesse de La Suze revived the elegy it seemed new and she imbued it with such passion that it created a sensation; it was no longer just the content and the form which defined the elegy but the tone. The preponderant reason she chose to write elegies may very well have been its association with death and love, often unfulfilled. But elegies could assume great length and La Suze's elegies are very very long. There may be a reason for this and it involved other women, conversing and writing.

Madeleine de Scudéry, in particular, influenced the writing of La Suze and this influence entailed a convergence of genres. A hallmark of Scudéry's writing is the conversation. Joan deJean has

⁷The form was epistolary in alexandrine or decasyllable and the content was love, often unrequited. Gertrude S. Hanisch, *Love Elegies of the Renaissance: Marot, Louise Labé and Ronsard* (Saratoga, California: Anna Libri, 1979) 135, 136.

⁸He also wrote the following very strange elegy ? entitled "A Monsieur de L. sur la mort de son père" which begins:

Oste-toy, laissez-moi rêver:
 Je sens un feu se souslever
 Dont mon Ame est toute embrasée
 O beaux prés, beaux rivages verts,
 O grand flambeau du l'Univers
 Que je tourve ma veine aismée!
 Belle Aurore, douce Rosée,
 Que vous m'allez donner de vers!

argued that Scudéry's introduction of the conversation into literature in 1651 "can be interpreted as a gesture of homage to the power women had exercised before the outbreak of heroism and to the art of conversation in which they had excelled in the salons."⁹ Scudéry herself had said that this "'esprit de conversation' is originally a female concept, invented in the salons and reinscribed in prose fiction when...women found a new power base in the republic of letters."¹⁰

This "esprit de conversation" is also reinscribed in the poetry of the Comtesse de La Suze. The verbal excess which typifies most of Scudéry's work is an apt description for the impression one has reading La Suze's elegies. Not only are the poems long but often there are a number of voices or a confusion of voices and this combined with the languidness of the elegy make them seem apparently endless. Virginia Woolf has commented upon reading the verbal excess that is characteristic of another contemporary to La Suze in another genre, Madame de Sevigné and the epistolary domain. Woolf alludes to an "illusion of vastness"¹¹ when she says : "As the...volumes...unfold their story of twenty years it seems that this world is large enough to enclose everything...the voices mingle; they are all talking together in

⁹Joan deJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 47.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹This is how Elizabeth Goldsmith characterizes Woolf's insight in *Exclusive Conversations: The Art of Interaction in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) 123.

the garden in 1678. But what was happening outside?"¹² I would take the Woolf quotation and deform it slightly as to the world we glimpse in La Suze's poetry: there is an illusion of vastness within but it entails an emptiness, instead, and the world is beyond the parameters of the poetry. So the question becomes "What is inside?"

This is one of the longest of the long poems by the Comtesse de La Suze and it is her most enigmatic in the sense that there is more of a confusion of voices than is usually present.¹³ Also, the poem stands off by itself as to its publication date (1662) in the chronology I established to group her other elegies into cycles.¹⁴

Maurice Scève did not revive a genre. He chose to write his *Délie* in dizains with the decasyllabic line which is exactly what his contemporaries had been and were writing.¹⁵ But Scève created a monument with--and to--the dizain. His was the first published sequence of love poetry and all in dizains. Saulnier says: "La

¹²Virginia Woolf, "Madame de Sevigné", *Death of the Moth* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1942) 57. Those who actually were in the garden on that evening in 1678 were Mme de Lafayette, Mme de Sévigné, and La Rochefoucauld.

¹³It may not be irrelevant that the description used for La Suze's own salon was "une cahue".

¹⁴The other exception is the last elegy which lies encased in Villedieu's novel, *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*.

¹⁵I.D. McFarlane conjectures that because Scève innovated in language he preferred not to do so with versification. He also states that he may have selected the dizain for its economy and for the fact that an idea or theme could spill over into another dizain. *The 'Délie' of Maurice Scève* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 43.

véritable originalité rhymique de Scève a été, outre un certain assouplissement du décasyllable et du dizain, dans la construction d'un recueil homogène entièrement fait de dizains. L'unité de forme répondant à l'unité de fond c'était le premier monument de ce genre."¹⁶

And Scève was innovative with language which may have prompted Sebillet to say that he wrote with "La rudesse de beaucoup de mos nouveaux".¹⁷ He may have been innovative in another way as well. Even with one dizain it may be possible to create an "illusion of vastness". Georges Poulet says this: "Le dizain de Scève est un point qui, à force d'être répété devient livre...ne serait-il pas possible de rêver à une poésie où le point, au lieu de rester contracté, s'étendrait, deviendrait une série de cercles contenant finalement l'univers?"¹⁸

If Scève with one perfect square of poetry¹⁹ can achieve such an illusion, is he not the better poet? Not at all. La Suze's ingenuity at choosing the elegy already entails writing a long

¹⁶Verdun-L. Saulnier, *Maurice Scève (ca. 1500-1560)* (Geneva, Paris: Slatkine, 1981) 278.

¹⁷McFarlane believes it is for this reason that Scève's fellow poets, Marot and his disciples, found him "aloof". *The 'Délie' of Maurice Scève* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 1.

¹⁸*Maurice Scève, Oeuvres poétiques complètes*, Edition établie par Hans Staub, Introduction par Georges Poulet (Paris: Union Generale d'Editions, 1970) 17,18.

¹⁹Poulet also calls attention to the symmetry of Scève's dizain: "Dix vers décasyllabiques forment une surface strictement délimitée, aussi large que longue, dans le carré de laquelle s'inscrit, sans jamais la déborder, le cercle serré des pensées." *Maurice Scève, Oeuvres poétiques complètes* (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1970) 8.

poem; her verbiage is in synchronization with the fact that she was a woman writing when she did and that her mentor, too, had written--very successfully--in this manner. Scudéry's voluminous novels are sometimes referred to as "romans de longue haleine".²⁰ She later reprinted much of the conversations from them, and added new ones, in *Conversations nouvelles sur divers sujets* (1684).

In both the dizain by Maurice Scève and the elegy by the Comtesse de La Suze, there is a female who is the object of affection, a male lover and a God of love. The female in both poems is neither the subject of discourse nor the subject in discourse--she is closed out of both.²¹ Beyond those few similarities the two poems seem to be very disparate. I will compare them by examining gaze, space, the "hinges"²² in each poem, desire and time. In Scève's dizain gaze is fixed, controlled, it promotes movement, it concretizes; in La Suze's elegy gaze is indirect, chaotic, it deceives. Space in Scève's poem allows for effective passage; in La Suze's there is an inability to manoeuvre through it. The hinges in the ten-line poem are concrete and assure communication; in the long elegy the hinges are elusive and seem to assure nothing. Desire is debated in the dizain; it is unauthorized in the elegy. Time is portrayed differently, too. In

²⁰It is Joan deJean who discovered this expression but cannot trace its origins. *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 81.

²¹In the La Suze poem the female persona's role as object is not even very pronounced.

²²These are the twists and turns in the poem, where it breaks but also what bridges those gaps.

Scève's dizain it is characterized by its continuity, it flows; in La Suze's elegy there are gaps and it often seems to "freeze".

GAZE

"Fixity of gaze" ²³ aptly describes the dynamics at work in this dizain by Maurice Scève. In a tight little poem which is not very visual and which is crowded with three personae--who all speak--gaze would not seem to be that which dominates the dizain. But the second word is "ma" with no other reference to a first person until "je" appears in the eleventh line. From the very beginning the reader is aware that someone is watching, that he is male and that he "claims possession"²⁴ of this lady. The gaze of that someone has zoomed in on his beloved in medias res²⁵: she is engrossed in her work. This is accomplished with the participle which begins the poem, "ouurant", with several possibilities as to meaning. First, of course, there is the meaning of working, here sewing. Modernizing the word to "ouvrant" creates two quite different impressions. One is the idea of the narrator opening the text though it does not fit syntactically: "Opening, my

²³This expression was coined by McFarlane in his introduction to *The 'Délie' of Maurice Scève* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 331.

²⁴Here the possession will be mitigated by the way the poem ends, thus keeping with the Platonic notion that supreme love should go beyond the idea of possessing someone. The reality though is that in seventeenth-century England, it was accepted that men owned women (their wives) but, interestingly, that women owned children. Sixteenth-century France could not have been much different.

²⁵McFarlane has pointed out this characteristic in other Scève dizains. *The 'Délie' of Maurice Scève* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 64.

Lady.....". (But, interestingly, the last word of the poem "escu" suggests a blocking, a closing). The other possibility does fit; ma Dame is the object of opening and not the subject of working. This is the first of several words "à double entente" in this poem which are quite erotic.

In the La Suze elegy there is certainly no fixity of gaze; in fact, there is a decided lack of visual information but a plethora of voices, though they do not clarify who these personae might be. In her elegies which are often so noisy--as with this one with its nameless narrator's voice lamenting--"picturing" who is talking and to whom is a way of blocking the poem and unlocking the text. The personae themselves in most of her elegies face the daunting task of trying to picture the beloved and often they try to alter that image.²⁶ It is more than the tradition of the absence of the beloved where, in fact, the lover should best be able to "see" his love with his eyes closed.²⁷ In La Suze's poetry the absence calls into question the very existence of the loved one--of the personae. In this elegy the male persona/narrator cannot even obtain a fixed image of his beloved, Florice; it follows that her existence is nebulous. Whereas there was a feeling of being privileged to enter immediately into the midst of the poem, into what the personae are doing in Scève's dizain, in this elegy there is an impression of

²⁶La Suze often uses the motif of the narrator as painter. In her last elegy encased in Villedieu's novel the female narrator manages to retouch the remembered portrait of her beloved. In the commendatory poems, too, the narrator--as painter--describes the onus of trying to capture the perfection of her subject.

²⁷This, of course, was originally Plato's idea which filtered down to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

eavesdropping on an ongoing tirade where admission will not come easily or quickly. The dizain is certainly not simple and may even prove to be the more complicated text, but the reader has the impression, at least, of being granted entrance straightaway.

In one poem gaze is light and in the other gaze must operate in the dark. In the elegy instead of the fixity of gaze of Scève's poem--where gaze functions as a spotlight--it is as though there were a darkened stage with a whole network of gazes. To a great extent, to divine that network is to understand the poem. The beam in the dizain does not flicker whereas in the elegy--if there is any light at all--all it does is flicker. Interestingly, there is no mention of light, of daylight, even of candlelight; there are only sinister waters, hard rocks, dark woods and eternal nights which offer no hope of repose. Gaze in the elegy would have to be imagined as a sort of rapid eye movement where, in the end, the eye sees nothing.

Gaze suggests movement in the dizain and both stasis and movement in the elegy. I would like to suggest thinking of the very famous painting *Las Meninas* by Velasquez as a way to visualize the network of gazes. As many have noted, there are seven planes in the painting and even more than seven persons in it whose gazes--if I imagine them--go in all directions. (Some of those individuals, of course, gaze out at the viewer.) A given La Suze poem is not so peopled but there are usually almost as many lines of vision. As with this elegy, there is a chaos of gazes. Florice, for example, is never really viewed but the male persona/narrator imagines that he sees her everywhere; his gaze

travels about but finds nothing concrete to land upon. It does "find" the image of her and, rather pathetically, carries on a conversation with that. Simply imagining gaze in the La Suze poem creates an impression of movement--dizziness--but there is stasis, too, because there was no real movement, no progression.²⁸

I would now like to use *Las Meninas* again to imagine focusing solely on one figure,--as one could do with a camera--the man furthest in the background, in the doorway, and then move forward one plane at a time until the person behind the camera steps into the picture as well. This is how Scève's dizain unfolds; gaze is very directed and narrow, focusing straightaway on Délie sewing and then moving backward--toward the foreground--steadily opening up the scene. As it moves from this deep focus the camera/gaze of the narrator sets the film in motion one scene at a time, or the poem one tableau at a time, until the narrator enters his own picture. With Scève, gaze promotes a fluid movement straight through the dizain.

TRAVELING THROUGH SPACE

Linked inextricably with gaze--and its movement through a poem--is space. Space is arranged differently in the two poems. Scève's dizain holds no extra space; the view has to be frontal and must procede one tableau at a time: Délie sewing, Délie dropping

²⁸Octavio Paz has used almost the same words in comparing the baroque to romanticism and to classicism. He shows how the baroque embodies characteristics of each and is both "vertigo and stasis". He goes on to call it "congealed movement". Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana or, The Traps of Faith*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1988) 54.

her thimble, the God of love picking it up and addressing her, and the narrator stepping into the poem and speaking.²⁹ It has been pointed out that the title of Scève's great collection of poems, *Délie*, comes from the French word "deslier", meaning to unravel.³⁰ Scève's poem is dense, tight. And, though the poem is very tightly wound and the knot intricate, the text comes undone cleanly; it unravels in a straight line.

The view cannot be frontal in the La Suze elegy--there is too much space. And though the elegy may be dense with voices, antonyms for dense--scattered, unconnected, isolated--are what typify its landscape. So, even with too much space, visibility is limited. It is like imagining gaze trying to manoeuvre through the narrow winding chasms of a fiord with its interminable granite walls making the water black and opaque. Images of rock abound in this poem: "les rochers les plus durs..." (32); "les rochers et les bois" (65); "J'amolirois plutot la bronze et les roches" (129) and these are always linked to hardness--physical and emotional--isolation and, finally, unrequited love. There is also an image of dark, ominous, bottomless water evoked with the words "Les plus hideux poissons dans le fond des abîmes".

In the Scève poem space allowed gaze to concretize, it passes neatly, cleanly through the space provided; as it lights upon a

²⁹There is an impression of "mannered acting" with these three personae; as with La Comédie Française, while one actor is speaking the other is immobile until it is his/her turn.

³⁰Joann DellaNeva makes this observation in *Song and Countersong: Scève's Délie and Petrarch's Rime* (Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum, 1983) 31. She says that Scève invites the reader "...to unravel...to untie the text..."

persona, life is granted and with another persona, speech. In La Suze's poem space forced gaze to be deceptive. The narrator is deceived by his own view; he thinks he sees Florice reflected off of something, the image is as murky as if he had seen it on the shiny walls of a fiord. Plato's idea of reality as an imperfect copy of the idea and art as the copy of reality comes to mind. Here, at times, it is truly a copy of a copy that is presented. For example, with the line: "l'image fidelle du mal qui fait Florice" comes an unmistakable impression of unreality. There is also the idea that sleep is death's image--its imitator--and that the persona would prefer death to sleep without death's forgetfulness. (lines 55-58). In the Scèbian text it is an unraveling which is needed; in the elegies the text is too loose, the reader must try to put it together. Labyrinthine is an apt description of space in this and other elegies and the words "dizziness and stasis" still apply. In the case of the latter the lasting impression is not that the persona has gotten anywhere but has simply turned in space.

THE FEMALE OBJECT?

What impact has all this had on the two female personae? I will apply some of the criteria I use in chapter two where I study eleven elegies as a corpus. It is gaze which fixes her in the Scève poem and gaze which attempts to do so in the La Suze poem. But she escapes being actually "pierced" in both. In the dizain it is the narrator who will finally protect her, literally shield her, as seen in the last line. (And, of course, if I follow one line of

interpretation, it is from carnal love that the male narrator is protecting her.) In the elegy the following line is interesting: "En vain pour la fléchir je lui dis chaque jour" (35). (As is often the case with La Suze's elegies, failure is succinctly stated first.) Gaze cannot even manage to get this female in its sights so she is never really possessed by the male narrator but there is more to it.

Scève's male narrator looks upon the female; in essence, the male gaze author-izes³¹ the existence of the female. Here again, the word "ouurant" at the very beginning can be thought to describe the male narrator's eye opening. The gaze of La Suze's male narrator does not authorize the female persona. There are two contrary conclusions to draw from this: one is that the male in this elegy is too weak to be able to summon the female and that she remains outside his gaze--and his control--but the other is that if the female is not authorized by a male, she doesn't really exist.

The idea of disembodiment may resolve the question. There was disembodiment of a sort in the Scève poem. It is the gaze of the male, not the whole person, who is operative at the beginning. And this persona does not intrude again until the last two lines of the poem to establish attribution of the gaze. Just as the gaze belonged to him so, too, does Délie. She is the consummante object: she is whole and capable of work and of speech; she is the object of the possessive adjective "ma", she is the object of the

³¹Hyphenating the word is my idea but the idea of a male authorizing gaze comes from Kate Lilley in her introduction to Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, 1624-1674, *The Blazing World and Other Writings* (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1994) xxvii of introduction. I discuss this in chapter five.

advances of the God of love, and she is the object of the intrusion of the narrator to protect what is his, as he would his property. There is a similar separation of self in the male narrator in the elegy but instead of being a gaze, he is a nameless voice, until the next to the last stanza (10). But it is Florice who is never corporally intact; she is body parts, voice, and ephemeral images. She is eyes--interestingly, more than anything else in a poem where it is so difficult to see--(lines 30, 122, 181); she is feet (33); she is laughter (mocking) (37); she is an image of herself (74); and she is an image of her behavior--evil (117). She is dismembered and then remembered but never re-membered.³² She is not a subject, in fact, she is less than an object but, by not being intact (dismembered), she escapes being owned.

HINGES

In the Scève poem the thimble is almost another presence. (It is the referent of "sa deffence" which in turn is the subject of the verb "fait" (lines 7, 8). It then engenders the idea of a shield; both are powerful symbols around which the poem turns (resistance to love/protection from its sting). They are the key to each rupture (reason for change of scene) and the link to communication (reason for and topic of conversation) which cause the poem to progress, to unravel. The pacific scene of the lover's lady sewing is cut into by the fallen thimble which summons the god

³²Nancy Vickers uses the idea of dismembering and re-membering throughout her fine article: "Diana Described: Scattered Women and Scattered Rhyme" in *Writing and Sexual Difference*, ed., Elizabeth Abel (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982).

of love and triggers their dialogue. That dialogue provokes the narrator to step in and to offer a variation on the thimble--a shield--as protection to his Délie. It is a seemingly insignificant object--and, in the case of the thimble, tiny--something to wear, really--which provides the impetus in the text. But it is very concrete.

As elusive as the thimble was concrete, the hinges in the elegy are always the absence of something. It is not only the god of love who causes disorder (in the fourth line) but the whole range of disorders in the poem are announced with "Y causant desordre". There is a *talking disorder* (talking is disordered, talking disorders/talking annihilates, talking is annihilating) There are six main shifts in the elegy, all triggered by the lack of the ability:... to speak, to hear speech or to have one's speech heard, to speak to the right person, or to speak the truth.

1) From stanza I to II Lisandre makes disordered sound and it is deafness which engenders the mention of Florice (the deafness of the god of love transferred to rocks and then to Florice.) 2) In stanza III when Lisandre begs, Florice leaves him; when she does speak--taunting him about love--he cannot answer, speech is arrested in his mouth: "...tous ces plaisirs dont je peins la douceur,/Se trouvent dans ma bouche & non pas dans mon coeur." (43-44)³³ 3) Lisandre thinks he sees Florice in stanza IV but it is to her image--to no one--that he laments. 4) His own speech

³³Here again is one of La Suze's favorite images: that of the painter fearful of--or guilty of--distorting the portrait. In this particular poem the image is one of shallow/meaningless words because they do not convey what is desired to the desired person. Desire is questioned.

deludes him: he suddenly thinks she is innocent but quickly realizes that the treachery of love (the god of love) was in her eyes the whole time, in stanza VII. 5) Speech elicits punishment: Lisandre names Florice and the god of love appears and chastises him, verbally and then physically. 6) Speech destroys: Lisandre again accuses Florice and the god of love and his own voice is extinguished.

More innocuously, Florice, too, had announced that it was all empty rhetoric in the following context:

Florice, on ne voit rien de si doux que l'amour:
 Elle se divertit, elle ne fait que rire
 Des douceurs que je pense, ou que je lui veux
 dire:
 Si l'amour est si doux, dit-elle en se moquant,
 Pourquoi m'avez-vous dit que vous enduriez
 tant? (36-40)

There is unreality--as if to suggest that the search must go somewhere beyond the text. Again, the following line is telling: "L'inhumaine me quitte, & change de discours." But there was no real discourse, she was not human and this was the departure of someone already absent. (This is similar to the copy of a copy: "l'image du mal que fait Florice".)

There is preoccupation with the surface--with words--and real concern with what is beneath--a lack. The line: "Ma tristesse m'éloigne & du monde & du bruit (63) is interesting. The "bruit" is connected with the light in the line before so that the sadness and isolation of unrequited love suggest the isolation of producing words and worrying about their order and their durability. And the word "m'éloigne" offers up an image of how great the isolation is. There is an internalized emptiness as well. Beyond the chaos of

voices on the surface there is a deep silence; at the core of the soul there was a vast darkness: "Et laisse dans mon âme une éternelle nuit" (64). Core is an interesting word since the words "ferme essence" in the Scève poem can be thought of as a solid core³⁴ It is with this core that the lover hopes to protect his lady. In the La Suze elegy the core is hollow.

DESIRE

Many critics have compared genre and gender. As far as elegy is concerned, Kate Lilley has said that "...elegy engages with the figuration of desire under the aspect of lack or interdiction."³⁵ I would like to suggest that there is a connection between the fact that this is an elegy, that it is written by a woman and that its very essence is an interdiction of desire.

Whereas the Scève dizain is about an argument over desire, the La Suze elegy is about its interdiction. The nature of love is debated in the dizain--its danger, its pain, its facets--but its very existence is not brought into question. In the elegy the first two words are cruel and persecuting; the whole poem is not only about the fact that love is ineffably sad but that the empire of love, so tyrannical and all consuming, should exist at all. Existence (a female persona's) was called into question; love was seen as persecuting, tyrannical. For whom is desire so

³⁴McFarlane translates this as "solid core" in *The 'Delie' of Maurice Scève* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 456.

³⁵This is from "True State Within" which is in *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992) 72.

annihilating? Though the narrator of this poem is male--and suffers--the poem is written by a woman. Women's existences--at least in the seventeenth century--were rather hollow when it came to their desire. There are very concrete feelings which can be associated with women and desire. Guilt³⁶ over desire is present in the poem, at times giving a biblical patina to the verses, such as when chains and fire rain down on Lisandre: "Laisse tomber sur lui des chaînes & des feux." (195). Desire engenders a feeling of being hunted down, even invaded: "...Tu me vainquis par force;/Tu me suivis partout, & tu vins te placer/Au milieu de mon coeur qui vouloit te chasser." (125-127). In a sense, the hollow core has been usurped.³⁷ Beyond being a topos of seventeenth-century poetry, the following line can be read as the absolute punishment for desire: "Si je veux respirer, il faut que je soupire,".³⁸

ENCONTRE/TIME

Dizain 332 seems to be one of Maurice Scève's lighter, talking poems, not unlike dizain 221, where the narrator and Délie leap into a boat and Délie picks up a fish which manages to free itself, while the narrator is caught by his love for her in a prison with

³⁶Guilt is also connected to the world of litigation. Imagery involving litigation and accounting (debits, credits etc.) was very much in vogue in poetry at this point of the seventeenth century and is salient in much of La Suze's poetry. It's as though loss had to be weighed and measured and someone held accountable. "La Montre" is another version of calculating love.

³⁷In chapter two it is space (female space) which is usurped by the male persona.

³⁸"Respirer" in the seventeenth century, of course, meant "désirer, souhaiter".

no escape. It is similar also to Dizain 170, a light event poem where they are playing in a meadow, are caught in a thunderstorm and the droplets of rain flee Délie.

And though it is playful, dizain 332 is also forceful; the narrator is in charge from the very beginning, it is his poem. It is interesting that, though there are three personae, there are only two exchanges: one between Délie and the god of love and the other between the narrator and the god of love. There is no direct exchange between the lover and *his* lady; he lays claim to her in his very presentation of her--his possession of her worded as a *fait accompli*--as "ma Dame" in the first line. He points out that Délie is sewing, the thimble falls--has she let it fall?--and then there is a male confrontation with the god of love as the narrator bodily enters the poem and offers his "ferme essence" as a shield (against the advances of the god of love? from the carnal side of love? from himself, in fact?). The thimble was concrete; its larger version--the shield--suggests more description; it is a continuous, firm--even hard--surface which protects against piercing, invasion.

But there is a word--a point--where the text is vulnerable, where it can be pierced; this is the point where the poem can fall through and be engulfed. The word is "encontre". It is, of course, a preposition or adverbial phrase meaning "à l'opposition de"; with this meaning it is already the seam of the poem. Seams can come open. But it is connected etymologically to "malencontre" and "malencontreux". The narrator had already concretized himself--stepping into the poem--to allay further mishap. But it is

"contre un malencontre", *against* the possibility of an unfortunate event, a misadventure, something *ill-timed* that the narrator calls forth his "ferme essence".

The thimble acted against a prick of the needle; this "essence", this core, seems to be all that is lasting, limitless--and seemingly impenetrable which, on the most literal level, acts as a shield against the sting of love. The narrator is there to assure Délie that she will be protected; he may also be trying to assure that the poem he appears in is protected. The "ferme essence" could as easily be a solid core of time, an endless core of time, as of love. The narrator has the last word(s) and there is a feeling both of a dead stop and of time going on forever; it's possible to imagine him trying to watch over his poem as it goes over the threshold to existing forever...or not and being read...or not.

The dizain was argumentative; the elegy is accusatory. In La Suze's poem the narrator tries to affix blame on an elusive Florice who is everywhere and nowhere; though she is mentioned in every stanza but the first, she is never actually present. (There is no real exchange with her lover either.) She is not without power; in fact she wields much more than her male lover. If I examine this poem from the angle of female space Florice is quite independent; the male begs for her help/her entrance into the poem and then she leaves him abruptly: "Et dès lors qu'à ses pieds j'implore son secours,/L'inhumaine me quitte, & change de discours." She is quite powerful in the sense that she can change discourse. Florice, too, is possessed but in a diabolical sense. Though she

herself is not brought under love's control, it is that control--love's terrible power--which is brought into question. She is not the subject of discourse--love is. There is a fatality to the way the narrator--who suddenly sees her as innocent--realizes that it was the god of love who shone ominously in her eyes from the beginning (lines 122-123).

In the elegy the narrator is anything but in charge. He is present from the very beginning, in fact the whole poem is auto-presentation--he presents himself over and over. The fact that he re-presents himself is in keeping with the other aspects of the poem where the originals are not seen but their repetitions are. (Even a "souvenir" is a "ressouvenir" (line 148). Nothing is really concrete and nothing is continuous except his suffering. There is narration, consequently, there is progression, but time does not flow. The hinges are always the absence of something positive or normal (cruelty, inhumane treatment, deafness etc.). These lacks create an impression of gaps...in time. Often, too, just when time does start to flow in the past, it becomes arrested; a past tense breaks down to an iterative present which underscores the idea of endless repetition (the frustration and futility of the lover's plight.) There is the passage where the departure of Florice--who was not really there--causes the imperfect to turn to the present:

Que ses yeux font on mal qu'elle n'entendoit pas;
 Aux plus tendres soupirs elle paroît cruelle,
 Les rochers les plus durs y repondent plus qu'elle,
 Et dès lors qu'à ses pieds j'implore son secours,
 L'inhumaine me quitte , & change de discours.
 En vain pour la fléchir je lui dis chaque jour, (30-35)

Time stops--it becomes "congealed time", to use Octavio Paz's term.³⁹ The concern for Scève was that the text was vulnerable to ill-timing; here it is vulnerable to stopping altogether. And when there is a definitive past it tends to describe not just injustice and suffering but finality. At the end of the elegy the narrator will neither be present to oversee time nor the poem. Even his voice is snuffed out with the *passé simple*.

Florice had not heard the words; the god of love was not the ideal receptor. The indirection of gaze, the negative "points de repère", the text saturated with voices but the rhetoric empty and the time gaps suggest a fear that the words will not reach the designated viewer/listener. This poem--all her poetry-- is as much about writing as it is about the disillusionment/deception of love, its inaccessibility, the tyranny of love, and the dying out of love. It is about disillusion--how in a century given to disguise and duplicity, women writers had to invent their own deceptions to say some of what they wished, within accepted parameters. It's about how acutely they felt the inaccessibility/resistance which still existed to their living--and writing--as they wanted. And it's about the fear that the words of their text--once written-- might not only be threatened in their own time but might die out altogether. There is sadness and isolation--not only of unrequited love--but the isolation necessary to the act of writing and the feeling of sadness at what did not get written--could not get

³⁹Actually he says "congealed movement"; congealed time is my transformation. Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana or The Traps of Faith*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1988) 54.

written.

In the Scève text the vulnerable point was "encontre". At the very heart of the La Suze elegy is a fear of emptiness and this is perhaps best expressed in her text as the following: "Les plus hideux poissons dans le fond des abîmes," (93) and "Se brisent aux rochers les fragiles vaisseaux" (179). "Abîmes" for her is the fear of losing oneself, of losing one's focus, one's voice; it is the fear of endless space without and vast spaces within. "Fragiles"/fragility is the fear of coming apart--of the text coming apart; it is the fear that her words are not concrete enough and durable enough or that the vessels (verses) which carry the ideas are not cohesive enough to keep everything together.

Though this particular Scève dizain is centered around the very ideas of concretization and firmness it does not stand alone; many of his other dizains are haunted by exactly the same ideas as in La Suze's poem: the abyss/fragility in the sense of disintegration. The first and last words in the tenth line of the poem, "encontre" and "escu" can be put together to signify the hope that the speaker expresses that he can shield his text from misfortune, an unfortunate or ill-timed event--like disintegration--either on the level of creation itself (that the words may not come together) or on the level of the text lasting (that the words may not hold together) so they can be read. Once again, the word "ouurant", by forcing slightly, could be thought to be both the verb working/writing, "oeuvrant"--the process--and the finished piece, "oeuvre"--the document. Woven into the fear of the writing surviving--just as the idea is woven into the scenes of the poem--

is the fear that the speaker's earthly concerns may get in the way of aspirations which would lead to something more lasting--having one's writing live on.

La Suze's concerns seem to be that the words may not be forceful, hard enough and that she--as fragile as they--will be lost with them; Scève's worry is that it is the very "dureté" of his text that may harm him, even as it assures that his text endures. With the same shield that the narrator uses to protect Délie from the god of love--from the more carnal side of love--and to unite Délie and himself in an eternal spiritual love⁴⁰ he will also wall himself off. This disintegration--having a portion of the self blocked off--may be what is necessary for the writing. At the beginning of the poem he thought of possessing Délie--or he has already possessed her--by the end he thinks more about protecting her--immortalizing her in verse--and insuring the survival of the text. It is interesting to think of the motto which accompanies the ninth emblem--though it is not that which precedes dizain 332--which reads "Ma fermeté me nuict". There are many dizains where firmness carries a sense of the self not being integrated or of it being closed out as in an abyss. In dizain 172 the speaker is closed out of Délie's heart, the last two lines read:

Je suis lors seur, Créature bien née,
Que fermeté est la clef de ton coeur.

In dizain 49 there is the description of how it would feel to have to separate the self. Here it is the lovers who are so entwined as are the senses and the soul--that to extinguish one is to snuff

⁴⁰Of course, Scève did not seem to think that physical love and spiritual love were mutually exclusive.

out the other:

Tant je l'aymay, qu'en elle encor je vis:
 Et tant la vy, que, maulgré moy, je l'ayme.
 Le sens, et l'ame y furent tant ravis,
 Que par l'Oeil fault, que le coeur la desayme.
 Est il possible en ce degré supreme
 Que fermeté son outrepas revoque?
 Tant fut la flamme en nous deux reciproque,
 Que mon feu luict, quand le sien clair m'appert.
 Mourant le sien, le mien tost se suffoque.
 Et ainsi elle, en se perdant, me pert.

As to the idea of shielding the text from mortality, shielding it from being pierced and devoured, keeping it whole and firm--at the risk of dividing the self--there is the beautiful dizain 378 where the narrator espouses the idea that it is Délie alone who can save him from death:

Pour plus me rendre enuers Mort inuincible,
 Mais toy, qui as (toy seule) le possible
 De donner heur à ma fatalite,
 Tu me seras la Myrrhe incorruptible
 Contre les vers de ma mortalité. (lines 6-10)

Even without reading the "vers", not only as worms but as verses, it is impossible not to see the way the narrator throws in the fate of the text with how well he can immortalize his lady. She and it are one.

La Suze's text is so porous that meaning gets lost; Scève's compact poem is so dense as to seem almost fettered with meaning. The shield is an apt metaphor in his poem because its surface is hard and continuous; there is much resistance to its clarity. Access to the poem may have been easy, finding a point of entry to understanding it is not; I used the word "encontre". In the dizain the whole poem tries to shield itself from fracturing and falling out into the abyss; in the elegy the disintegration is spelled out in the dis-play of the personae and the abyss lies within. Each

poem is trying to do the same thing; the way this is accomplished has been very different depending on the gender of the poet. The dizain is as economical as a poem can be, it's very toughness is what keeps it together and allows it to come apart. The elegy seems to recycle itself: just when an idea seems exhausted it is given new birth and goes on describing the suffering "couche" upon "couche".

The idea of an "illusion of vastness" is interesting. Both Scève and La Suze are illusionists. Scève takes a point and makes it seem to expand to the vastness of a world. La Suze takes a vast space and reduces it to a single hollow point. The speaker in Scève's poem tries to have the last word; in La Suze's elegy he is wordless. The answer to my question, based on Woolf's, "What is inside the elegy?" is nothing. The answer to the same question applied to the dizain would be everything. They have created an illusion of doing the opposite; they have done the same thing. Each author has fused his/her own death in the poem with his/her suffering at love's hand in a way which, not surprisingly, reflects gender. Scève has embodied himself and his suffering in his poem; the *body*⁴¹ remains. La Suze has effaced herself; her suffering is dispersed, scattered (as dust) to every word in the long elegy. Nothing is left. La Suze's elegy certainly lacks the exquisite concision of Catullus' love epigram, used as epigraph. This dizain by Scève may lack the extremity of feeling Catullus' speaker

⁴¹McFarlane was not talking of the idea of a corpse but he says: "One of the things that will strike us quickly about Scève's imagination is its concern for economy...his finest dizains give an impression of 'body'." *The 'Délie' of Maurice Scève* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 58.

professes. But in both elegy and dizain there is something of the plight of the poet lover. He does not know why he searches for this terrible place where he is torn between love and hate; between outer sensations: longing, desire on the one hand and inner torture on the other. But he is acutely conscious of how it feels to be there.

Chapter V

COMMUNITY OF WOMEN:

EDGES, INTERSTICES, ENTRACTES, PARTITIONS,

AND THE ONE TRUE PLACE

Je me cherche la première dans
 tout ce que j'écris, et je
 conjure mes lecteurs de ne lire
 que par divertissement ce que
 je ne compose que pour me
 divertir.

Mme de Villegieu,
 Aux Lecteurs,
Galanteries grenadines

Je vis dans la dernière de ces Lettres une nouvelle qui m'affligea beaucoup, Madame, & que je m'assure qui affligera fort aussi vôtre Altesse; c'est que la pauvre Comtesse de la Suze étoit malade d'une maladie dont elle ne pouvoit guérir, & qu'on la regardoit comme morte. Sans mentir, c'est grand dommage que cette personne meure si-tôt; elle avoit un bel esprit, & elle faisoit bien des vers passionnés; Marigny envoioit une de ses Elegies à la Baronne de Roste, que je ne crois pas que vous aiez vûë; car il lui mandoit qu'elle ne l'avoit été de personne. Elle voulut bien que j'en prisse une copie, & je vais vous l'envoier; car je trouve cette Pièce admirable, & je pense que vous me pardonnerez volontiers d'interrompre mon histoire, pour vous faire voir une si belle chose.¹

¹This is the passage from Villegieu's *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* immediately preceding La Suze's elegy, "Il est enfin parti cet homme incomparable." It includes both a thread from the narrative with which to tie in the poem and a justification for the interruption.

Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze, died on 9 March 1673. Her last elegy was undoubtedly written when her life was almost over; it lies encased almost at the end of Madame de Villegieu's² novel. When Villegieu was writing parts five and six of her novel--the elegy is in the sixth--her own literary life was ebbing.³ She stopped writing in 1675. What is salient is an impression of being near the edge: the edge of a life, the edge of a book, the edge of a career.

The title itself of the novel, i.e.: the choice of the word "mémoires," beyond its obvious meaning of memoirs, also seems to straddle the fence between the other two meanings in French: (as a feminine noun) memory, remembrance, commemoration; (as a masculine noun) memorandum, statement of account, treatise. As with other living people turned characters and real incidents which became settings in the novel--sometimes with gossamer veils; sometimes with none--La Suze finds her way into Villegieu's work but there is a twist. She is the only one who has one of her works included and it is La Suze's imminent death which is illuminated, not her life. The inclusion of the elegy is both the chronicle/memorandum of her death (fiction here standing in for a public

²Marie-Catherine Desjardins began calling herself Madame de Villegieu only after the death of her long-time lover, Antoine Boessel, sieur de Villegieu in 1667; he had never gotten around to marrying her. Some would have it that Madame de Villegieu was an "aventurière" but Micheline Cuénin's exhaustive research led her to believe that she truly loved Villegieu and suffered from his ill treatment of her.

³The six parts or very long letters comprising the novel were not published all at once but as follows: the first two in June, 1671, the second two in May, 1672 and parts five and six in January, 1664.

treatment in a newspaper) and the commemoration of her life as a writer. Her own notorious adventures are not mentioned; her very appearance occurs in conjunction with her imminent disappearance. She does not become a character so much as her elegy does. And it is the elegy which lies at the edge, goes over and survives. La Suze is still living when her poem is penned into another's work; by the time Villedieu publishes the final two "adventures"⁴ of her novel her friend is dead. The elegy on the edge encounters not an end but a "limen" in the sense of a threshold, even a beginning.

The objectives of French seventeenth century literature in general were *to please* and *to instruct*. With novels the goals were less constrained: *pleasure* and *entertainment* were what the reading public desired. Poetry, too, was exempt from having any didactic intent. In fact, it was to have been both written and read as a *pastime*. As such poetry--and novels, too--were deemed particularly appropriate for women. Poetry, especially, may have often been in the service of women who wanted to use it for much more than a pastime and this was certainly not restricted to France. A contemporary of Henriette de La Suze--and someone she must have known--Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1623?-

⁴The novel had also been published under the title *Les Aventures de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*. Each new adventure was eagerly awaited by the reading public; the novel was so in vogue by 1674 that it is mentioned in *Le Mercure galant*, volume VI, pp. 270-271 of that year, that fashion-conscious women who wore a kind of straight coat were dressing "à la Sylvie". Newspapers were rare in seventeenth century France: the slim *La Gazette* carried the official news; Parisian society eagerly read *Le Mercure* to learn more.

1673)⁵ includes the following in the prologue to her *Atomic Poems*:

"...For I had nothing to do when I wrot it, and I suppose those have nothing, or little e'se to do, that read it. And the Reason why I write it in Verse, is because I thought Errours might better passe there, then in Prose; since Poets write most Fiction, and Fiction is not given for Truth, but Pastime; and I feare my Atomes will be as small Pastime as themselves: for nothing can be lesse then an Atome..."⁶

That this passage is about science, written in verse and by a female is not its most surprising aspect. What is remarkable is the self-effacing tone used by a theatrical, outrageous woman who spoke scurrilously and elsewhere dubbed herself Margaret the First, making it clear that her intent in writing was nothing less than to

⁵Both La Suze and Cavendish were part of or frequented the Courts of Charles I in Oxford and then of the exiled Henrietta in Paris during the same years. La Suze lived in England from the summer of 1643 to sometime in 1644 with her first husband, Thomas Hamilton, Count of Hadington. Hamilton's family was aligned with Charles I and the young couple settled for a time in Oxford where the doomed king and his queen held their court, the same court where Margaret Cavendish was Maid of Honour to Queen Henrietta. Cavendish followed the queen into exile to Paris; La Suze returned to France following the premature death of her husband by illness--both left in 1644. (The sadness and altered health of the exiled queen is mentioned in documents and correspondence pertaining to La Suze.) In Paris Cavendish met and married William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle; they were forced to live in exile there and in Antwerp until the Restoration enabled them to return to England.

⁶The above two sentences appear in a passage where Cavendish states that if she does err it is not important, implying that women's discourse is not considered "Authentick." She goes on to say that if she is wrong no harm will be done and no time lost. (Here again, the implication is that time--women's time--is worth very little.) Then, continuing in a tone which is more characteristic of Cavendish, she says: "But my desire that they [atomes] should please the Readers, is as big as the World they make; and my Feares are of the same bulk...my Ambition is such, as I would wither be a World, or nothing." Margaret Cavendish, *The Atomic Poems*, Emory University, Online, 2 August 1997. <<http://chaucer.library.emory.edu/wwrp/atomic-web/atomic-frame.htm>>

make a spectacle of herself, and of women.⁷ In her novel, *The Blazing World*--the only known Utopian fiction by a seventeenth-century woman writer--the heroine, abducted by a cruel Prince in a ship which crosses into a New World at the Poles, survives the crossing while the Prince and his male accessories freeze to death, then begin to thaw and "corrupt." Once in the Blazing World the nameless young noblewoman, owing to her natural merit, accedes to a position of total dominion as Empress while the Emperor who married her and empowered her remains very much in the background; he himself becomes a sort of smiling, self-effacing enabler.

The new Empress, after long digressions in an Experimental Philosophy vein with her various subjects (bear-men, frog-, fox-, fly-, worm-, spider-, lice-, parrot-men, etc--always men) enters into discussions with spirits. She now expresses a need for a scribe and special advisor and brings in--who else but Margaret Cavendish--who also becomes her "platonic lover." They travel magically to the Empress' former country and world and Cavendish successfully coaches her in vanquishing the enemies of her former monarch. Once this is done, they return to the Blazing World;⁸ the Empress, technically to her husband. Cavendish lingers in this world with

⁷Virginia Woolf in "The Duchess of Newcastle", *Women and Writing* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979) 81, cites the following quote by Cavendish: "I always took delight in a singularity, even in accoutrements of habits."

⁸The title is an apt one for Cavendish, the author. Virginia Woolf says the following about her in *Women and Writing* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979) 87: "...though her philosophies are futile, and her plays intolerable, and her verses mainly dull, the vast bulk of the Duchess is leavened by a vein of authentic fire." I have read *Blazing World* and two other short novels, as well as some of her poetry; I feel the words dull and intolerable certainly don't apply to these works.

her lover, teaching her how to create an imaginary world--to rule, of course--in her head, but always goes back to the estates in England which she still cohabits with her husband, William Cavendish.

Kate Lilley has said that, though it is through "the authorizing gaze of men" that the Empress rises to power, she goes beyond needing to be seconded by males.⁹ Certainly in the tale the male becomes secondary--even superfluous--to the female. One cannot help but wonder if Margaret Cavendish, the author, would have dared write--and live--as she did without her husband to authorize her. Villedieu's heroine, too, is ushered to the convent by a male and when they reach the nunnery walls gaze ends as does the narrative and, soon after, Villedieu's writing. La Suze's poem evokes the female persona's struggle not to be authorized--and La Suze's struggle not to be author-ized--by the male but this is the heroine's last "transport", and La Suze's, too: it is the very last elegy the poet would ever write.

There is another seventeenth century woman writer whose silence toward the end of her life may have been due to not being author-ized by the males in power, in her case, by the censorious gaze of the highest echelons of the Catholic Church. She was Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz and the place was New Spain. As a nun, she already took great risks in choosing to write in a lyric genre instead of a sacred. More surprising still is the fact that her love poetry is infused with a very earthly friendship and love and

⁹Lilley talks of this in her fine introduction to *Margaret Cavendish: The Blazing World and Other Writings* (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1994)xxvii.

even sexual attraction. But with her masterpiece, *Primero Sueño*, she openly meditates on an infinite universe and does not arrive at a divine resolution for her great 970-line poem. Sor Juana wrapped her lines in an obscurity that goes beyond the night she chose as the very point of departure and vehicle for the soul's voyage and its/her awakening. Electa Arenal believes that in choosing night and its silence she wished to obfuscate how daring her subject matter was, for a woman--and a nun--writing in the seventeenth century.¹⁰ Among other things "formulas of humility and feigned denials", as Arenal calls them,¹¹ helped protect Sor Juana, at least for awhile.

The Comtesse de La Suze and Madame de Villegier were both thought of by many as notorious "aventurières"; the Duchess of Cavendish was quite frankly referred to as the Madwoman of Newcastle.¹² Perhaps women like these, more than most authors writing in the seventeenth century, felt they needed to weave disclaimers/ self-effacement statements into their texts (such as the out-of-character one by the Duchess and the passage on

¹⁰Electa Arenal says the following in "Where Woman is Creator of the Wor(l)d", *Feminist Perspectives on Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz*, ed. Stephanie Merrim (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991) note 29, 140: "In the *Repuesta* she claims, cagily defending her dedication to the profane (to her sacred) lyric genre, that heresies against art are not punished by the Inquisition. Did she have the daring of *El Sueño* in mind? One wonders."

¹¹*Ibid.* 127.

¹²Virginia Woolf in *Women and Writing* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979) 87, talks about Cavendish's reputation by the time the Cavendishes had resettled in England: "When the rumour spread that the crazy Duchess was coming up from Welbeck to pay her respects at Court, people crowded the streets to look at her, and the curiosity of Mr. Pepys twice brought him to wait in the Park to see her pass."

"divertissement" by Mme de Villegieu at the beginning of this chapter). They were fully cognizant of the danger in not humbling themselves in front of the all powerful men who ran their world and of the inadvisability of offending other women in powerful positions. These pronouncements of modesty were a commonplace; these women could no more afford to dispense with this element than they could with the "privilege du roi." The choice to write in forms thought appropriate to women and women's lives, *on the edges* --it probably came down to a choice to write in novel or poetic form or not at all--could also be seen as a way to pay homage to males but at the same time providing a sort of cover under which women could say a lot more than what the categorical word "pastime" encompassed. With Sor Juana it was the opposite: selecting lyric poetry as her genre was the very thing that evoked displeasure among her critics. That the danger she faced was far greater--and therefore, her risk--than for the other women writers goes without saying.¹³

Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière has been called "une oeuvre souriante" by critics.¹⁴ It certainly is that

¹³Electa Arenal talks about the way Sor Juana "lucidly took apart inherited religious schema [in writing a "loa"]...with the aim of correcting injustices and teaching her superiors." She goes on to say about certain lines from the poem of praise, "One might quake (from a safe distance, with laughter; with fear, in the proximity of inquisitional mentalities) just imagining the august ecclesiastics...as they heard those lines." "Where woman is Creator of the Wor(l)d", *Feminist Perspectives on Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz*, ed. Stephanie Merrim (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1991) 126, 127.

¹⁴From the introduction to *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*, the reissued (1977) edition of 1702--identical to the original Villegieu novel-- by the "Groupe d'étude du XVIIe siècle de l'Université de François-Rabelais". Micheline Cuénin

and on two levels: On one, it is exactly what I have been discussing--it is a work where the female author accepts to write in a certain genre, the novel, and whose content appears "souriant" enough to be sanctioned as appropriate as women's writing. (The choice to write in letters and to address a famous princess may have also been a way to appease persons with power.) It is also "souriant" in the way the editors intended the phrase: it is a witty, almost zany, satire where the unexpected often happens (as when the Conte d'Englesac dies and then is resurrected.) But on both counts the work is more than souriant. Precisely because the rest of the work is not one long Memento Mori, the insertion of the La Suze elegy is all the more remarkable. And Villedieu is certainly doing more than simply showcasing another's verse. If Villedieu wanted to accentuate something in her own text what better and safer way to do it than with another poet's work and one about to die at that? Already, the choice of an elegy, a lament, is interesting. And though most of La Suze's elegies are like flamenco's "solea" (the dance of loneliness) this one is the most pointed. The line in the elegy: "Agissez, ma raison, par cent efforts puissans" (7) is apt; the passion that had permeated her other poems to the degree that it gave both a general impression and its very characteristics seemed to determine the sudden dips and turns¹⁵ in those poems is absent from this elegy. Passion is

headed the group. *Oeuvres complètes de Marie Catherine Hortense Desjardins* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1969) vi.

¹⁵Interestingly, this last La Suze elegy no longer has the dips and turns but the book into which it is inserted does. Intended or not, this seems a further tribute Villedieu pays to La Suze.

not summoned; this poem's ending is about the banishment of this and all other bursts of feeling. But there will be something offered up in its place.

What is there in Villedieu's novel that is not so "souriant", that the elegy seems to be pointing at, to be showcasing? At the very heart of what became the entire novel, in part four, p.195, is a passage where the typical rhythm and pattern, one adventure spinning dizzily into the next, suddenly fall away. Sylvie and her count, after innumerable adventures--and pages--devoted to trying to unite in marriage, finally do so. Sylvie's happiness is disproportionately short-lived, as this passage is disproportionately short with respect to the rest of the text. This same true love who earlier had set fire to a castle simply to win a kiss from her, had gone through other trials "by fire" (surviving the ultimate textual one: dying and being resurrected back into the text) now becomes both disenchanted with her and flagrantly unfaithful to her in one movement. And in one sentence: "Je ne sçay si ces faux bruits refroidirent le Comte d'Englesac, ou si le mariage fit seul ce changement, mais il se dégouta comme c'est la coutume: & dès que je luy plu moins, plusieurs autres femmes vinrent à luy plaire beaucoup."¹⁶ This passage is surprising for its sudden leadenness, its one-note intrusion into what had been a cacophony. Even in a novel typified by its irony and lack of sentimentality, this passage is jarring. Somewhat later, still in part four, there is an echo of the same tonal

¹⁶This is from the 1977 edition of *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*, part IV, p.195.

quality, again one sentence, which "reports" that Sylvie had had a baby by the Comte d'Englesac and that it had died.¹⁷

Jonathan Culler has typified poetry by its quality of having intimidating "margins of silence"¹⁸ around it. I have talked about how the elegy transgresses its own margins both to shine a light back into the novel to highlight the passages where the narrative subsides to reveal the actual state of things and to go beyond even the edges of the novel. It is possible to view the La Suze elegy as a sort of painting hanging within the Villedieu novel, though not hanging neatly in its frame but protuding out of it. It violates its margins of silence to participate more fully in the novel.

The very off-centeredness--spilling over edges and out of frames--spells itself out in characteristics of two other genres: the epistolary novel and theater. Villedieu's novel, of course, is comprised of six very long letters addressed to a mysterious "Altesse". Critics widely believe this princess to have been Marie d'Orléans-Longueville, Duchesse de Nemours.¹⁹ That the book was

¹⁷The sentence comes in a passage about the trial which the count's mother has taken up once more against Sylvie: "Le proces se commenca donc avec une chaleur sans egale: Madame d'Englesac reprit les informations qu'elle avoit autrefois fait faire contre moy, & pretendit prouver par laque l'enfant que j'avois eu, & qui estoit mort, n'estoit point au Comte d'Englesac."

¹⁸Jonathan D. Culler, "Poetics of the Lyric", *Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975) 161.

¹⁹Again in the reissued edition of the *Mémoires*, Madame de Nemours' identity is based on the fact that the "Altesse" is alluded to in the text as a foreign princess who had interests in and outside France (p.163). Several of her character traits are revealed as well such as being gay, lively and curious, but also a prudent even virtuous woman; she possessed a good heart but also a

addressed to someone of the stature of the Duchesse (she actually was a princess) was no accident. Henriette-Sylvie's lively character, not unlike that of the Duchess, may have even been a creation designed to please Madame de Nemours and, certainly, pleasing her probably protected Villegieu from any liberties the author decided to take. The very act of writing the novel in letters aids in its readability as well. The adventures of this central character--and others, too-- take so many twists and turns that pulling the reader back to the flattened page offers a welcome and necessary deep breath which is exactly the way these trips back to the surface are worded. For example, at the end of part IV, there appears: "Mais, Madame, il faut vous donner un peu de relâche, vous devez être lasse d'une si longue lecture; je le suis aussi d'avoir tant écrit..." These are also reminders that with a novel written in letters there are interstices and in this one some of the most important events-- or at least most salient for a feminist reading--happen during these spaces "between" (the breakdown of Sylvie's marriage, the death of her baby etc.).

There is theatricality without and within: in the narrative setting which surrounds the elegy and within the poem itself. (There is also a sense of community as Henriette-Sylvie, among three other strong women, introduces and reads the elegy.) The four women are sitting on a terrace. One is reminded of the spectacles of the seventeenth century, either witnessed from a

penetrating wit and keen sense of humor which did not preclude singling out society for ridicule. The editors think all this aligns too well with what is known of the Duchesse de Nemours to be coincidence.

terrace of a château or palace or presented on a terrace and viewed from afar. (In part two of the novel itself was the long, ornately detailed scene of a royal spectacle lasting for days which, of course, referred to the equally lavish "divertissements" that Louis XIV gave for the queens, known as "Plaisirs de l'Ile Enchantée" in the Parc de Versailles, 7-13 May 1664.) Here the elegy within the novel is the spectacle, that which is gazed upon/read. But the four women, once the elegy is read--the performance completed--look to the horizon where a horseman is glimpsed:

Nous lisions cette Elégie sur une terrasse qui regarde vers le grand chemin; & comme nous achevions de la lire, nous vîmes passer un homme à cheval, suivi d'un valet de chambre, que la Baronne reconnût pour un des meilleurs amis de son fils, & qu'elle ne douta point qui ne vint lui rendre une visite.

This rider, in essence, causes the narrative to start up once again and moves it to where the women seem poised, waiting to enter in. Adding to the impression of illusion is the fact that Henriette-Sylvie is disguised as a man and only one of the three other women knows her true identity. This is fitting in a book and a century where things are rarely what they seem to be or that they are one thing to one person and something else to another.

Upon closer analysis the whole elegy seems to take place in an "entracte". The first act has transpired and the female persona is struggling with her reason and her pride, rehearsing how she might discover things that are not what they seem to be: "Découvrez, s'il se peut, dans ces grands sentimens, Des affectations & des déguisemens." The word "Découvrez" serves to obfuscate a clear meaning: is the goal--and delight--in the discovery itself or is it uncovering what is beneath, which may lead to yet more disguise?

Is she looking for truth or anything but the truth? She tried to retouch her lover's image so that she may find him less appealing: "Peignez-moi la douceur dont je suis enchantée, Moins auguste, & moins tendre, ou du moins affectée." The female tries to find flaws so that the male cannot go on. He doesn't; there is no second act. The poem happens somewhere in between. The poem is the story of the interruption of his story, as Villedieu interrupted hers, in the passage preceding the elegy: "...Je pense que vous me pardonnez volontiers d'interrompre mon histoire, pour vous faire voir une si belle chose." His story will not be taken up again; Villedieu's will, but only to end. There is no struggle once this last man in the novel rides into existence; his brief reappearance on stage seems designed to propel the narrative to its conclusion just as he accompanies Sylvie to her end which is the convent. Entering the convent is another threshold, another beginning but to this the reader is forever barred access. The last we hear from Sylvie she is safely esconced inside.

The placement of the elegy warrants mentioning again because it lies at the very denouement of the novel. The poem acts as a "renvoi," back to the scene at the end of part V where Sylvie begins--sadly then--to entertain the idea that for her own "repos" she would do well to enter the convent. But it also acts as a "envoi" pointing just ahead to Sylvie's definitive decision to live in the convent. The poem resides at the very spot where something definitive has to happen (in order to change the way things are moving.) Nothing does; in essence, the poem happens. And taking its cue from the outcome of the elegy, the novel stops exactly

where the scene in part V had foreshadowed it would: at the convent walls. But where Sylvie then ²⁰ was loathe to do what she thought she should now, at the end, she embraces her decision. Interestingly, there is a line toward the end of the elegy: "Ah! respirons, ma Gloire, & calmons notre effroi," which assuages the female persona who has made the decision to alter the male's portrait and leave him where he is (absent) but which also impacts upon, if not the decision Sylvie is about to make, the way she carries it out. Finally, the march to the convent is triumphant.

²⁰Once again, it is in the company of women--a woman, in this case--that the idea of entering a convent first comes to Sylvie. It is her dear and supportive friend, L'Abbesse, who gently suggests the possibility, pp. 302,303.

Ainsi les tableaux vus de trop loin--
 -et de trop pres; et il n'y a qu'un
 point indivisible qui soit le
 véritable lieu: les autres sont trop
 pres, trop loin, trop haut ou trop
 bas. La perspective l'assigne dans
 l'art de la peinture; mais dans la
 vérité et dans la morale, qui
 l'assignera?

Pascal
*Pensées*²¹

The elegy was viewed as a painting which spilled out of its frame--and into the novel--and out of the novel altogether. Edges suggested interstices (as with a novel written in letters) and entractes (as with an elegy whose "story" seems to take place in one as well as the idea that the narrative of the novel suspends itself to allow for the poem before moving on to its conclusion). Edges, interstices and entractes offered up exchanges in meaning.

Now, instead of focusing on the boundaries which are breached and the breaks and spaces which interrupt the text, I envision the novel and poem as one continuous work and discern its *partitions*--for Villedieu incorporated the poem into her own writing; she quite literally embodied it. There is no reason to believe it was written with the intention that it would become part of the novel but Villedieu pronounced it good enough to bring inside and placed it as a sort of *mise-en-abyme* within her book. The gaze will light upon the one or the other--the four women sitting on the terrace determine where the gaze will be directed; it is they who move it from the novel to the poem and back again. They become the elegy's

²¹Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*: ed. Louis Lafuma, 21; ed. Leon Brunschvicg, 381.

frame, they become its margins of silence; they assure it interiority and protection, not only, temporarily, from the narration of the novel, but from all that is outside the work as a whole. This makes a unique statement: a wall of four strong women whose lives are confined to a story concretize to protect a fragile lament by a real-life woman who is about to lose her life/live story. Once the elegy is read/gazed upon--author-ized and by women--the women, and the reader, look away from the elegy, to the horizon, to see the narration of the novel begin again.

And if the novel and poem form a single work or canvas, I would like to propose looking at Villedieu as the painter/viewer, not unlike the way Consalve, in Mme de Lafayette's *Zaïde* acts as the viewer par excellence.²² In so doing I would like to see whether there is not a "true place" from which to view the work.

Certainly much of what Villedieu does in *Les Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* is to paint what--and whom--she sees around her as through a "transparent plane."²³ There is an impression of "reportage" in Villedieu's depiction of those she sees around her and this is even--especially--true of her

²²John D. Lyons uses the term, the patron/viewer, in discussing *Zaïde* in "Speaking in Pictures, Speaking of Pictures: Problems of Representation in the Seventeenth Century" from *Mimesis: From Method, Augustine to Descartes* (Hanover: Published for Dartmouth College by the University Press of New England, 1982) 172.

²³This, of course, was Leone Battista Alberti's direction to painters to achieve a perspective rendering of the objects and persons being put on canvas; Alberti called this the "open window". Leonardo da Vinci, intrigued by perspective, found shortcomings in Alberti's system but said essentially the same thing of the open window: "Perspective is nothing else than seeing a place (or objects) behind a pane of glass, quite transparent, on the surface of which the objects behind the glass are drawn." *Works*, trans. Jean-Paul Richter, 5.1.150.

supposedly fictionalized characters and what befalls them: i.e.: the stark recounting of the way Sylvie's marriage comes undone and the demise of her baby. In *La Princesse de Clèves*, Mme de Lafayette wrote of the nobility and the Court and moved her story to another century. Villedieu also portrays the Court but it is the City which really comes alive (be it Paris or Toulouse or elsewhere in the provinces) and she does not exclude others, often those who people the "faits-divers" of the time, her time. The sense of immediacy is such that Villedieu's announcement of the coming death of La Suze is offered up naturally in the narrative as the reason for inclusion of her poem. Like a good painter, Villedieu uses a kind of perspective--altering a name here, making composites of persons, and introducing half-fictional, half-real characters--not so much perhaps to create a "truthful" picture as to have a more literary result.

Painting offers another analogous idea: "la scène agréable". (For example, in *Zaïde* it is Alphonse who first commissions an artist to paint a shipwreck scene in which the topos required it to have--in order to be "agréable"--several corpses on the beach or in the water). Villedieu's *Mémoires*, to be "agréable", is a colorful and witty rendering of the late seventeenth century society with all the prerequisite elements: duplicity and disguises of all sorts; voyeurism (persons lurking behind bushes, windows--even in churches); perilous confrontations; ostentation; magic; and betrayals.

Once more, like Consalve, who takes over from Alphonse and paints himself into the painting to try to communicate with Zaïde,

Villedieu places herself, doubly, in her own work. Creations are meddled with: in *Zaïde* certain images are effaced; in *Mémoires* an image (la Rivale) is effaced, another (Sylvie) is put away. The elegy becomes Villedieu's creation, too, which she puts away--not within a convent--but within her own book.

Though it may be risky to see the novel as frankly autobiographical there are many pieces of the person and of the life which find their way eerily into it. Foremost is the example of Sylvie's physical appearance and that of her "Rivale". (Sylvie may, in fact, resemble Villedieu in many ways except one: Sylvie is stunningly beautiful, Villedieu was scarred from small pox.) But that aspect is not effaced, Sylvie's rival's flawlessness is altered. She is disfigured, (distorted) so that Villedieu eventually removes her, paints her over. Sylvie, though, is not marred so that when Villedieu ultimately places her beyond view, behind the nunnery walls, she will be removed intact and without distortion.

The elegy by La Suze is about meddling with a creation, too. La Suze's female persona, having created a portrait of her beloved in her head, now wishes to change it. She pleads with her reason to "paint" him less august, less tender than that image which her memory offers up to her. It amounts to the same thing: Villedieu alters La Rivale, then obliterates this other side of Sylvie/herself and finally removes Sylvie, intact, from view. La Suze has her persona modify the features of her beloved and then removes *him* so that she cannot be looked upon. These are special mirrors indeed; Villedieu arranges it so that it is the untarnished

reflection which gazes back. La Suze directs her female persona not to look into a mirror/man to determine her own perfection but instead has her question his. In the fiction, Sylvie, unscarred, and the persona, untroubled, are preserved. The reality was different: Villedieu remained scarred and the end of La Suze's life was anything but untroubled. She was not so skilled at removing that which threatened to diminish her. She had become what many regarded as a pathetic courtesan and she had gone through years and years of battles with and trials against her sister-in-law, lost, and lost everything which was not already gone through poor advice and a certain lack of interest in her own affairs. Her health was gone, too. What she had not lost was her pride and she was not alone. The female persona in her last elegy is no longer looked upon; she is, in effect, *dis-regarded* by the male because she has chosen to remove him (Sylvie, too, is dis-regarded: she removes herself from the gaze of the Male.) But heroines--and authors, too--in being disregarded are able to "dessiller" their own eyes and they are finally *undeceived*.

This idea of becoming undeceived and that the truth cannot be seen--at least not readily and not by everyone--suggests one of the most colorful and memorable scenes in Villedieu's novel which may hold the very key to its essence. This is the scene early on (in Part II) where Sylvie and her count meet once again, this time when Sylvie--disguised as a man--has found herself the object of affection of a certain marquise and now must follow through on the diurnal flirting with night visits or risk everything. The Conte d'Englesac and she conspire to continue duping the woman: Sylvie

keeping up with her by day and the count "performing" during the nocturnal visits. Once the plan is devised Sylvie, as though to answer critics of such a preposterous idea--and perhaps Villedieu to those who had been critical of her own unorthodox romantic practices--says: Peut-etre meme qu'on m'accusera dans la suite, d'avoir trop peu de delicatesses; mais franchement je n'ai jamais pu admettre de certaines jalousies qui me paroissent trop engagées dans les sens, l'assurance d'un coeur sans partage m'a toujours suffi, & me suffira toujours. Chacun a sa maniere d'aimer, et je crois que je suis encore plus delicate que les delicats memes en aimant de cette sorte." I believe that Villedieu--through Sylvie--is saying that just as it was unprecedented and difficult to perceive what was really going on in her variation on Boccaccio's theme of the wife and lover duping the husband, a new code of love was emerging out of the shadows of what had been the old. This new way would be typified by clarity and a certain independent way of thinking for women. It might not have been the ideal for women, perhaps there was no ideal. As Sylvie progresses through the novel one can view her evolution in the light of Madame de Lafayette's statement--when she was only nineteen--that she was glad that her generation was "exempt" from love. Sylvie's decision to enter the convent--her decision to be disregarded--presages the same ending for Mme de Clèves in Lafayette's most famous novel.²⁴ And perhaps

²⁴In fact, there are many striking parallels between Villedieu's *Les Mémoires* and Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*: The Chevalier de la Mothe looks from his windows in a neighboring house into Sylvie's "comme s'il eut été chez moi" (p. 252), just as Nemours rented the apartment across the courtyard from Mme de Clèves to spy on her; Le Marquis Flamand is freed by the death of his wife as was Mme de Clèves by the death of her husband; Sylvie

Lafayette's statement applied not only to her own Princesse and to Sylvie and to the persona in the elegy but to Villedieu and La Suze. These women all became undeceived.

To the notion of being undeceived I would like to add another: that of being *undisarrayed*. Here again, there were four strong women, all authors this time: Sor Juana de La Cruz; Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle; Marie-Catherine Desjardins, Madame de Villedieu; and Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze. None of these women was disarrayed: not by threats, not by ridicule, not by convention, not even by death. Each of them found that "true place" and wrote as close to it as was possible. And one of the crucial things making this possible was these women's interrelation with other women; the image of a wall of women is once again apt. Every one of them had a female protector embodied in a real-life person and/or in a fictional companion/lover. Cavendish, of course, created "the Empress," interestingly without any other name, whereas the name Margaret Cavendish is readily visible as both the name of a character and the author; Villedieu addressed every long letter comprising her book to a real princess, as though asking for author-ization over and over. Sor Juana's difficult task of being allowed to write love poetry, the metaphysical *Sueño*, and her audacious *La Repuesta* was facilitated, for a while, by her

did not marry Le Marquis, Mme de Clèves did not marry Nemours. But where Mme de Clèves had to flee Nemours and, for quite a time, avoiding him was effected with great difficulty, Sylvie was actually aided in her resolve to flee all men--Le Marquis included--by his collusion. (It is interesting that one of the very few men in the novel whose interest in Sylvie is in her best interests--and he is in love with her--bears simply the name "Le Marquis Flamand".)

warm friendships with two vicereines: first, Leonor Carreto, Marquise de Mancera and then, Maria Luisa Manrique de Laura y Gonzaga, Marquise de La Laguna, Countess de Paredes.²⁵ And as I have tried to demonstrate, La Suze certainly found a protector, of her last elegy and, in a unique way, of her reputation as a writer, in Villedieu. We should look to that point--that dot--where Sor Juana's poem, *Primero Sueño* ends. The incredibly beautiful description of the soul's long voyage to find understanding in the universe which is, finally, futile is not all there is. For the very last word of the poem comes back to Sor Juana herself, to that infinitesimal dot: "y yo despierta". She is neither deceived, nor is she disarrayed.

²⁵These deep friendships attest to the critical role female patronage played in the lives of women and how necessary it was to the survival of the text.

Women who wrote books used
their minds to cross-dress.
Guez de Balzac²⁶

In the dedicatory preface to a collection of poetry²⁷ a prominent publisher's address to La Suze reads in part:

...Dans cette pensée, Madame, j'entreprends de vous les présenter, comme à la personne qui possède, non seulement ces qualitez éminentes, mais de plus, comme à celle qui force tout le monde à avouer que vous faites toute seule un troisième sexe, puisque vous estes autant éloignée de la foiblesse des Femmes que vous estes au dessus de l'excellence des Hommes...

The curious phrase "vous faites toute seule un troisième sexe" is high flattery indeed. But extreme adulation was very much in vogue. To read the portraits etc. written about women of the seventeenth century is to believe that every woman was a paragon of beauty and every women writer or ruler was additionally endowed with much wisdom and wit. (La Suze's commendatory poems are a good example.) The words "toute seule", though, highlight the idea that to her contemporaries La Suze stood apart. To take it further, they may not have known what to make of her nor quite where to place her. The very disconnectedness that is a feature of her poems may not be an incorrect description of La Suze, the woman and the writer.

²⁶Guez de Balzac, *Lettres familières de Monsieur de Balzac à Monsieur Chapelain* (Paris: Elzevier, 1661) 139. I am using this quotation in a way similar to Joan deJean's use; referring to it, she says: "The literary women of this generation would prove him right by becoming amazons of the intellect." Joan deJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 47, 48.

²⁷A *Mme la comtesse de la Suze* in *Nouveau recueil des plus belles poésies contenant...* (Paris: Loyson, 1654)

But the words "un troisième sexe" suggest something that includes but goes well beyond her clever use of metamorphose as to the gender of the personae in her poems. This had been part and parcel of French literature of the seventeenth century since *Astrée* when Céladon dresses as a woman--becomes Alexis--and is referred to as "she" for more than a thousand pages. La Suze is ingenious in choosing 1) to write elegies 2) to make them of sufficient length and their narrative such that cross-dressing--so much a part of the seventeenth century--is incorporated into the poem.

The appellation "un troisième sexe" suggests placing La Suze in a slightly different and very French context of women ruling, rebelling and writing. She is in the company of women like the Regent Marie de Medici who chose to have the great events in her life depicted in several gigantesque tableaux which show her "more as a heroine than as a queen".²⁸ There was also the poet/warrior Barbe d'Ernecourt, Comtesse de Saint Baslemont who, dressed as a man and on horseback, fought in defense of her own and her neighbors' lands.²⁹ Catherine de Meurdrac de La Guette, if her own memoirs are authentic, cross-dressed and fought as a soldier in the 1640's, then ended that life and began another to write about the experience. The Comtesse de La Suze may not have ruled, had

²⁸Ian Maclean, *Woman Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature 1610-1652* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York:Oxford University Press, 1977) 209.

²⁹Joan deJean provides more information on the Comtesse de Saint Baslemont including the following quote by her contemporary, Jean-Marie de Vernon: "Whoever looks attentively at the conduct of Barbe d'Ernecourt will find her the equal of the heroes of antiquity and will be able to suggest her as a model...for the most courageous men." *Tender Geographies: Women and the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 24, 25.

herself painted as martial or assumed male dress to fight but she certainly fits in with these women who Joan deJean calls literary amazons. La Suze fought with conventions which dictated what a woman could and should do, both in her professional life and her personal life. Like Baslemont, she certainly can be thought of as a model for men...and women. As to Loyson's phrase "vous estes...éloignée de la foiblesse des Femmes" she may have helped to distance those (men) who believe(d) that women are "foibles". The Comtesse de La Suze needs to be restored to her true place among the more outstanding women of the seventeenth century who ruled, who rebelled and who wrote.

CONCLUSION

Le siècle est amy de la Prose,
 Et n'aime les vers qu'en chansons.
 Villegieu

When one looks at poetry of the latter half of the seventeenth century it may be with longing that one thinks back to the baroque poets of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and to the richness and variety of their texts. The purification of the language in the seventeenth century, especially in poetry, which Malherbe¹ had inaugurated and the poets of Richelieu's era reinforced made of love poetry something classic and heroic but so standardized and so "purified" as to be somewhat monotonous and boring. Vincent Voiture was so successful because his poems of "désinvolture" were a whirlwind in a world of poems written under severe and exacting guidelines. But, except for the trends of "badin" and "burlesque" poetry, the atmosphere was again very settled by the time the Comtesse de La Suze began to write. It was a vast terrain of sameness regarding versification, language and imagery. Even "préciosité" with its penchant for oxymoron² which had been a breeze on a very still day can itself be seen as contributing to a stilted impression in poetry.

This was the poetic landscape when La Suze came of age as a

¹The rigor and severity that Malherbe advocated applying to poetic texts John Lapp calls "épluchage du texte." *The Brazen Tower: Essays on Mythological Imagery in the French Renaissance and Baroque* (Saratoga, California: Anna Libri, 1977) 42.

²The most amusing oxymoron of the era that I have heard I learned in a lecture by Gabriële Verdier at New York University: "fade à vomir."

poet. It is already surprising that she was as innovative as she was. She was capable of writing verse which surprised and delighted everyone, combining the revival of the love elegy with a tone the modern reader would regard as truly elegiac; La Suze's best poems are laments which seem to offer up images of the soul tearing itself to shreds. She was versatile and in writing "La Montre" demonstrates that she was endowed with a keen sense of humor, a playfulness and a cleverness that extends well beyond the limits of her work. She wrote the audacious sonnet on abortion which attests to a sense of commitment and compassion.³

As a woman writing the "paysage" was more fertile. This was the century when the attention on women really came to the fore and women themselves met the challenge; it began with Marie de Medici's triumphal entrance into France in 1600, immortalized by Rubens in art and Mallherbe⁴ in poetry, and continued on through to the end of the century. Perhaps the apogee of women's new freedom and power came at the middle of the century with their role in the Fronde; a concrete detail of that power is that women actually

³She was certainly seen as a force in her own time as seen in the ironic letter written by her in defense of certain writers and in the fragment of the letter about her and the incident. This letter is listed at the end of the appendix and begins "Puisque, Dieu mercy, je ne suis pas du temps passé..."

⁴In Malherbe's famous ode the Duc de Bellegarde who accompanied Marie de Medici to France is compared to an Argonaut bringing with him Hyménée:

Jamais Argonaute semblable
N'alla conquérir la toison,
Tu menois la Blonde Hyménée,
Qui devois solennellement,
De ce fatal accouplement
Célébrer l'heureuse journée...
Oeuvres, ed. Lebègue et Fromilhague (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968) II, 103.

manned points of defense. All this was reflected in women, writing.

La Suze not only served as a crucial link between Mademoiselle de Scudéry and Madame de Villegieu but she enabled many women to write. Two very fine women poets who followed her, in addition to Madame de Villegieu, greatly felt the influence of La Suze: Madame de Lavergne and Madame Deshoulières.⁵ And there were many others who might not have written and would not have published if not for her. Nevertheless, La Suze does seem a bit eclipsed by other women who wrote more. One is tempted to want there to be another story. One wants to believe that she may have written other poetry that was vastly different from what everyone was writing or that she may have written plays and/or novels but--perhaps thinking them unfit or inappropriate to have come from the pen of a woman--put them away or destroyed them.

In this regard it may prove useful to look at a word which appears over and over in her poetry--and in most poetry of the era--and examine its exact meaning in the middle and later years of the century. The word is "raison." Robert Garapon has raised the issue of misunderstanding as to the seventeenth-century meaning of the word in an insightful article.⁶ He proposes the word "discernement" rather than "raisonnement" as coming closer to the

⁵The proof of this influence is that there are several poems where attribution has been given to both La Suze and Lavergne or to La Suze and to Deshoulières.

⁶Robert Garapon, "Sur le sens du mot "raison" au XVII^e siècle", *Convergences Rhetoric and Poetic in Seventeenth-Century France*, ed. David Lee Rubin, Mary B. McKinley (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989).

dominant meaning for the French of the second half of the century. Furetière in his *Dictionnaire* offers the following as the first meaning of the word "raison": "entendement; faculté, puissance de l'âme qui discerne le bien du mal, le vrai d'avec le faux..."

Already it could be argued that in La Suze's elegies it is more than simply a struggle between passion and reason that is going on; it often feels as though La Suze is struggling against the severity and rigor imposed on poetry itself at the time. As to the tension between "raison" and "coeur" in her elegiac poetry--and in the abortion sonnet--she certainly used "raison" as the counterpart to feelings and passion, that is, in the sense in which we now think of the term or the second of Furetière's meanings.⁷ But it may not be only the personae in La Suze's poetry who face a struggle over reason and passion; La Suze may also be struggling with the two meanings of "raison." It is not irrelevant that in her very last elegy reason wins; this can also be seen as the victory of "discernement" over "raisonnement."

The Comtesse de La Suze's elegies are not vastly different from much of the poetry of the age because they could not be but in subtle ways their difference is remarkable. It could be said that as a poet she had "une puissance de l'âme"; she worked on minute details which made her verses finer, higher, sadder. She created personae in her elegies, female and male, who tried to make choices of discernment in love, to choose that which is truer, better.

⁷The "second" meaning given by Furetière was: "RAISON dans la même idée signifie le jugement, le bon sens, la faculté de concevoir, de réfléchir, la compréhension, l'étendue et la pénétration de l'entendement..."

They may have lost at love but they aspired to something more.

Once La Suze is given her due as the poet among male--and female--poets who brought back the elegy, endowing it with passion and sincerity she should also be restored to her proper place among women writers of her era. She is not overshadowed by them. Perhaps Loyson's dedication to her "...vous faites toute seule un troisième sexe" is correct in the sense that Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de La Suze needs to be seen as someone who stood a bit apart, someone who subtly and expertly discerned what needed to be added to what had been and was being written in the seventeenth century and wrote exactly that.

APPENDIX I

Chapter I
LIFENOTESLe Triomphe d'Amarillis
pour Madame La Duchesse de Chastillon
Ode IV

Que pour la pompe solennelle
 Que vont préparer les neufs Soeurs,
 On fasse un riche amas de fleurs,
 Afin d'en couronner le chef de la plus belle:
 Venez Lauriers, Mirthes, & Lys,
 Ombrager aujourd'huy le front d'Amarillis;
 Crois[s]ez Iasmins, Oeillets, Anemones & Roses,
 Sa grande feste approche, & ses charmes divers,
 Qui viennent d'achever de vaincre toutes choses,
 Vont enfin triompher de tout cet Univers.

Qu'à ce grand & rare spectacle
 Le bel Astre qui va toujours
 Arrête son rapide cours,
 Comme il fit autrefois pour un moindre miracle,
 Que les flateurs Chantres des Bois
 Retiennent par respect leurs languissantes voix;
 Que par tout les ruisseaux suspendent leur murmure;
 Amarillis n'a rien qui ne doive étonner,
 Vous sçavez bien qu'elle est l'honneur de la Nature,
 Ne m'interrompez pas, ie la vais couronner.

Ie voy déjà qu'elle s'avance,
 Et son léger habillement,
 Bien moins superbe que charmant,
 Découvre mille attraits dedans sa negligence;
 De ses divins cheveux epars
 Les boucles sur son sein volent de toutes parts,
 De soupirs amoureux doucement emportées;
 Sa parure n'a rien qui paroisse affeté
 Elle meprise l'art des graces empruntées,
 Et tire son éclat de sa seule beauté.

Sa belle teste n'est ornée
 Que d'une Guirlande de fleurs;
 Sa juppe est des mesmes couleurs
 Que le Ciel prend au temps d'une belle journée,
 Une agraffe de diamant
 Au costé la rehausse assez negligemment;
 On luy voit sous un bras une écharpe brillante;
 D'un drap d'or est couvert son corsage divin;
 Et qui voit aujourd'hui cette Beauté charmante,
 Voit le dernier effort d'une immortelle main.

Ses yeux, source des belles choses,
 Ont plus de feu que le Soleil;
 Et proche de son teint vermeil
 On voit jaunir les Lys, on voit pâlir les Roses.
 Qu'elle a d'attraits! qu'elle a d'appas!
 Dans cet estat pompeux, qui n'admireroit pas
 Les rayons éclatans de cet objet celeste?
 En pouvez-vous, mes yeux, tout l'éclat suporter?
 Acheverez-vous bien d'observer tout le reste?
 Et jusques dans son Char la verrez-vous monter?

Mais courage, suivons la Belle
 Dedans un Char si glorieux,
 Qu'il semble descendre des Cieux,
 Tant il nous paroist beau, brillant, & digne d'elle [?]
 La sur des pierres de grands prix,
 Des plus illustres coeurs que ses yeux ont surpris,
 Avec des traits profonds la defa[ite] est gravee,
 Et sur un or b[runy] paroist tout à l'entour,
 Entre mille Rubis en bosse relevée,
 L'impuissance de Mars contre le Dieu d'Amour.

Au milieu du Char est assise
 Cette ravissante Beauté,
 D'ou l'on diroit que la fierté
 Avec un doux dedain, cet appareil méprise:
 Les Graces, avec les Vertus,
 Tenant dessous ses pieds les Vices abbatus,
 Paroissent autour d'elle en un ordre admirable;
 L'une luy [t]end des fleurs, l'autre luy sert d'appuy;
 Et comme cette Belle en est inseparable,
 On les voit triompher avec elle aujourd'huy.

Dix jeunes enfans de Cithere,
 D'un air aussi doux que galand,
 Traisment ce Chariot brillant,
 Et pour Amarillis ils ont quitté leur Mere;
 Les ris, les agrémens, les jeux,
 D'un visage & d'un air aussi gay qu'amoureux,
 Suivent cette Beauté qui n'a point de pareille;
 Et devant eux les doux Zephirs,
 Par tout ou doit passer cette jeune merveille,
 Vont parfumant les airs de leurs plus doux souûpîrs.

Après cette troupe galante
 On voit marcher de tous costez
 Et les Heros & les Beautez
 Dont vient de triompher la belle Conquerante.
 Et de mille climats divers
 Ces illustres Captifs sont venus dans ses fers,
 Et disputent entr'eux l'honneur d'en estre Esclaves;
 On les voit à ses pieds, ces glorieux vanqueurs,
 Ils luy font tous soûmis, & mesme les plus Braves
 Aiment mieux la servir, que triompher ailleurs.

Les Peuples paroissent en suite
 De chapeaux de fleurs tous couverts,
 Et de leurs cris fendant les airs,
 Font aller jusqu'au Ciel le bruit de son merite:
 Chacun poussé du beau desir
 De pouvoir contempler cette Belle à plaisir,
 Se presse sans respect ny de sexe n'y d'âge;
 Au bonheur de la voir leurs biens sont établis;
 Et touchez des attraits d'un si charmant visage,
 Font par tout retentir le nom d'Amarillis.

Tout le monde épris de la gloire
 D'accompagner cette Beauté,
 Marche avec autant de fierté,
 Qu'il marcheroit au jour de sa propre victoire:
 Chacun par ses beaux vestemens,
 Sa propreté, son air, & ses ajustemens,
 Accroist de quelque éclat cette pompe agreable.
 Que peut-on souhaiter afin de s'orner mieux,
 Puis qu'on y voit paroistre en un ordre admirable
 Tout ce qu'ont de parfait & la Terre & les Cieux?

Il faut que le passé luy cede,
 Comme fait le siecle present;
 Tout ce qu'il avoit de plaisant
 N'avoit pas les attraits que cet Ange possede:
 Sortez du plus creux du tombeau,
 Vous, Reyne a qui l'Egypte a servy de berceau;
 Et venez confesser qu'Amarillis vous passe:
 Si pour n'accroistre pas la pompe de Cesar,
 Vous cherchastes la mort avecque tant d'audace,
 Vostre Ombre toutefois peut bien suivre son Char.

C'est une chose sans pareille;
 Et loin de luy rien comparer,
 Le monde la doit adorer,
 Puis qu'elle est de nos jours la plus belle merveille;
 Il faut que comme aux immortels
 On luy dresse par tout de superbes Autels,
 Qu'elle aille de son Char au Temple de Memoire,
 Et que l'illustre rang qu'elle doit y tenir,
 Soit si haut élevé, si digne de sa gloire,
 Qu'elle triomphe encor des siecles à venir.
 (1653) *Poésies de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles
 Sercy, 1666).

Portrait de Madame La Duchesse
de Chastillon
Ode III

Cherchons pour peindre Amarillis,
Des fleurs nouvellement écloses;
Cueillons des Oeillets & des Roses,
Meslons-y quantité de Lis,
Et rassemblons enfin toutes ces belles choses.

Corail, Rubis, Perles, & Fleurs,
Astres brillans, lumière pure,
Riches Tresors de la Nature,
Faites-moy part de vos couleurs
Pour cette merveilleuse & divine peinture.

Mais quel ambitieux desir
Dans un si beau dessein m'engage?
Ah! que dans un si grand ouvrage
I'aurois de gloire & de plaisir,
Si ma force pouvoit egaler mon courage!

Ce peintre qui dans un Tableau
Assembla tout ce qui peut plaire,
Auroit passé pour temeraire,
S'il eust employé son pinceau
Au merveilleux Portrait que i'entreprends de faire.

Sa Vénus avoit moins d'attraits,
Moins d'agrémens, & moins de grace;
Et quelque recit que l'on fasse
De ces beaux & fameux Portraits,
L'illustre Amarillis en charmes la surpasse.

Mais si ce Dieu que tous les jours
Elle fit vaincre dans le Monde,
Dans ce beau dessein me [s]econde,
Nous pourons avec son secours
Peindre cette merveille en merveilles feconde[s].

Qu'il tire délicatement
Avec la fleche legere
Le tour des beaux yeux de sa Mere,
Et ce rare & noble agrément
Que nul autre pinceau ne sçauroit iamaïs faire.

Qu'il prenne ce qui peut charmer,
Et retenir en son empire
Tout ce qui fait qu'on y soûpire,
Ce qui tuë & qui fait aimer,
Et ce ie ne sçay quoy qu'on ne sçauroit bien dire.

Il faut de Rubis pleins de feux
 Former ses deux lèvres vermeilles,
 Et pour achever ces merveilles,
 Mettre des Perles entre-deux,
 Telles que l'Orient n'en ait point de pareilles.

Pour les faire mieux découvrir,
 Faisons sa bouche à demy close,
 Semblable au bouton d'une Rose
 Qui ne commence qu'à s'ouvrir,
 Quand la Mere du Jour de ses pleurs les arrose.

Il faut faire son teint de Lys
 Beau comme celui de l'Aurore,
 Ou pareil à celui de Flore,
 Quand nos champs en sont embellis,
 Et mesme, s'il se peut, plus éclatant encore.

Que sur l'albâtre de son sein
 Tombe negligemment en onde
 Sa chevelure vagabonde,
 Qui sans étude & sans dessein
 Dans ses chaisnes d'ébeine engage tout le monde.

Et vous, Graces, à vostre tour
 Venez parer sa belle teste,
 Comme on voit en un jour de Feste
 Celle de la Mere d'Amour,
 Lors qu'elle se propose une grande conquete.

Mais c'est en vain qu'à mon secours,
 Pour rendre ses traits plus fidelles,
 Avec ces trois Soeurs immortelles,
 I'appelle icy tous les Amours,
 Ils ne quittent iamais ce miracle des Belles.

(1659) *Poésies de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1666).

Pour Mademoiselle
de Normanville
Madrigal

Vous que charment les déplaisirs,
Esclaves d'un mal volontaire,
Sujets du Prince de Cytere,
Qui vous nourrissez de soupirs;
Amans, si vous craignez une peine infinie,
Ne brûlez point pour Silvanie,
Le feu de ses beaux yeux ne s'éteint qu'au tombeau,
Ses regards sont mortels, détournen-les en les vôtres;
Mais toutefois il est plus beau
De mourir pour ses yeux, que de vivre pour d'autres.
(1653)

Pour la Mesme
Madrigal II

Jeunes Amours, ne pleurez pas,
Reprenez vos traits & vos armes,
La Reyne de tous les appas
S'en va reprendre tous ses charmes;
Le Ciel la rend à mes desirs
Comme il la rend à tous les vôtres;
Elle va finir mes soupirs,
Mais elle en fera naistre d'autres:
Quand ses yeux, ces flambeaux d'amour,
Auront repris un nouveau jour,
Que ne pourront point leurs oeillades?
Ha! ie croy de cette Beauté,
Que plus elle aura de santé,
Plus elle fera de Malades.
(1653) *Poésies de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles
Sercy, 1666).

La Belle Vagabonde
Pour La Reyne de Suede
Ode I

Belle lumière vagabonde,
Mobile source de clarté,
Flambeau d'éternelle beauté,
Oeil du jour qui voit tout le monde,
Soleil qui dans un Char si pur
Te promenes dessus l'azur
Avec un appareil si superbe & si [grave],
Vois-tu rien de si beau de ton Trône orgueilleux,
Que la fille du grand Gustave?
Et le Ciel a-t-on rien qui soit si merveilleux?

Ne craindras-tu point qu'à ta honte
Cet Astre qui se leve au Nort,
Fatal au bonheur de ton sort,
En lumière ne te surmonte?
Déjà son matin plus brillant
Que ton midy chaud & brûlant,
Semble te menacer d'une triste aventure:
Tout le monde étonné de ses divins appas,
Dit que l'honneur de la Nature
N'est plus au Firmament, & qu'il est icy bas.

Tu cours en vain la terre & l'onde
Pour en estre estimé le Roy,
Puis que la nuit avecque toy
Partage l'Empire du Monde:
Mais cet autre Soleil plus beau,
Par un miracle tout nouveau,
Eclaire en mesme temps la terre universelle;
Ses rayons en tous lieux s'épandent avec bruit,
Et de leur lumière immortelle
L'eclat ne souffre point d'eclipse ny de nuit.

Que cette Reyne qu'on admire
Est digne Fille de ce Roy,
Qui portant en tous lieux l'effroy
Soumettoit tout à son Empire!
Mais des Palmes que ce Heros
S'acquit au mépris du repos,
Le nombre glorieux fut fatale à sa vie;
Il ne pouuoit perir, cet honneur des Guerriers,
Malgré les efforts de l'Ennuie
Qu'abatu sous le [flaix de ses propres Lauriers.

L'Univers qui pleura la perte
 De ce Prince qu'il réueroit,
 Ne crût pas quand il la pleuroit,
 Qu'elle pût estre recouuerte:
 Mais lors un miracle naissant,
 Qui de ce Monarque puissant
 Pouuoit seul occuper la place par ses charmes,
 Heritant de son nom comme de sa vertu,
 En reprenant ses mesmes armes,
 Sous leur puissant effort a veu l'Aigle abbatu.

Cette Princesse toute illustre,
 La gloire de cet Univers,
 Par mille avantages divers
 Des plus grands Roys ternit le lustre;
 Et ses vertus & ses beaux yeux,
 Dans le coeur de nos demy Dieux,
 Ont si bien sceu porter le respect & la crainte,
 Que pendant que l'Europe endure sous le faix
 Des malheurs dont elle est atteinte,
 Seule dans ses Estats elle garde la Paix.

A present quel Prince barbare,
 Poussé d'un esprit inhumain,
 Entreprendroit d'armer sa main,
 Contre une merveille si rare?
 Qui pourroit ne respecter pas
 Les miracles & les appas
 Dont le Ciel enrichit ce chef-d'oeuvre des Reynes?
 Si l'Ennuie entreprend de troubler son bonheur,
 Ses entreprises seront vaines,
 Et sa temerité sera son des-honneur.

Chez cette Reyne sans seconde,
 Qui sur les autres a le prix,
 Est l'asile des beaux Esprits,
 Et l'élite de tout le monde:
 Les plaisirs d'honneur revestus,
 Les Sciences & les Vertus,
 Ont fait de son Palais le Temple de la Gloire;
 Les neufs sçavantes Soeurs du bel auteur du jour
 Ces dignes Filles de Memoire,
 Composent sa superbe & magnifique Cour.

Dans son rare Esprit sont encloses
 Toutes les hautes qualitez,
 Il est la source des beautez,
 Et le tresor des belles choses:
 Mais si dans son illustre coeur,
 Avec tant d'éclat & d'honneur,
 Les plus grandes Vertus ont leur paisible empire;
 Si c'est la qu'elles ont leur Trone glorieux,
 Sans les offenser, on peut dire,
 Qu'aussi le Dieu d'Amour a le sien dans ses yeux.

Par un rapport assez fidelle,
 La Renommée avec sa voix
 Nous a dit plus de mille fois
 Combien cette Princesse est belle:
 Sa divine ame, & son beau corps,
 Font un meslange de tresors,
 Qui de la main de Dieu [f]ont les plus beaux ouvrages;
 Enfin parmy les fleurs dont brille son printemps,
 Elle a les plus grands avantages
 Que l'esprit peut tirer de l'usage & du temps.

On dit que sans faire une injure
 A ses adorables attraits,
 On ne peut faire de portraits
 De ce miracle de Nature:
 Mais le tableau qu'on nous en fait,
 Encore qu'il soit moins parfait,
 Efface tout l'éclat des choses animées;
 Et quoy que d'assez loin nous viennent ses rayons,
 Nos ames en sont plus charmées,
 Que ne le sont nos yeux de ce que nous voyons.

Terre heure[u]sement asservie
 A cet Astre de qui l'éclat
 Embellit tant vostre climat,
 Ah! qu'on vous doit porter enuie!
 Et vous, ses peuples si vantez,
 Qui voyez de pres ses beautez,
 Que vous estes heureux au pris de tout le monde!
 Que vous estes chers & protegez des Cieux,
 Par une grace sans seconde,
 Qui fait regner sur vous le chef-d'oeuvre des Dieux!

Ce n'est pas que son doux Empire
 Ne s'étende en des lieux divers,
 Et qu'avec vous tout l'Univers
 Ne la respecte & ne l'admire;
 Cet honneur est commun à tous,
 Vous ne pouvez avoir sur nous
 Que la gloire de voir de plus près sa lumière;
 Si le Sort ne soumet à ses attraits vainqueurs
 L'Empire de la Terre entière,
 Son merite la rend Reyne de tous les coeurs.

Que de son bonheur on doit croire
 Mon Sexe vain & satisfait,
 Depuis qu'un sujet si parfait
 En relève par tout la gloire!
 L'autre ne doit plus l'emporter,
 Puis qu'il ne sçauroit se vanter
 Que le Ciel l'ait beny d'une grace pareille:
 Mais c'est trop, mes desirs, ie n'ay pas le pouvoir
 D'exprimer bien une merveille
 Que iamais mon esprit ne sçauroit concevoir.

Ie crains de luy faire une offense;
 Pour en parler plus dignement,
 Ce travail est deub [du] seulement
 Au Dieux meme de l'Eloquence:
 C'est luy qui doit dire en tous lieux,
 Que depuis que roulent les Cieux,
 Il n'a rien veu de tel sur le plus fameux Trône;
 Et qui doit publier par ses ecrits divers,
 Que cette sçavante Amazone
 Est l'exemple & l'amour de tout cet Univers.
 (1653) *Poésies de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles
 Sercy, 1666).

Portrait de S.Altesse Royale
Mademoiselle
Ode II

Fille du Souverain des Dieux,
Qui des Arts les plus glorieux
Merite l'eternel hommage;
Minerve, viens à mon secours,
Je veux peindre dans cet Ouvrage
Le plus rare Objet de nos jours.

Pensant à ce divin Objet,
Cent fois un si hardy projet
A sceu me flater & me plaire;
Et foible pour ce grand Tableau,
Cent fois de ma main temeraire
I'ay laissé tomber le pinceau.

Que mon sort sera glorieux!
Si par mes Vers ambitieux
Je fais autant pour ma Princesse
Qu'ont fait mes Ayeuls autrefois,
Par leur épée & leur adresse,
Pour le service de nos Rois.

D'un air imperieux & doux,
Qui mettroit Iunon en couroux,
Sa belle taille est animée,
Et l'on voit bien a ses beaux yeux,
Que le sang dont elle est formée.
Est le plus beau sang de nos Dieux.

Sa bouche a mille attraits puissans,
Elle surprend l'âme & les sens,
Rien n'est si doux que son langage,
Le coeur qui ressent son pouvoir,
Ne sçait ce qui plaist davantage,
Ou de l'entendre, ou de la voir.

Parmi les plus brillantes fleurs,
Cherchons les plus vives couleurs,
Pour peindre une bouche si belle;
Et prenons ce riche incarnat
Que prend une Rose nouvelle
Qui veut se donner de l'éclat.

Ma Peinture sans la flater,
Pouroit mille traits emprunter
De la Princess de Cithere;
Mais son Esprit est au dessus,
Et l'on sçait que cette Ame fiere
Ne veut rien avoir de Vénus.

Toy qui dans un si beau dessein
 Conduis mon esprit & ma main,
 Rend ma noble entreprise heureuse;
 Il faut, ô divine Pallas,
 Peindre son Ame genereuse;
 Déesse, ne t'éloigne pas.

Pouray-je bien, selon mes vœux,
 Faire voir les soins merveilleux
 D'une Ame en vertus si féconde?
 Et donner assez de rayons
 Au plus brillant Esprit du monde,
 Avec de si foibles crayons?

Venez, divines qualitez,
 Sagesse, Lumieres, Bontez,
 Dont le doux éclat l'environne;
 Et pour un si rare Tableau,
 Que chacune de vous me donne
 Ce qu'elle eust iamais de plus beau.

Animons d'une noble ardeur
 Le beau Portrait de son grand Coeur,
 Dont la Gloire est seule maistresse;
 On dira qu'en son plus beau jour
 Il y manque quelque tendresse,
 Mais la honte en est à l'Amour.

Que cette Heroïne a d'attraits!
 Qu'elle a de graces & de traits
 Où l'Art ne peut iamais atteindre!
 Qu'elle sçait bien-tost nous chanter!
 Qu'elle est propre à se faire craindre!
 Et scavante à se faire aimer!

On sçait qu'en son juste courroux,
 Contre ces redoutables coups;
 Toute la resistance est vaine;
 Mais malgré son ressentiment
 Elle punit avecque peine,
 Et pardonne facilement.

L'honneur regle ses actions,
 Sur les plus fortes passions
 Son bel Esprit sçait prendre empire;
 Il cache ce qu'il veut cacher,
 Mais la gloire qu'elle en retire
 Luy couste peut-être bien cher.

Son coeur à la devotion
Sent quelque disposition,
Et voudroit l'avoir toute entière;
Il y fait tout ce qu'il y peut,
Mais c'est une fort grand'affaire,
Et ne l'a pas toujours qui veut.

Ie ne puis que trop foiblement
Toucher en mon étonnement
La force de son grand courage;
Que le danger soit sous ses pas,
Qu'elle entende gronder l'orage,
Son beau teint n'en changera pas.

Avec cet Esprit sans égal,
Cet abord aux coeurs si fatal,
Cette fierté pleine de charmes,
Ce coeur incapable d'effroy,
Mettons luy ton casque & tes armes,
Pallas, on la prendra pour toy.
(1659) *Poésies de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles
Sercy, 1666).

CROPPED ELEGIES

Absence

Mais qui pourra me suivre en ce triste voyage?
 Qui me consolera de ne vous plus revoir?
 Hélas! s'il vous païsait d'ordonner a l'espoir,
 Qu'en cét éloignement sa vertu me console,
 Il ne vous coûteroit qu'une seule parole;
 Ou, pour vous epargner un regard gracieux,
 Il entend assez bien le langage des yeux:
 De grace expliquez-vous, il est temps de me dire
 Si vous avez dessein qu'il vive, ou qu'il expire;
 Car si vous ordonnez qu'il ne me suive pas,
 Il faut en mesme temps me resoudre au trépas.
 Vous aurez mesme soin si vous voulez qu'il meure;
 Je n'ay pas le pouvoir de le survivre une heure.

Commencement d'Amour

I'estois en cét estat exem[p]t de déplaisirs,
 Ou rien ne m'arrivoit contraire à mes desirs,
 Quand vous vinstes troubler le repos de mon ame,
 Et, jetter dans mon Coeur le desordre & la flâme;
 D'abord ie reconnus la force de vos coups;
 Sans rendre de combat, ie me rendis à vous,
 D'abord vostre Beauté, qui faisait ma foiblesse
 S'empara de mon Coeur, & s'en rendit Maîtresse;
 Je vous aimay d'abord que je vis vos beaux yeux;
 Mais ie vous adoray quand ie vous connus mieux;
 Lors que i'eus apperceu cet esprit admirable,
 Ce procédé galand, cét air incomparable,
 Enfin quand ie connus tous ces rares thresors
 Qui parent à l'enuy vostre ame & vostre corps,
 N'ayant jamais treuvé d'appas comme les vostres,
 Je ne peux vous aimer comme on aime les autres;
 Et l'Amour m'inspira bien d'autres sentimens
 Que ceux que d'ordinaire il inspire aux Amans.

Force de l'Amour/Colère

O rage, ô desespoir! faloit-il que mon Coeur
 Preferast follement a mille Amants fidelles,
 L'impitoyable autheur de mes peines cruelles?
 Mais, il se vit contraint de ceder au plus fort,
 Et l'on ne change pas les volonteés du Sort,
 Tirsis de tous les coeurs le charme inevitable,
 Ah que de te haïr, ie me sens peu capable!
 Et que ie doute encore en ce funeste iour
 Si ma colère égale mon amour!
 Que ne te repens-tu, ta grace est toute preste.

Liberté

Dans un si triste estat de mon sort incertaine,
 Ah que i'ay dit de fois en resvant a ma peine,
 Desiderable [desirable] repos, aimable Liberte.
 Unique fondement de la felicite!
 Sans toy l'on ne vit pas, pour qui chacun soupire,
 Faut-il donc qu'un Tyran usurpe vostre Empire,
 Qu'il me fasse oublier vos charmes les plus doux,
 Et que ces seuls tourmens me plaisent plus qu'a vous?

Plaisir

Pensers ou l'on se plait, apparences flatteuses,
 Douces emotions, langueurs delicieuses,
 Desirables transports, agreables soupirs,
 Ou l'Ame s'abandonne avec tant de plaisirs:
 Qu'estes-vous devenus charmes incomparables?
 Comme vous estiez grands, que n'estiez-vous durables,
 Belle & secrette Paiz d'un Amant bien-heureux,
 Ne reviendrez-vous plus dans mon coeur Amoureux?
 (1665) *Sentimens d'amour tirez des meilleurs poètes modernes par le*
Sieur Corbinelli (Paris: Barbin, 1671)

Chapter II

ORNAMENTS AND FLOURISHES

Sur une absence

- 1 Faut-il donc me resoudre à m'éloigner des lieux
 Où ie puis tous les jours adorer vos beaux yeux;
 Où ie les rends témoins de mon cruel martyre,
 Où des maux qu'ils me font devant eux ie soupîr?
 5 Ie sonde sur ce point mon coeur à tout moment,
 Mais ie tire de luy des soupîrs seulement;
 C'est tout ce que répond cette Esclave fidele,
 Dont mesme vos mépris entretiennent le zele.
 Voilà comme il s'explique & comme il me repart.
 10 Quand ie le veux resoudre à ce triste départ.
 Donc inutilement le deuoir m'y connueie,
 Ie ne sçaurois quitter mon aimable Siluie;
 Raison, tous vos efforts sont icy superflus,
 Vous avez beau parler, ie ne vous entens plus:
 15 M'avez-vous dit qu'elle est si parfaite & si belle,
 Pour m'ordonner apres que ie m'éloigne d'elle?
 Et m'avez-vous appris qu'il n'est rien icy bas
 Qu'on doive comparer à ses moindre appas?
 Que comme sa beauté, sa grace est admirable?
 20 Enfin m'avez-vous dit combien elle est aimable,
 Pour n'estre pas d'accord qu'on doit assez aimer,
 Celle que vous disiez qui me deuoit charmer?
 Pour m'opposer les loix de ce deuoir bizarre
 Qui veut que ie la perde, ou que ie m'en sépare,
 25 Et qui pour m'enlever hors d'un si beau séjour,
 Est sans cesse en querelle avec mon amour?
 Mais hélas! le Destin est de l'intelligence,
 Il faudra bien subir sa fatale ordonnance,
 Des plus heureux Amans il a troublé la paix,
 30 Et ses ordres enfin ne se rompent iamais,
 Ie vay donc vous quitter, adorable Siluie,
 Et traîner loin de vous une mourante vie:
 Tous ces diuers appas qu'étale le Printemps,
 Ne pourront adoucir l'aigreur de mes tourmens;
 35 Toutes ces riches fleurs que la nouvelle Flore,
 En ce temps amoureux, au matin fait éclore,
 Dont ie verray briller les merueilleux appas,
 Absent de vos beaux yeux, ne me toucheront pas.
 Rien ne pourra flater la rigueur de mes peines;
 40 On me verra pensif sur le bord des Fontaines,
 Accroistre de mes pleurs leurs humides trésors;
 On me verra chercher les solitaires bords
 Des ruisseaux égarez dans les Bois les plus sombres,
 Pour plaindre mes ennuis dessous leurs tristes ombres:
 45 Mais n'apprenez pas qu'en me plaignant ainsi,
 Aux Nymphes de ces Bois i'apprenne mon soucy,
 Que mes cuisans regrets, leur décourant ma flame,

Trahissent malgré moy les secrets de mon ame:
 Iamais on ne sçaura mon mal par ce moyen;
 50 I'en parleray si bas, qu'Echo n'en sçaura rien:
 Et ce n'est pas encor une petite gesne,
 Que de souffrir beaucoup, & de cacher sa peine.
 Mais outre tous les maux dont ie suis tourmenté,
 D'un autre plus cruel mon coeur est agité;
 55 Ce monstre sans pitié, qu'on nomme Ialousie,
 De funestes soupçons troublant ma fantaisie,
 Ie crains que mes Riuaux n'aillent adroitement
 Blâmer auprès de vous ce prompt éloignement.
 Oüy ie les voy déjà vous tenir ce langage,
 60 Que le jeune Tirsis est un esprit volage,
 Qu'il n'est rien de si fort qui puisse l'arrêter,
 Qu'un autre seroit mort avant que vous quitter;
 Que les loix du deuoir n'ont que de foibles armes,
 Quand on est retenu par de si puissans charmes;
 65 Que l'Amour, quoy qu'enfant est assez résolu,
 Et qu'il regne toujours d'un pouvoir absolu;
 Que son Empire va jusqu'à la tyrannie;
 Que chez luy la raison doit passer pour manie,
 Et qu'il se rend enfin plus difficilement
 70 Aux regles du deuoir quand il fait son tourment,
 Vous sçavez à quel point la haine peut atteindre,
 Et par là vous voyez si j'ay beaucoup à craindre;
 Si de tant d'ennemis on me voit combatu,
 Un absent est bien foible, & bien-tost abattu.
 75 Mais cessez, mes frayeurs, vous offensez Siluie,
 Elle n'écoute pas le discours de l'Ennuie,
 Elle ne reçoit point de fausse impression,
 Et ne peut ignorer quelle est ma passion.
 Genereuse Vertu dont mon ame est charmée,
 80 Aimable Verité que i'ay toujours aimée,
 Prenez bien mon party contre mes enuieux,
 Lors qu'ils m'accuseront, défendez-moi contr'eux,
 Confondez de leurs voix l'insolence importune,
 Ie vous laisse le soin de ma bonne fortune;
 85 Affleurez tous les jours ce miracle des Cieux,
 Qu'amour est dans mon ame ainsi que dans ses yeux,
 Et qu'autant qu'elle passe en attraits les plus Belles,
 Ie surpasse en amour les coeurs les plus fidelles.
 Ne voulez-vous pas bien, objet rare & charmant,
 90 Que ie laisse en ses mains le soin de vostre Amant?
 Cet appuy pres de vous releve mon courage:
 Mais qui pourra me suiure en ce triste voyage?
 Qui me consolera, de ne vous plus reuoir?
 Helas! s'il vous plaisoit d'ordonner à l'espoir,
 95 Qu'en cet éloignement sa vertu me console,
 Il ne vous cousteroit qu'une seule parole,
 Où pour vous épargner un regard gracieux,
 Il entend assez bien le langage des yeux.
 De grace expliquez-vous; il est temps de me dire
 100 Si vous avez dessein qu'il vive, ou qu'il expire;
 Car si vous ordonnez qu'il ne me suive pas,

Il faut en mesme temps me resoudre au trépas;
Vous aurez mesme soin, si vous voulez qu'il meure,
104 Je n'ay pas le pouvoir de le suruiure une heure.

Sur une jalousie

- 1 Pensers ou l'on se plaît, espérances flat-
 teuses,
 Douce émo­tion, langueurs déli­cieuses,
 Désirables trans­ports, agréables sou­pirs
 Où l'ame s'aban­donne avec tant de plaisirs,
 5 Qu'êtes-vous devenus, charmes incompara-
 bles?
 Comme vous étiez grands, que n'étiez-vous
 durables!
 Belle & se­crette paix d'un Amant bien­heureux,
 Ne re­viendrez-vous plus dans mon cœur amou-
 reux?
 Le Dieu qui vous fit naître est toujours dans
 mon ame;
 10 Mais s'il la brûle en­core de sa pre­mière flâme,
 Je ne l'y ressens plus par ces beaux mouve-
 mens,
 Qui l'élevoient sans cesse à des ravisse­mens.
 Hélas! qu'il est changé, le cruel que j'adore,
 Son feu qui m'ani­moit, à présent me dévore:
 15 Aussi je n'offre plus sur ces fameux Autels,
 Que des larmes de sang & des sou­pirs mor-
 tels;
 Il n'a plus les attraits qu'il avoit de coû­
 tume, Et toute sa douceur se change en amertume;
 Puisqu'il me persécute & la nuit & le jour,
 20 Puisqu'il n'a plus d'appas, amour n'est plus
 amour.
 Ce Dieu doux & char­mant qui fit toute ma
 joye,
 De­vient un fier De­mon à qui je suis en proie;
 Et bien que sa ri­gueur m'accable de malheurs,
 Je chéris tout de lui jusques à mes douleurs.
 25 Mon cœur devroit sortir d'un si rude esclavage,
 Mais ce foible captif n'en a pas le courage:
 S'il songe à s'affranchir, il sent qu'il ne le peut;
 Il combat, il se rend, & ne sçait ce qu'il veut.
 Ne vous irritez pas du tourment que me presse,
 30 J'en accuse mon Dieu, sans blâmer ma
 Déesse,
 Quoiqu'on tienne partout, objet brillant &
 doux,
 Que se plaindre de lui, c'est se plaindre de
 vous:
 Mais je ne puis vous faire une si grande offense,
 Bien qu'avec lui vos yeux semblent d'intelli-
 gence,
 35 Non, je ne vous veux point reprocher mon
 ennui,
 Mais je m'adresse à vous pour me plaindre de
 lui:
 Ecoutez, belle Iris, la rigueur, l'injustice,

- L'étrange cruauté, la gêne & le supplice,
 Qu'exerce dessus moi ce jeune impétueux,
 40 Et faites, s'il se peut, qu'il me traite un peu
 mieux.
 Il me fait ressentir les cruelles atteintes
 De ce qu'ont de fâcheux les soupçons & les
 craintes:
 Il glisse dans mon coeur un horrible serpent
 Dont le venin fatal dans le coeur se repand,
 45 Traverse le repos & des sens & de l'ame,
 Il y porte la glace au milieu de la flâme,
 Et leur antipathie y cause des combats
 Qui font languir ma vie, & ne l'achevent pas:
 Par des fantômes vains qu'il me forme sans
 cesse,
 50 Il trouble ma raison, alarme ma tendresse;
 Enfin ce fier vainqueur, après m'avoir soumis,
 M'expose à la fureur de tous mes ennemis.
 Je devois vous cacher ce qu'il a de sévère,
 Par l'intérêt que j'ai qu'il puisse un jour vous
 plaire;
 55 Vous celer ses défauts, & parler seulement
 De ce qu'il a de doux, d'aimable & de char-
 mant:
 Mais déjà mon silence, ô beaute que j'ad-
 mire!
 Vous en a plus appris que je ne sçaurois dire:
 Vous m'avez vû cent fois languissant & rêveur,
 60 Pâle, triste, chagrin, & de bizarre humeur,
 Observer vos regards, votre air, votre langage,
 Et ne rien expliquer qu'a mon désavantage,
 Sans mouvement, sans voix, ne faisant qu'écou-
 ter,
 Mécontent pres de vous, sans pouvoir vous
 quitter,
 65 Faisant le satisfait au fort de ma tristesse,
 Le désintéressé lorsque tout m'intéresse;
 Et feignant bien souvent avoir de la froideur,
 Au moment que je brûle avecque plus d'ar-
 deur,
 Sont-ce pas les effets d'une douleur mortelle?
 70 Devinez, belle Iris, comment cela s'appelle?
 Sans doute vous direz que c'est être jaloux.
 Il est vrai, je le suis, mais ce n'est pas de vous,
 Ne vous en fâchez pas, trop aimable inhu-
 maine,
 Non, ce n'est pas de vous, ce n'est que de ma
 peine:
 75 Je sçai que vos captifs n'ont ni trêve, ni paix,
 Que vous faites souffrir, & ne souffffrez jamais;
 Vos regards sont mortels, leurs coups sont re-
 doutables,
 En faisant des Amans, ils font des misérables:
 Je ne suis point jaloux du bien de mes Ri-

- vaux,
 80 Mais je ne puis souffrir qu'ils ressentent mes
 maux,
 Je ne veux point qu'on m'aide à supporter mes
 chaînes;
 Leur mal accroît mon mal, & leur gêne mes
 gênes.
 Hélas! c'est bien assez de souffrir mon ennui,
 Sans être tourmenté par les malheurs d'autrui.
 85 Beaux yeux de mon Iris, vives sources de flâ-
 me,
 Ne portez plus vos feux ailleurs que dans mon
 âme,
 Je consens de languir sous vôtre dure loi,
 Mais ne faites de mal à personne qu'à moi,
 Ah! si pour l'intérêt & l'honneur de vos char-
 mes,
 90 Il faut que vos Autels soient arrosés de larmes;
 S'il leur faut des respects, des soupirs & des
 yeux,
 Si vous prenez plaisir que l'on souffre pour
 eux,
 Je vous satisferai beaux yeux; car il me sem-
 ble,
 Que seul j'endure assez pour tout le monde en-
 semble.
 95 Je suis marri de voir que d'autres moins tou-
 chez,
 A votre divin Char veuillent être attachés:
 Les uns sont travaillés du désir de la gloire
 De voir graver leur nom au Temple de Mé-
 moire:
 D'autres pour des trésors ont un aveugle
 amour,
 100 Et d'autres aux neuf sœurs font un aveugle
 Cour;
 Je laisse à qui voudra cette peine importune,
 Je méprise grandeurs, & richesse & fortune,
 Et ne veux, belle Iris, que disputer à tous
 104 L'honneur de soupirer & de mourir pour vous.

- 1 Belle et sage Daphné, merveille de nos jours,
Que toutes les vertus accompagnent toujours,
Et qui connois si bien leurs graces naturelles,
Que tu ne prends jamais leurs phantômes pour
elles!
- 5 Illustre & chere amie, à qui dans mes mal-
heurs,
J'ai toujours découvert mes secrettes dou-
leurs:
Qui sçais ce qu'un mortel doit désirer ou crain-
dre,
Et qui ne blâmes pas ce qu'on ne doit que
plaindre:
- 10 Ecoute mes ennuis, soulages-en le faix,
J'ai bien plus à te dire aujourd'hui que jamais;
Et tes prudens conseils tant de fous salutaires,
Ne me sçauroient jamais être plus nécessaires:
Défends ma liberté, ma Daphné, je combats
Un Dieu dont j'ai souvent méprise les appas,
15 Qui lasse de me voir insensible à ses charmes,
A pris pour m'asservir ses plus puissantes ar-
mes.
Ha! que je l'appréhende avecque tant d'at-
traits;
- 20 C'est le jeune Tirsis qui lui fournit des traits;
Tirsis en qui reluît tout ce qui rend aimable;
Tirsis de tous les coeurs le charme inevitable;
Et dont le Ciel prodigue a verser ses tresors,
Ne forma que trop bien & l'esprit & le corps
Ce merite pourtant dont la force est si douce,
N'est pas le seul sujet, des soupirs que je pousse,
25 Avec ses qualites je l'aurois estimé;
Mais je n'aimerois pas, s'il ne m'avoit aimé.
Pour tout autre que lui je serois insensible,
Lui seul pouvoit m'ôter le titre d'invincible,
Et je n'avois pas crû l'amour contagieux,
30 Lorsque, sans y penser, je le vis dans ses yeux.
D'un peril si charmant mon ame fut surprise,
Et des ce premier jour craignit pour sa fran-
chise;
Mon courage orgueilleux alors se démentit,
Et mon coeur soupira des maux qu'il pressen-
tit.
- 35 Il a par mille efforts tâché de se défendre,
Mais je sens bien qu'enfin il est pret a se ren-
dre;
Et ma foible raison dans ce mortel danger,
Se trahit elle-même, & sert a m'engager.
Si mon repos t'est cher, si ma gloire t'est che-
re,
- 40 En l'état où je suis, dis-moi que dois-je faire?
Quand je verrai Tirsis plus fort que mon de-
voir,
Me faudra-t-il resoudre à cesser de le voir?

Et par une fierté dont le penser me tue,
 Dois-je priver mes yeux d'une si chère vue?
 45 Mais, Daphné.....
 Je ne puis, ni ne veux l'arracher de mon
 cœur.
 Hélas! en tous endroits tu sauras que sans
 cesse
 Cet aimable garçon me tourmente & me pres-
 se,
 Cent témoins diligents à servir mes désirs,
 50 A toute heure, en tous lieux, m'apportent ses
 sopirs,
 M'expliquent ses désirs, ses transports & ses
 craintes,
 Et d'un air languissant me redisent ses plain-
 tes;
 Enfin, il suit partout la trace de mes pas,
 Et je le trouve même où je ne le vois pas,
 55 Quand il vouloit encor disposer de mon âme,
 Souvent dans le desir de surmonter ma flâme,
 J'évitois ses regards, comme un charme fatal;
 Car on m'avoit bien dit qu'Amour étoit un
 mal;
 Mais, aimable Daphné, j'avois beau m'en dé-
 fendre,
 60 Ces subtils enchanteurs sçavoient bien me sur-
 prendre;
 Et c'est ainsi qu'Amour renversant mes projets,
 Va réduire mon cœur au rang de ses Sujets.
 Dans un si triste état qui me rend incertaine,
 Ha! que j'ai dit de fois en rêvant à ma peine:
 65 Désirable repos, aimable liberté,
 Unique fondement de ma félicité,
 Sans qui l'on ne vit pas, pour qui chacun sou-
 pire,
 Faut-il donc qu'un Tyran usurpe votre empire,
 Qu'il me fasse oublier les charmes les plus
 doux,
 70 Et que les seuls tourmens me plaisent plus que
 vous?
 Faut-il que je m'expose à ces esprits sévères,
 Qui ne connoissent pas les amoureux mystères,
 Et répondent sur tout leur venin dangereux,
 Et ne sçauroient souffrir ce qu'on n'a pas pour
 eux?
 75 Et qui pis est, disois-je, hélas! si je m'engage,
 Peut-être un jour Tirsis infidèle & volage
 Fera dedans mon cœur naître autant de sopirs
 Que j'aurais pris de peine à flatter ses désirs.
 On sçait de cent beautés les tristes aventures,
 80 Et l'Empire amoureux est rempli de poignu-
 res.
 Voilà ce que j'oppose à ses plus doux poisons;
 Mais l'amour est plus fort que toutes les rai-

sons:

Le destin veut que j'aime, il faut le satisfaire,
Je ne résiste plus, las! que pourrai-je faire?
85 Ces Maîtres des mortels, les Dieux lui cedent
bien,
Tes conseils seroient vains, Daphné, ne me dis
rien;
Laisse-moi soupirer, ma peine est sans remède,
Mon coeur est trop charmé du feu qui le pos-
sede.
Une douce langueur occupe mes esprits,
90 Et perdant tout espoir, ma Daphné, je t'écris,
Non pour chercher la fin de mon malheur ex-
trême,
Mais pour me satisfaire, en te disant que j'aime
Si tu blâmois un mal ou tu vois tant d'appas,
94 Plains une malheureuse, & ne l'accuse pas.

- 1 Le printems rappelloit les amoureux dé-
sirs,
Et brilloit dans son char poussé par les Zéphirs,
Suivi d'un doux concert, & couronné de roses,
Il exhalait dans l'air les parfums qu'il com-
pose:
- 5 Et toute la Nature en un riche appareil,
Languissoit doucement dans les bras du som-
meil,
Quand la Bergere Iris, en rêvant à sa peine,
D'une mourante voix pres les bords de la Seine,
Exprima par ses maux le feu qui l'animoit,
- 10 Et qu'elle sentoit mieux qu'elle ne l'exprimoit.
Noires filles des nuits, douces & cheres om-
bres,
Je cherche un sûr azile en vos retraites som-
bres,
Couvrez bien mon ennui de votre obscurité,
La douleur que je sens redoute la clarté;
- 15 Et si je vous fais part de mes peines secrettes,
C'est parcequ'on scait bien que vous êtes dis-
crètes.
Ecoutez donc mon mal, & plaignez mon tour-
ment.
Je le veux consulter avec vous seulement.
Une douce surprise, un désordre agréable,
- 20 Par une émotion qui n'est point exprimable,
Allume un feu secret dans le fond de mon
coeur,
Qui touche & l'agite, & s'en rend le vain-
queur.
C'est-la que triomphant de mon âme asservie,
Il unit sa chaleur à celle de ma vie,
- 25 Et que par un accès qui m'est délicieux,
Il produit la langueur qui paroît dans mes
yeux:
Mais parmi ce torrent de tourment & de flâme,
Je ne sçai quoi de doux se coule dans mon
âme;
Je trouve tant d'appas dans mon propre mal-
heur,
- 30 Que je ne puis juger si c'est joye ou douleur:
Hélas! je n'en sçai rien; toutefois il me semble
Que ce pourroit bien être & l'un & l'autre en-
semble:
Et tout ce que j'en sçai; c'est que j'ai vu Tirsis;
Qu'avant que de le voir, j'avois moins de sou-
cis,
- 35 Et que depuis ce jour j'ai toujours eu dans l'â-
me,
La peine, la douleur, la tristesse & la flâme.
Rien ne me divertit, je ne dors point la nuit;
J'aime la solitude, & le monde me nuit;
Je ne sçaurois penser qu'aux peines que j'en-

- dure,
 40 Je prens même plaisir d'irriter ma blessure;
 J'entretiens des pensers que je devrois bannir;
 Je pousse des sanglots que je veux retenir:
 Lorsque l'on parle à moi, je ne sçaurois rien
 dire:
 Je rêve, je languis, je pleure, je soupire,
 45 Au seul nom de Tirsis je change de couleur,
 Quand il est près de moi j'ai bien moins de
 douleur,
 Si-tôt qu'il est parti je ne suis plus la même:
 D'où vient ce changement, n'est-ce point que
 je l'aime?
 Ce Dieu que je fuyois, a-t'il surpris mes sens?
 50 Et si ce n'est Amour, qu'est-ce donc que je
 sens?
 Voilà tous les tourmens qu'on souffre en son em-
 pire,
 Je le connoissois bien, mais je n'osois le dire;
 Et mon coeur qui sentoit ce beau feu s'élever.
 Vouloit bien le souffrir, & non pas l'avouer.
 55 Il feignoit d'ignorer le mal qui le possède,
 De peur d'être obligé d'y chercher du remede;
 Il faisoit un secret du nom de son Vainqueur,
 De crainte d'alarmer la honte & la pudeur.
 Enfin ce malheureux qui n'osoit pas se rendre,
 60 S'entendoit avec lui pour s'y laisser surprendre:
 Mais si par un excès dont il fut prévenu,
 Il en eut de la honte apres l'avoir connu,
 Aujourd'hui qu'il connoît tout ce qu'il a de
 charmes,
 Il trouve de la gloire à lui rendre les armes.
 65 Sanglots entrecoupez, soupirs mourans & doux,
 Ennuis, transports, langueurs, je m'abandonne
 à vous;
 En vain j'ai combattu votre pouvoir extrême,
 Puisque vous me forcez de confesser que j'aime,
 Oûi, ma bouche après vous, va le dire à son
 tour,
 70 J'aime, & ce que je sens ne peut être qu'a
 mour.
 Ne vous étonnez pas, ombres tristes & vaines,
 Si j'ose découvrir le sujet de mes peines:
 Si vous voyiez Tirsis, sans doute il vous plai-
 roit,
 Et malgré vos froideurs il vous enflammeroit:
 75 Amour est dans ses yeux, il est dans son lan-
 gage,
 Il aime, il fait aimer, se peut-il davantage?
 Il ne forma jamais que des desseins heureux,
 Ah! l'on m'avoit bien dit qu'il étoit dangereux.
 L'honneur de nos hameaux, la divine Climeme,
 80 Au soir que nos troupeaux païssoient parmi la
 plaine,

Voyant qu'il m'abordait, me vint dire tout
 bas:
 Si vous craignez d'aimer, ah! ne l'écoutez
 pas:
 Son adresse en cet art n'eut jamais de pareille,
 Il sçait comme on attire une ame par l'oreille;
 85 Fuyez, fuyez, Bergere, un si mortel hazard.
 Je ne sçaurois, lui dis-je, il est un peu trop
 tard.
 Hélas! il étoit vrai, mes forces me laisserent,
 Et tous les traits d'Amour ensemble me blesse-
 rent;
 Un agreable trouble, une douce langueur,
 90 Surprit en même-tems & mes sens & mon
 cœur:
 Au lieu de repousser cette atteinte imprévûë,
 De lui-même il souvrit au poison qui le tuë,
 Chere & parfaite Amie, ah! si ton amitié
 En prevoyant mes maux, en eut quelque pi-
 tié,
 95 Tu devrois me donner un avis charitable,
 Avant que j'eusse vû cet objet redoutable.
 O toi! dont les Amans n'eurent jamais de
 paix
 Et qui donne souvent ce que tu n'eus jamais,
 Pour punir ta malice, orgueilleuse Climeme,
 100 Puisses-tu quelque jour sentir la meme peine.

- 1 Tristesse, ennui, chagrin, langueur,
mélancolie,
Troublerez-vous toujours le repos de ma vie?
A toute heure, en tous lieux, sentirai-je vos
coups,
Et ne pourrai-je pas être un moment sans vous?
- 5 Je viens dans ces deserts chercher la solitude,
Où seule, loin du bruit & de la multitude,
Je puisse en liberté dire mes sentimens.
Déserts; soyez temoins des peines que je sens:
L'esprit tout agité de nouvelles alarmes,
- 10 Je viens ici cacher mes soupirs & mes larmes;
Comme aux seuls confidens de toute ma dou-
leur,
Je viens vous découvrir les secrets de mon
coeur:
Le chagrin me dévore, & mon ame abatuë
Sans force & sans secours, cède au coup qui
la tuë:
- 15 Je souffre sans sçavoir ce qui me fait souffrir,
Je cherche, mais en vain, les moyens de guérir.
Hélas! tout m'est fatal, tout fait mon infor-
tune,
Tout ce qui me plaisoit, aujourd'hui m'impor-
tune,
Mon esprit accablé sous de rudes combats,
Considère sa peine, & ne la comprend pas.
- 20 De mes yeux languissans un éloquent silence,
En dépit de moi-même, explique ma souf-
france;
Je n'ai point de repos ni la nuit, ni le jour.
Hélas! d'où vient mon mal? N'est-ce point de
l'amour?
- 25 Je ne puis voir Tirsis que je ne sois émuë
Je rougis de paroître interdite à sa vuë;
En sa mine, en son air, en chacun de ses traits,
Je trouve des appas inconnus & secrets.
Le feu de ses regards par qui son coeur s'expli-
que,
- 30 Etincelle de joye, & me la communique:
Quand je ne le vois plus, ô Dieu! quel chan-
gement!
Il étoit mon plaisir, il devient mon tourment.
Dans le trouble fâcheux que l'absence me cau-
se,
Ma raison incertaine à soi même s'oppose:
- 35 L'objet que j'ai laissé, ne me sçauroit laisser,
Tous les autres objets ne le peuvent chasser.
Incessamment, Tirsis occupe ma pensée:
Sans le voir je le vois, & mon ame blessée
Se trace nuit & jour ce phantôme plaisant,
- 40 Quoi que loin de mes yeux, il m'est toujours
présent:
Un transport tout de flame eclate en son visage,

Sa Majesté me plaît, & sa douceur m'engage,
 Et ce, je ne sçai quoi, qu'on ne peut exprimer,
 M'a plus de mille fois conseillé de l'aimer.
 45 Je suis cette belle ombre, & je veux m'en dé-
 fendre,
 Mais par-tout je la vois, par-tout je crois l'en-
 tendre.
 Trop aimable Tirsis, pourquoi mal à-propos
 Etaler tant d'appas, & troubler mon repos?
 50 Veux-tu vaincre mon coeur autrefois invinci-
 ble?
 Veux-tu rendre mon coeur à tes larmes sensi-
 ble?
 Mais, que dis-je, peut-être en es-tu Posses-
 seur,
 Peut-être est-il vaincu, peut-être es-tu vain-
 queur.
 Hélas! je n'en sçai rien, j'ignore ma défaite,
 Peut-être en ce moment ta victoire est parfaite.
 55 Vous vous êtes, mon coeur, révolté contre
 moi,
 Et vous m'abandonnez pour suivre une autre
 loi:
 Vous cédez aux ardeurs d'une flâme inconnuë.
 Rigoureuse fierté, qu'êtes-vous devenue?
 Que deviens-je moi-même, & quel est le pou-
 voir
 60 Qui me force à sortir des règles du devoir?
 Quoi! ceder à l'amour? Quoi! manquer de
 courage?
 Quitter ma liberté pour un rude esclavage?
 Souffrir qu'un fier tyran, sans avoir combattu,
 Triomphe malgré moi de toute ma vertu?
 65 Non, je me veux défendre & soutenir ma gloire,
 Des mains de mon Vainqueur arracher la vic-
 toire,
 La raison & l'honneur me l'ordonnent ainsi,
 Tout le veux, je le dois, & je le veux aussi.
 Mais, que dis-je? ô grands Dieux! je parle en
 insensée:
 70 Foibles raisonnemens, sortez de ma pensée,
 Ma flâme vous dément, & mon coeur aujour-
 d'hui
 Se soumet à l'amour, & ne connoît que lui,
 Hélas! qu'il est changé, je le cherche en lui-
 même,
 Mon coeur n'est plus mon coeur, il suit l'objet
 qu'il aime;
 75 Pour lui seul il respire, il consent à ses vœux,
 Il soupire, il languit, il brûle de ses feux:
 J'en rougis de dépit, ma vertu s'en offense.
 Quoi! toute ma raison se trouve sans puissan-
 ce?

- Quoi! ma noble fierté s'est soumise à son tour?
 80 Il falloit ou mourir, ou surmonter l'amour:
 Il falloit constamment combattre pour ma
 gloire,
 Remporter sur soi-même une illustre victoire,
 Etouffer cette ardeur dont mon coeur est epris,
 Et pour tout dire enfin, résister à Tirsis.
 85 Résister à Tirsis! Mais, Dieux! est-il possible?
 Pourrois-je vivre, hélas! à ses vœux insensi-
 ble?
 Ah! cela ne se peut, il n'y faut plus penser,
 L'amour qu'il a pour moi, ne sçauroit m'of-
 fenser;
 Il m'aime avec respect, & je puis, sans foi-
 blesse,
 90 Ecouter ses soupirs, répondre à sa tendresse;
 Il sçait que la vertu peut engager mon coeur,
 Il sçait l'art de fléchir ma sévère rigueur,
 Et ménage avec soin ce moment favorable
 Qui le peut faire aimer autant qu'il est aimable.
 95 Que ses charmes sont grands! Que son transport
 est doux,
 Quand il dit, je vous aime, & je n'aime que
 vous!
 A ces mots il soupire, & ses yeux pleins de
 flâme
 Brûlent du feu secret qui brûle dans son ame:
 Ils sont passionnez, ils ont de la douceur,
 100 Leurs regards, où l'on voit la joye & la lan-
 gueur,
 Me disent, sans parler, qu'il craint & qu'il
 espère,
 D'un visage trop fier, & d'un air trop sévère
 Je voulois éviter ce charmant entretien,
 Et feignois d'ignorer ce que je sçavois bien.
 105 Ne parlez plus, Tirsis, de peine & de martyre,
 Espérez, je vous aime, enfin je l'ose dire;
 Je reçois votre coeur, je reçois vos soupirs:
 Unissons notre flame, unissons nos desirs,
 Contentons notre ardeur, laissons parler l'envie,
 110 Jouissons des plaisirs les plus doux de la vie;
 Et pour me rendre heureuse & pour vous rendre
 heureux,
 Aimons-nous, aimons-nous, & cherissons nos
 feux.
 Tu l'emportes, Amour, je cede à ta puissance,
 Assez & trop long-temps je t'ai fait résistance,
 115 Par ta force invincible, & tes attraits puissans,
 Tu maîtrises enfin ma raison & mes sens,
 Je fléchis sous les loix de ton aimable empire.
 Puis qu'aimer est enfin tout ce que je désire,
 Viens triompher, amour, de mon coeur & de
 moi.
 120 Esprit, honneur, vertu, tout se soumet à toi.

- 1 Fiere & foible Raison, qui par de vains
Combats
Choque les passions, & ne les détruits pas;
Ne me tourmente plus, tes forces sont bor-
nees,
Et l'on ne change point l'ordre des destinées:
5 Elles font a leur gré le tissu de nos jours,
Et forment dans le Ciel les noeuds de nos
amours.
Tu sçais bien que mon coeur pour se vaincre lui-
meme,
T'opposa mille fois au Dieu qui veut que j'ai-
me;
Mais quoiqu'on puisse dire au mépris de ses
loix,
10 Aimer, ou n'aimer pas, n'est pas de notre
choix.
A son divin pouvoir, il faut enfin se rendre,
Un mortel contre un Dieu pourroit-il se dé-
fendre?
Je l'avois combattu, ce dangereux pouvoir,
Par les plus grands efforts qu'exige le devoir:
15 L'esprit enfin lassé d'une si rude guerre,
Une nuit que voyant les beautez de la terre,
Sembloit n'avoir éteint la lumiere du jour
Que pour favoriser les desseins de l'Amour,
Et qui chassant du coeur les importunes craintes,
20 Mettoit en liberté les soupirs & les plaintes.
Je disois près des bords d'un bois délicieux,
Qui m'ôtoit aux regards des astres envieux,
Qu'un mal qu'on trouve doux, met de trouble
dans l'ame!
Et que d'un feu qui plaît, aisément on s'en-
flâme!
25 Hélas! que dans l'ardeur des plus pressans dé-
sirs,
La pudeur à l'amour dérobe de plaisirs,
Tirsis, & que souvent à tes desirs rebelle,
Secrétement mon coeur a murmuré contr'elle!
Que tes charmans appas ont sur moi de pou-
voir!
30 Et que dans cet état je craindrois de te voir!
Je croyois que les vents emportoient mes pa-
roles,
Mais las! je me flâttois d'espérances frivoles,
Quelle fut ma surprise! Et que devins-je, ô Dieux!
Lorsque soudain Tirsis vint s'offrir à mes yeux:
35 Je le connus malgré les ombres infideles,
Douces auparavant, en ce moment cruelles,
A sa taille divine, à cet air fier & doux,
Qui surprit tant de coeurs, & fit tant de jaloux:
A ce charme secret qui fit naître ma flâme:
40 Mais je le connus mieux au trouble de mon
ame.

Jalousie

- 1 La nuit pâle & mourante, en ses espaces
sombres,
Alloit s'évanouir avec toutes ses ombres,
L'Aurore dans son char, d'un teint jeune &
vermeil,
Préparoit d'un beau jour le pompeux appa-
reil,
- 5 Et la riche Nature en merveilles feconde,
Etaloit ses tresors aux yeux de tout le monde,
Quand Tirsis enflâmé de colere & d'amour,
Ne pouvant plus souffrir la lumiere du jour,
Ni l'indigne mépris de l'ingrate qu'il aime,
- 10 Ses yeux pleins de dépit, & le visage blê-
me,
Du funeste récit de ses ennuis secrets,
Fait plaindre nos vallons, & gémi[r] nos
forêts.
- O Dieu! s'écria-t'il, quoi! le Ciel & la Terre
Viennent-ils de concert me déclarer la guerre?
- 15 Ce bel Astre du jour, d'un visage riant,
Peint de nouveaux rayons les rives d'Orient;
Déjà l'or & l'azur du haut de ces montagnes,
Emaillent à longs traits ces fertiles campa-
gnes.
- La ces chantres des airs, à l'ombre des or-
maux,
- 20 Accordent leurs accens au murmure des eaux;
La ces troupeaux errans bondissent dans ces
plaines,
Le Zéphir amoureux nage sur ces fontaines,
Les roses, les jasmins naissent en mille lieux,
Et l'Univers enfin brille de tous ses yeux:
- 25 Et moi seul cependant, insensible à ces char-
mes:
Je ne voi[s] que l'horreur de mes tristes alar-
mes:
Ces plaines, ces troupeaux, ces Zéphirs & ces
fleurs,
Réveillent mon dépit & mes vives douleurs;
Je songe qu'au milieu de toutes ces délices,
- 30 Au mépris de mes feux & de tous mes servi-
ces,
Mon indigne Rival peut-être en ce moment,
Etale aux yeux d'Iris sa joye & mon tour-
ment,
- Je songe que peut-être au fond de ma tristesse,
Il triomphe en secret de toute ma tendresse;
- 35 Qu'entre les bras d'Iris, en ce funeste jour,
Il satisfait sa gloire & non pas son amour.
Non, son coeur n'eut jamais que de fausses at-
teintes;
Ses larmes, ses soupirs ne furent que des fein-

- tes.
 L'ingrate cependant facile à ses désirs,
 40 Confond ses feints regrets, & mes justes sou-
 pirs,
 Et d'un perfide Amant me faisant la victime,
 Méprise ma confiance, & respecte son crime.
 En vain sur son orgueil J'ai rassuré ma foi,
 Ah! je n'ai que trop vû qu'il n'étoit que pour
 moi:
 45 Oûi, j'ai connu qu'un coeur à l'amour insen-
 sible;
 Au faux éclat du bien n'étoit pas invincible,
 Et qu'un Hymen orné d'un charme si puis-
 sant,
 Rend la vertu coupable, & le crime inno-
 cent.
 C'est peut-être aujourd'hui la fatale journée,
 50 Que se doit accomplit cet injuste hyme-
 née:
 A ce triste penser je sens mon coeur gémir,
 Mon exprit se confondre, & tout mon corps
 frémir;
 Je ne sçai plus que dire, & ne sçai plus que
 faire,
 Ma raison interdite a soi-même [contraire],
 55 Se trouvant sur mes sens sans force & sans
 pouvoir,
 Me laisse à la merci de tout mon desespoir.
 Justes Dieux! qui voyez les peines que j'en-
 dure,
 Vous pouvez voir qu'Iris récompense un par-
 jure.
 Hélas! si c'est ma mort que demandent les
 Cieux,
 60 Je ne demande plus que mourir à ses yeux;
 C'est-là le triste honneur où mon amour as-
 pire,
 Et mourir est enfin tout ce que je désire.
 Grands Dieux! pour moi seul vous êtes sans
 bonté,
 Sauvez-moi pour le moins par une cruauté;
 65 Et puisque rien n'a pu flechir cette inhumaine,
 Faites que dans mon sang elle soule sa haine.
 Peut-être, ah! quel peut-être! en puis-je encor
 douter?
 De quel espoir trompeur veux-je encor me
 flatter?
 Assez & trop long-tems une fausse espérance,
 70 A trahi mon amour, & trompe ma constance;
 Assez & trop long-tems ses injustes rigueurs
 Ont payé de mepris mes trop justes langueurs:
 Ah! je ne sçai que trop que cette ame
 cruelle,
 Jouïra sans pitié de ma douleur mortelle,

- 75 Et me verra pour elle expirer constamment,
 Sans daigner m'honorer d'un soupir seulement.
 En vain le matelot mille desseins concerte,
 Quand les flots mutinez ont résolu sa perte.
 En vain un pauvre Amant pense arriver au
 port
- 80 Quand sa belle inhumaine a résolu sa mort.
 Trop perfides pensers qui déchirez mon ame,
 Vous qui d'un lent poison venez nourrir ma
 flame,
 Pouvez-vous bien encore me flatter de gué-
 rir?
 Traîtres, retirez-vous, & laissez-moi mou-
 rir.
- 85 Impitoyable mort, dont les traits secourables
 Finissent tous les maux de tous les miséra-
 bles,
 Toy de qui la fatale & injuste inimitié
 Fait bien souvent d'un meurtre un oeuvre de
 pitié,
 Viens par un coup fameux signaler ta puis-
 sance,
- 90 Et terminer ma vie avecque ma souffrance.
 Arrache à mon Rival le trop cruel honneur,
 De se voir a mes yeux maitre de mon bon-
 heur,
 Et l'injuste Iris nous doit etre ravie,
- 94 Avant que de la perdre, au moins perdons
 la vie.

- 1 Ah! qu'il est dangereux quand on a bien
aimé,
De revoir les beaux yeux qui nous avoient char-
mé,
Et que dans cet état la forte sympathie
Rallume promptement une flâme amortie!
- 5 Qu'avec peu de succès notre foible raison
Nous fait voir les rigueurs d'une ancienne pri-
son,
Et qu'il est doux d'entrer dans une servitude
Dont nos coeurs avoient fait une longue habi-
tude!
- 10 Phénice, vous sçavez que ce coeur autrefois
Malgré votre rigueur fut soumis à vos loix,
Qu'en voyant vos beautez je ne pus me dé-
fendre
De concevoir pour vous une amitie bien ten-
dre;
- 15 Que j'adorai dès-lors tous vos divins appas,
Et que votre mépris ne me rebuta pas:
Je trouvai les moyens de vous faire paroître
Un feu que votre coeur ne vouloit pas con-
noître,
Et ma Muse discrete en le disant pour moi,
Par mille doux sermens vous engagea ma foi.
C'est tout ce qu'elle fait; car votre indiffé-
rence,
- 20 Ne me flatta jamais de la moindre espérance,
Et je vous vis alors abandonner la Cour,
Sans avoir seulement approuvé mon amour:
Vous partîtes, Phénice, & laissâtes mon ame
Avec l'impression de sa nouvelle flâme.
- 25 L'Hyver a eu depuis par trois fois ses glacons,
L'Ete s'est couronné de ses blondes moissons,
Et depuis ce tems-là le grand flambeau du
monde
A trois fois achevé sa course vagabonde,
Et j'ai toujourns senti regner dedans mon coeur
- 30 Cette même tendresse, & cette même ardeur.
Il est vrai que ce coeur quelquefois infidèle,
A porté ses désirs à quelque amour nouvelle;
Qu'il s'est laissé soumettre à la brune Cloris,
Que de la blonde Aminte il fut long-tems
épris,
- 35 Et qu'il ne put un jour défendre sa franchise
De la charmante humeur de l'aimable Belise:
Mais, Phenice, l'eclat de toute leur beauté
N'a point entierement soumis ma liberté.
Toujours dedans mon coeur votre puissante
idée,
- 40 Malgré tous leurs appas s'est trop bien conservée;
Et lorsqu'après avoir surmonté leurs rigueurs,
J'en recevois enfin de légères faveurs,
Je disois en suivant mon amoureux caprice,

- 45 Que je serois heureux si c'étoit de Phénice,
 Et si le bel objet qui captive mon coeur,
 Avoit la meme estime & la même douceur!
 Ainsi toujours à vous, quoique toujours vo-
 lage,
 J'ai toujours adoré votre divine image,
 Et malgré tous les maux qu'autrefois j'ai souf-
 ferts,
 50 Je reviens à vos pieds reprendre tous mes
 fers,
 Rendez-les moi, Phénice, avec toutes mes pei-
 nes,
 Je reviens de bon coeur pour renoûer mes chaî-
 nes,
 Et pour subir enfin toutes les mêmes loix
 Auxquelles mon esprit fut soumis autrefois.
 55 Mais puisque mon destin veut bien que je vous
 aime,
 N'adoucirez-vous point votre rigueur extrê-
 me?
 Et ne voudrez-vous point que ma bouche aujour-
 d'hui,
 Vous parle avec respect de mon cruel ennui?
 Vous n'y consentez point, & toujours ado-
 rable
 60 Vous paroissez pour moi toujours inexora-
 ble,
 Et si je trouve en vous mon aimable vain-
 queur,
 Je le retrouve armé de toute sa rigueur.
 Et bien, puisqu'il le faut, inhumaine Phenice,
 Je veux vous adorer malgre votre injustice,
 65 Mes tourments autrefois me parurent trop
 doux
 Pour ne m'exposer pas à les souffrir pour vous.
 Je veux que mon amour, & soumise & dis-
 crete,
 N'ait que mon seul respect pour fidèle inter-
 prete;
 Je veux que mes regards & mes tristes sou-
 pirs
 70 N'osent pas seulement parler de mes desirs;
 Et quoique je vous trouve également cruelle,
 Je veux être toujours & soumis & fidèle.

- 1 En vain, charmante Iris, j'oppose ma constance
 Aux douleurs que me cause une si longue absence:
 En vain à mon secours j'appelle ma vertu,
 Rien ne peut relever mon courage abbatu,
- 5 Rien ne peut dissiper l'excès de ma tristesse;
 Je sens que ma raison à ce coup me délaisse,
 Je vois bien que mes maux ne gueriront ja-
 mais,
 Et que le sort détruit les projets que je fais.
 J'ai l'esprit inquiet, & l'ame trop peu libre
- 10 Pour voir finir mon mal aux fameux bords du
 Tibre;
 Je viens grossir son onde avec l'eau de mes
 pleurs,
 Et son superbe cours entretient mes dou-
 leurs.
- En rêvant aux douceurs de ma gloire passée,
 Je songe, aimable Iris, que le courroux des
 Dieux
- 15 M'a force malgré moi d'abandonner vos
 yeux;
 J'ai vainement erré sur la terre & sur l'onde,
 J'ai couru l'Italie, en merveilles féconde;
 Cette Rome où le luxe étale mille attraits,
 Où la pompe & l'éclat brillent dans ses Pa-
 lais,
- 20 Où l'on voit habiter d'amoureuses Déesses,
 Qui font de ces beaux lieux les illustres hô-
 tesses.
 Dans cet heureux climat & la Terre & les
 Cieux,
 D'un charme sans péril me surprirent les
 yeux,
- Je me laissai flotter au destin qui m'entraîne:
- 25 Mais de quelque côté que ce Tyran me meine,
 Ces somptueux lambris, ces bois délicieux
 Ne peuvent plus m'offrir qu'un séjour en-
 nuyeux;
 Ni ces Jardins remplis d'éternelle verdure,
 Où l'Art en mille endroits embellit la na-
 ture,
- 30 Ni tous ces longs côteaux tous couverts d'O-
 rangers,
 Ne rendront point mes fers plus doux, ni plus légers.
 Mon cœur ne goûte plus le charme & les délices,
 Il sent à tout moment redoubler mes suppli-
 ces:
- Votre agréable image & vos rares beautés,
- 35 Tiennent incessamment tous mes sens enchan-
 tez:
 Rien ne peut modérer mon tourment, ni mes
 peines,
 Ils augmentent au bruit de ces claires fontai-
 nes,

- Leur source & leur murmure excitent mes sou-
 pirs.
 Mais ils n'éteignent point l'ardeur de mes de-
 sirs;
 40 Et depuis que mon coeur vous a rendu les ar-
 mes,
 Qu'il s'est trouvé soumis au pouvoir de vos
 charmes,
 Que l'amour m'a rendu sous vos divins ap-
 pas,
 Tout plaisir m'abandonne où je ne vous vois
 pas.
 Je brûlerois pour vous quand la troupe im-
 mortelle,
 45 Prendroit soin de m'offrir la Nymphé la plus
 belle;
 Quand ils lui donneroient tous ces riches tre-
 sors
 Qui servent à parer & l'esprit & le corps,
 Je vous sacrifierois cet objet adorable,
 Quand il seroit encor mille fois plus aima-
 ble.
 50 Si vous m'aimez, Iris, les Dieux me font te-
 moins;
 Qu'en possédant leur sort, je m'estimerois
 moins
 Vous pourriez à l'instant dissiper ma tristesse,
 Si vous vouliez un peu répondre à ma ten-
 dresse.
 Si votre jeune coeur se disposoit d'aimer,
 55 Au feu de mes regards il pourroit s'enflâmer:
 Il verroit dans le mien votre image tracée,
 Qui par nul autre objet ne peut être effacée.
 Vos yeux vous apprennent ma secrète dou-
 leur:
 Si vous consultiez bien ces miroirs de mon
 coeur,
 60 Vous verriez que l'Amour ne lui donna pour
 armes
 Que mes vœux, mes soupirs, mon ardeur &
 mes larmes;
 Que le soin de vous plaire est son soin le plus
 doux,
 Et qu'il vous est fidèle, & veut mourir pour
 vous:
 Mais l'eussiez-vous prévu, hélas! qui l'eut put
 croire,
 65 Que vous fissiez mes maux aussi-bien que ma
 gloire,
 Et qu'un éloignement contraire à mes desirs,
 Put changer en tourmens tous mes plus grands
 plaisirs?
 Le chant des Rossignols, les Zéphirs de ces
 plaines,

- N'ont jamais pû calmer la moindre de mes
peines:
- 70 Ces bois, ces prez, ces monts, ces sentiers
ecartez
N'ont point eu le pouvoir d'effacer vos beau-
tez:
- Leur Silence ne sert qu'à rafraîchir l'idée
Que mon ame a toujours fidèlement gardée.
Je ne puis vivre heureux ni pres, ni loin de
vous,
- 75 Et je ne cesse point de ressentir vos coups.
C'est en vain que la nuit me vient offrir ses
charmes,
Quand je suis devore de mortelles allarmes.
Parmi l'obscurité je ne fais que gémir,
Mon ennui me réveille, au-lieu de m'endor-
mir;
- 80 Et loin de l'arracher de ma triste memoire,
De pouvoir sur moi-même emporter la vic-
toire.
Je ne scaurois trouver dans ce plaisant séjour,
Un azile assez sûr pour éviter l'amour.
Hélas! je connus, bien, admirant sa puis-
sance,
- 85 Que j'emploirois en vain ma foible resis-
tance.
Aux lieux où j'attachois mes languissans re-
gards,
Je rencontrois toujours la pointe de ses dards;
Et ce cruel Auteur de ma douleur profonde,
Se joûe en rallumant ma flâme sans seconde:
- 90 Au lieu de soulager mes tourmens rigoureux,
Il me vient accabler de chaînes & de feux.
Assez & trop long-tems j'ai nourri ma cons-
tance,
Assez & trop long-tems une fausse espérance
A trahi mes desseins, puisque votre beauté
- 95 A sçu prendre partout ma chere liberté.
Je n'ai pû voir vos yeux sans sentir leurs at-
teintes,
Ni les quitter aussi sans vous faire mes plain-
tes.
Endurez que mes meaux puissent être écoutez
Par ces sombres forêts & leur Divinitez:
- 100 Et souffrez pour finir mes tristes destinées,
Qu'au lieu de consumer les nuits & les jour-
nées
A regretter les lieux où je fus enchanté,
J'aïlle prier vos yeux d'adoucir leur fierté,
Et de me pardonner, quand mon audace ex-
trême
- 105 Vous diroit hardiment, belle Iris, je vous
aime.
Laissez pour m'écouter cette injuste pudeur.

- Laissez toucher votre ame au tourment de mon
 coeur.
 Laissez-vous attendrir, bannissez cette peste
 Fatale à mon repos, à mes voeux si funeste;
 110 Ou bien vous me verrez, sans force & sans
 pouvoir,
 Réduit à la merci d'un affreux desespoir.
 Si du peu que je vaux votre grand coeur s'irrite,
 Mon feu, divine Iris, me tient lieu de mérite.
 L'eussiez-vous mille fois de gloire environné,
 115 [Apprenez] que le mien vaut un coeur cou-
 ronne:
 Vous [connoîtrez] le prix des respects où mon
 âme
 S'abime en vous parlant de ma brûlante flâme,
 Si vous considerez qu'il n'est rien parmi nous
 De plus soumis que moi, ni de si fier que vous.
 120 Ce que je vous ai dit au fort de ma misere,
 Redouble, belle Iris, une peine si chere:
 Je souffrirai les maux que souffrent les Amans,
 Sans oser prendre part à leurs ravissemens:
 Puisque loin d'appaier mes secretes allarmes,
 125 Vous méprisez mes voeux, mes soupirs & mes
 larmes;
 Et voyant que tout aime en ce mortel séjour,
 Seule vous résistez aux forces de l'amour.
 Quoique ce Dieu puissant qui lance le ton-
 nerre,
 Ait bien quitté le Ciel pour aimer sur la Terre;
 130 Et qu'on ait vû souvent pour des objets mor-
 tels
 Les Déesses laisser le soin de leurs Autels:
 Leur céleste pouvoir ne les a pû défendre
 Des extrêmes transports d'un mouvement si
 tendre.
 Elles cedoient sans crainte & sans s'examiner,
 135 Ne s'imaginant pas qu'on les pût condamner,
 Comme ces Déitez, vous êtes adorable,
 Comme elles, devenez aux Amans favorable,
 Imitiez pour m'aimer ces exemples puissans;
 Prenez quelque pitié des peines que je sens;
 140 Chassez cette importune & froide indifférence,
 Pour bannir mon chagrin & mon impatience,
 Et pour rendre mon sort plus heureux & plus
 doux,
 Donnez-vous toute à moi comme je suis à
 vous.
 Je fuirai pour jamais ces bois, ces solitudes
 145 Qui furent les témoins de mes inquiétudes:
 Si vous perdez enfin votre injuste rigueur,
 Je quitterai bien-tôt cette morne langueur:
 Si pour récompenser une flâme fidèle,
 Vous daignez approuver mon amour & mon
 zèle;

150 Si vous favorisez ma noble passion,
J'y bornerai ma gloire & mon ambition:
Si vous me laissez voir dans le mal qui me-
 presse,
Que je puisse esperer tendresse pour tendresse,
Je vous promets, Iris, que vous verrez en moi
155 Un exemple éternel de constance & de foi.

- 1 Iris, tous vos sermens n'étoient donc que
des feintes,
Tous ces tendres soupirs dont vous calmiez mes
plaintes,
N'étoient que des appas jetez adroitement,
Pour mieux m'entretenir dans mon aveugle-
ment:
- 5 Mille fois au milieu de toutes vos caresses
Mon coeur m'avertissoit que c'étoit des adres-
ses,
Et des pieges secrets ou ma crédulité
Se laissoit engager par l'infidélité.
Ainsi pris par vos yeux, ou par mille autres
choses,
- 10 Je prenois le poison caché dessous les roses,
Et dormant en repos, sans crainte d'aucun
mal,
Je travaillois moi-meme au bonheur d'un
Rival
Mais Dieu! de quel Rival me fait on la victime
Iris, méritoit-il que vous fissiez un crime?
- 15 Et qu'oubliant les soins de ma fidèle ardeur,
Il fut de tout mon bien l'indigne usurpateur?
Je ne veux point ici vous vanter mes services,
Vous faire souvenir de tous mes sacrifices;
Que seule vous faisiez ma joye & mon bon-
heur,
- 20 Que seule vous étiez Maîtresse de mon coeur,
Que comptant sur la foi de toutes vos paroles,
J'en avois exilé mes premieres Idoles,
Et dessus leurs debris élevé des Autels
Qui brûloient plus pour vous que pour les Im-
mortels:
- 25 Mais ne retraçons point ces soins ni ces ten-
dresses,
Ils vous reprochent trop vos injustes foibles-
ses,
Et je sens que mon coeur malgré tous ces mé-
pris,
Garde encor du respect pour son ingrate Iris;
Et que prest d'expirer, sa flâme trop fidèle,
- 30 Fait de nouveaux efforts pour cette criminelle.
Ah! quand il me souvient de ce tems bienheu-
reux,
Ou dans son jeune sein Iris recut mes feux:
De nos deux volontez, amour n'en faisoit
qu'une,
- 35 Nous voir & nous aimer étoit une fortune,
Et bornant en nous seuls nos plus ardens dé-
sirs,
Nous n'allions point ailleurs chercher d'autres
plaisirs:
J'étois de mon Iris la premiere victoire,
Ce fut moi le premier qui servis à sa gloire,

- Et qui guidant ses pas au climat des amours,
 40 D'un chemin inconnu lui montrai les détours.
 Aussi me souvient il qu'un jour cette perfide
 Me nommoit de son coeur le plus fidèle guide,
 Et me disoit, Tirsis, c'est de toi que je tiens
 Les secrets de l'amour, & mes premiers
 liens:
- 45 Mais, las! ou t'enfuis-tu, ma fortune passée?
 Tu ne me semble plus que l'Image effacée
 D'un sommeil imposteur, & de qui je n'ai
 plus
 Que l'affreux souvenir des biens que j'ai per-
 dus.
- 50 Iris, l'ingrate Iris, en prenant d'autres chaînes,
 Change tous mes plaisirs en de cruelles gênes;
 Elle me fait tomber du Thrône dans les fers,
 Du repos aux ennuis, & du Ciel aux enfers,
 Et m'abandonne enfin à la noire pensée
 Qui pousse au desespoir une amour offensée.
- 55 O Dieux, qui punissez les sermens méprisez,
 Et qui sçavez venger les Amans abusez,
 Si je suis criminel, faites choir sur ma tête,
 De votre ardent courroux la plus rude tem-
 pête;
- 60 Mais si je n'ai rien fait digne de courroux,
 Choisissez le coupable, & qu'il sente vos
 coups.
 Iris, si je pouvois avoir autant de haine
 Pour votre esprit léger, qu'il me coûte de
 peine,
 J'attirerois sur vous les plus grands châti-
 mens
- 65 Dont le Ciel sçait punir les parjures Amans:
 Mais le seul souvenir de notre intelligence
 Ne peut me conseiller qu'une douce ven-
 geance,
 Et je ne sçai quel est ce doux solliciteur
 Qui parle encor pour vous dans le fond de
 mon coeur.
- 70 Amour, seroit-ce toi qui n'as pas le courage
 D'abandonner les fers de ce dur esclavage;
 Et qui trop enchanté par ce subtil poison
 Qu'Iris porte en ses yeux, n'aime que la pri-
 son?
- Hélas! qu'en te flattant j'ai montré de foi-
 blesse!
- Malheureux, reprends coeur, quitte cette Mai-
 tresse,
- 75 Infidèle qu'elle est , & d'un hardi dessein
 Tire le trait mortel qui te perce le sein;
 Laisse aller cette Iris, puisqu'elle est si volage,
 Tache à gagner le port, & voi de son rivage,
 De l'amoureuse Mer & les Vents & les flots;
- 80 Et que rien désormais ne trouble ton repos.

- 1 O Dieux! seroit-il vrai que l'amour m'eut
soumise?
Je crains pour mon repos, je crains pour ma
franchise,
Et depuis que Daphnis m'a fait voir ses appas,
Je le cherche en mon coeur, & ne le trouve
pas:
- 5 Son espoir, sa douceur, sa mine & son cou-
rage,
Aux coeurs les moins soumis font aimer le ser-
vage,
Et je sens que le mien, s'il est encore à moi,
Ne sera pas long-tems sans vivre sous sa loi.
Quand je ne le vois point, je ne suis pas con-
tente,
- 10 Si bien-tôt son retour ne borne mon attente.
Jamais sans me troubler mes yeux ne l'ont pû
voir,
Et son nom seulement suffit pour m'émou-
voir,
Si du moindre danger sa vie est menacée,
Une soudaine peur rend mon ame glacée;
- 15 Le repos m'abandonne & la nuit & le jour.
D'où naîtroient ces effets si j'étois sans amour?
Il le faut avouer, à quoi sert-il de feindre?
L'amour n'est plus un mal que mon coeur doive
craindre:
- 20 En vain je tâcherois d'éviter sa prison,
Il retient dans ses fers mes sens & ma raison:
Mais sans en murmurer, je souffrirois ses gê-
nes,
Si j'avois le pouvoir de parler de mes chaî-
nes;
L'implacable pudeur regne sur mes désirs,
Intimide ma voix, mes yeux & mes soupirs,
- 25 Ils ont tant de respect pour les loix de leur
Reine,
Qu'ils n'osent découvrir la cause de ma peine;
Et quoiqu'ils voudroient bien me pouvoir sé-
courir,
De peur de lui déplaire, ils me laissent mou-
rir.
- 30 Lorsque mon feu s'accroît, cette Reine severe
Me fait voir dans ses yeux le feu de sa colere,
Menace mon amour d'un triste événement,
Si je parle à Daphnis de mon cruel tourment.
Elle me permet bien de répondre à sa flâme,
Si j'ai tant de bonheur que d'embrazer son
ame;
- 35 D'écouter son discours s'il veut m'entretenir,
Mais non de m'abaisser jusqu'à le prévenir.
Ainsi pour se venger, Junon impitoyable,
D'écho Nymphes des bois, fit le sort déplorable,
Lui ravit le pouvoir d'exprimer ses amours,

- 40 Sans du cruel Narcisse emprunter le secours.
 Si ce bel insensible eût aimé cette belle,
 Elle eût redit pour lui ce qu'il eût dit pour elle;
 Et si Daphnis aussi me parle de sa foi,
 Je redirai pour lui ce qu'il dira pour moi:
- 45 Mais Dieux! si par malheur il n'a rien à me
 dire,
 Faudra-t'il sans secours endurer mon martyre?
 Faudra-t'il que mes [mains] me ravissent le
 jour?
 Peut-être il m'aimeroit s'il sçavoit mon
 amour;
 Peut-être qu'ignorant le sujet de ma peine,
- 50 Loin de me croire Esclave, il me croit inhu-
 maine,
 Et que s'il ne craignoit l'excès de ma rigueur,
 J'aurois la liberte du maître de mon coeur;
 Lui découvrant le mal dont je souffre l'atteinte,
 Par sa propre douleur je finirois sa crainte:
- 55 Je me rendrois heureuse & le rendrois heu-
 reux,
 Et sçachant mon amour il seroit amoureux.
 Que dis-je, il le seroit? Peut-etre qu'il soupire,
 Mais il n'ose expliquer son aimable martyre;
 Il se plaint du respect qui cache son ardeur,
- 60 Ainsi que mon amour se plaint de ma pudeur.
 Ah! si c'est le respect qui t'oblige à le faire,
 Ne crains point, cher Daphnis, de me pouvoir
 déplaire;
 Tu me rends un honneur qui cause mon tré-
 pas,
- Ah! de grace, Daphnis ne me respecte pas,
- 65 Tes craintes sont pour moi des craintes homi-
 cides,
 Tous les autres Amans ne font pas si timides;
 Et dire ton amour à qui t'a pû blesser,
 C'est louer ses appas, & non pas l'offenser.
 Dis un mot seulement je romprai mon silence,
- 70 Je ne veux pas donner mon coeur a ta cons-
 tance;
 Des que tu m'auras dit ton amoureux souci,
 Je te dirai, Daphnis, hélas! je t'aime aussi:
 Ah! si tu veux sçavoir si mon ame est blessée,
 Donne-moi le moyen de t'ouvrir ma pensée,
- 75 Ne me refuse pas un signe de ta part,
 Fais parler un soupir, fais parler un regard.
 Si la chaste pudeur se plaint que je l'offense,
 Ce soupir, ce regard me servent de défense,
 Et je puis opposer à sa cruelle loi
- 80 Que je n'ai déclaré mon amour qu'après toi.
 Mais je demande en vain qu'il m'aide a me dé-
 fendre,
 L'adorable Daphnis ne me sçauroit entendre.
 Que deviendrai-je donc dans l'état où je suis?

- Pourrai-je dans mon coeur enfermer mes en-
nuis?
- 85 O Dieux, injustes Dieux! qu'elle est votre sa-
gesse?
Vos loix s'accordent mal avecque ma foi-
blesse,
Vous êtes les Auteurs de ma fragilité,
Je la reçus de vous avecque la clarté:
Toutefois vous voulez que je sois la maitresse
- 90 Du puissant ennemi qui me plait & me blesse,
Et que la passion dont je me sens bruler,
Me consume le coeur sans en pouvoir parler:
Vous souffrez que l'Amant qui reçut en par-
tage,
Dès lors qu'il vit le jour, la force & le courage,
- 95 Et dont la fermeté peut braver les malheurs,
Decouvre sans rougir ses secretes douleurs,
Et cruels seulement à la fragile Amante,
Vous voulez l'immoler au Dieu qui la tour-
mente;
Vous voulez l'obliger à cacher son tourment
- 100 Et préférer la mort à son soulagement;
Et si de son amour l'extrême violence
La contraint à parler malgré votre défense,
L'émotion du coeur lui trouble son esprit,
Le désordre paroît dans tout ce qu'elle dit,
- 105 La rougeur de la honte altere son visage,
Et ce n'est qu'en tremblant qu'elle dit son ser-
vage.
Grands Dieux! vous la traitez avec trop de ri-
gueur,
Donnez-lui d'autres loix, ou bien un autre
coeur.
Mais j'ai beau résister à leurs rudes contrain-
tes,
- 110 Et pousser dans les airs tant d'inutiles plaintes,
Tout injustes qu'ils sont, il leur faut obéir,
Et leur garder la foi jusques à me trahir,
Malgré tous les efforts de mon amour extrême,
Je veux bannir de moi la pitié de moi-même,
- 115 Desabuser mon coeur de l'espoir du secours,
Et la triste langueur co[n]sumera mes jours.
Mais ni Dieux, ni pudeur, ne me sçauroient
distraindre
D'aimer jusqu'au tombeau l'objet qui ma sçu
plaire.
Je t'aime, cher Daphnis, & t'aimerai tou-
jours,
- 120 Ma vie & mon amour auront un même cours;
Et si je t'entretiens, sans jamais oser dire
Que mon coeur est soumis aux loix de ton em-
pire,
Si j'empêche mes yeux de t'en rien reveler,
Et force mes soupirs à le dissimuler,

- 125 L'étrange changement de mon visage blême
Te fera quelque jour connoître que je t'aime;
De mon teint abbatu la mortelle pâleur
Te dira mon amour, sans blesser ma pudeur;
Mon mal me fera doux, & je mourrai contente
- 130 Si tu sçais par ma mort que je meurs ton Amante.

LETTER FROM LA SUZE

Plusieurs affaires qui m'ont occupée depuis quelque temps sont causes que je n'ay pu achever plustost l'ouvrage auquel vous m'aviez engagée; et tant de choses fascheuses m'ont traversée dans ce dessein que je ne pense pas que ces charmantes filles (les Muses), avec qui l'ont dit par le monde que vous n'estes pas trop mal, m'eusse assurées que j'y venois de vostre part pour les conjurer de m'accorder quelques pensées, quelques expressions et quelques rymes pour composer des vers sur une Jalousie. A ce mot de Jalousie, il s'éleva un bruit assez confus entre elles; je fus traité de fourbe et cette illustre troupe soutint que vous aviez receu trop de faveurs d'elle, pour concevoir de la jalousie de quelque nature qu'elle pust estre. Et mesme la plus prude de toutes, après avoir dit à ses compagnes que tant de voleurs qui s'étoient introduits chez elles, sans passeport, avoyent mal usé de leurs trésors et qu'il falloit plus souffrir cet abus, me demanda si vous m'en aviez donné un. Je repondis qu'à la vérité je n'en avois point par écrit; mais que vous aviez jugé que je n'estois pas de si mauvaise mine qu'on pust me croire sur ma parole. Comme nous en estions en ces termes, une certaine Muse, qui semble jeune et moins sévère que les autres et avec qui j'ay achevé de faire connoissance chez vous, me reconnut et assura qu'elle m'y avoit veuë, et que vous me faisez la grace d'avoir quelque estime pour moy. Sur cette assurance, chacune de ces filles me traita assez favorablement. Apollon mesme me jetta quelques regards dont les rayons m'ebouirent d'abord. En suite, cette Muse, ma protectrice,

dont je vous viens de parler, prit la commission de me conduire dans les lieux où je pourrois choisir les choses dont j'avois besoin. Je la suivis par d'assez agréables routes; et après m'estre entretenue quelque temps avec elle sur l'ordre de mon dessein, bien que mon sujet fût assez violent, elle me conseilla de le traiter d'une manière douce, et comme c'est son tempérament, je ne luy pus jamais faire violence. De plus elle me dit que si elle estoit fille à estre galantisée, elle ne trouveroit pas bon qu'un amant, par une jalousie furieuse et emportée manquast de respect pour sa vertu; qu'elles en tiendroient offensée, et qu'elle ne me pourroit la souffrir. Il fallut consentir à ce qu'elle voulut; et lorsque mon Elégie fut achevée, et que je la luy eus récitée, je me plaignis de ce qu'il me sembloit qu'elle avoit esté un peu avare de ses trésors. Elle m'assura, pour me consoler, que j'en trouverois autant chez vous que chez elle; que c'estoit là qu'elle et ses soeurs conservoient ce qu'elles avoient de plus précieux et que vous estiez trop civil pour me refuser les choses qui manquoient à mon ouvrage. Enfin elle se remit à vous de ce soin. Si vous satisfaites à son attente, je mettray cette grâce au nombre des obligations que je vous ay et qui m'engagent à estre, monsieur, vostre très humble servante. COLIGNY.

Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Mss. Conrart 5131.

Chapter III

WATCHWOR (L) D

LA MONTRE.

Ce fut dans une des plus grandes Villes du monde, & durant la tranquillité de la paix, que Damon devint amoureux de l'aimable Iris. Ils étoient tous deux nobles, riches & jeunes; de sorte que l'égalité de leur naissance, de leur fortune & de leur âge faisoit que leurs parens ne s'opposoient point à leurs amours, & que ces Amans pouvoient espérer d'être bientôt heureux; cependant Iris fut obligée de faire un voyage à la campagne, où elle demeura quelques mois: Damon, qui étoit le plus amoureux de tous les hommes, souffroit impatiemment l'absence de sa Maîtresse; & ne pouvant la visiter aussi souvent qu'il eût désiré, il lui écrivoit à toutes les occasions. Après lui avoir écrit cent jolies choses, il se souvint de lui demander par un Billet une discrétion qu'il lui avoir gagnée avant son départ. Iris différoit toujours, & Damon ne se lassoit point de demander; mais comme je ne prétens pas ici raconter leurs aventures, ni rapporter tous leurs Billets, on n'y trouvera que la Montre que cette charmante fille lui envoya.

IRIS A DAMON.

Il faut avouer, Damon, que vous êtes l'homme du monde le plus pressant; vous m'avez demandé cent fois dans vos Billets la discrétion que vous me gagnâtes, & vous ne voulez pas attendre mon retour pour être payé. Il ne fait pas bon devoir à un Créancier de cette sorte; vous voulez exiger vos dettes un peu trop promptement. Je m'imagine que vous craignez que je ne devienne insolvable & c'est peut-être la raison pour laquelle vous m'avez tant pressée. Je veux enfin sortir d'affaire, je suis fille de parole; & pour vous payer, je vous envoie une Montre de ma façon. Il pourroit être que vous n'en avez point vu comme celle-ci; ce n'est pas une de ces Montres où il y a toujours quelque chose à raccommoder: elle est bonne, elle est juste & elle le sera tant que vous m'aimerez & tant que je serai absente: dès que vous cesserez de m'aimer la corde se rompera, elle n'ira plus; & dès que je serai de retour, l'usage en sera presque inutile. Mais, Damon, apprenez que bien que je ne l'aye montée que pour le printemps, elle pourra vous servir durant toute l'année n'étant nécessaire pour cela que de changer les heures des emplois qu'elle marque selon la grandeur ou la petitesse des jours & des nuits; car ma Montre servira moins à vous montrer les heures, qu'à vous enseigner comment vous devez les employer. Vous y verrez tout ce que vous devez faire pendant mon absence, & je ne l'ai faite enfin que pour servir de règle à toutes vos actions. La considération de l'Ouvrier vous doit faire estimer l'ouvrage; et bien que ce ne soit pas un chef-d'oeuvre, vous me devez sçavoir quelque gré d'avoir travaillé pour vous. Il est vrai que je ne sçaurois me vanter d'avoir été seule à l'achever. Peut-être, Damon, vous

dites déjà en vous même:

*Qu'Amour m'en fournit le dessein,
Que du fonds de mon coeur il a conduit ma main.*

Je vous laisse la liberté de dire ce qu'il vous plaira, & pour vous donner un témoignage de mon amitié,

*Je veux vous dire à mon tour,
Sans croire me faire un outrage,
Qu'il est certain que l'Amour
A quelque part à mon ouvrage.*

Ce n'est pas un méchant maître que l'Amour: il instruit fort agréablement, & il réussit toujours en toute chose.

*Il ne manque jamais en rien,
Quand il fait un métier, il le fait toujours
bien.*

Mais je dois vous expliquer ma Montre. Elle marque les vingt-quatre heures qui composent le jour & la nuit. Au-dessus de chaque heure vous trouverez écrit ce que vous devez faire durant cette heure-là. Toutes les demi-heures sont marquées par des soupirs; parce que le propre d'un Amant est de soupirer jour & nuit, outre que les soupirs sont des enfants qui naissent à toute heure. Toutefois afin que ma Montre soit juste, il faut que l'Amour la conduise, & que le mouvement soit enfermé dans votre coeur.

*Et si votre coeur le seconde,
Ma Montre ira le mieux du monde.*

EXPLICATION DES HEURES.

Toutes les heures sont longues pour un Amant éloigné de sa Maîtresse, Je veux pourtant que ma Montre vous en fasse passer quelques-unes sans inquiétude, & que la force de votre imagination charme quelquefois les chagrins que mon absence vous fait ressentir.

*Peut-être je me trompe ici,
Mais je souhaiterois que cela fût ainsi.*

Pour commencer à vous instruire, jettez les yeux sur les huit heures du matin, qui est l'heure que vous commencez à vous éveiller, vous y trouverez écrit: Agréable reverie.

VIII. AGREABLE REVERIE.

Ne vous levez pas si-tôt, on peut rêver assez agréablement après qu'on est éveillé. C'est à cette heure-là que vous devez vous demander raison à vous même des songes que vous avez fait durant la nuit. Si vous avez songé quelque chose à mon avantage,

confirmez-vous dans cette pensée; si c'est quelque chose qui me fasse tort, désavouez votre songe. C'est encore durant cette heure-là que je consens que vous rappelliez en votre memoire ce que j'ai fait pour vous de plus obligeant.

*Afin de vous entretenir [entretenir]
De votre passion ainsi que de la mienne,
Faites dans votre esprit que le passé revienne,
Et rendez présent l'avenir.*

Je vous permets de vous flatter vous-même, & de vous souvenir de toutes les marques d'amitié que je vous ai données; mais s'il se peut ne soyez qu'a demi-éveillé, afin que mes complaisances ne passent que pour des demi-songes.

*Les faveurs d'une Maîtresse
Touchent un coeur tendrement:
Toutefois de peur qu'un Amant
Ne l'accuse un jour de foiblesse,
Elle en doit donner rarement.*

Quoique toutes les complaisances qu'une honnête fille a eues pour un honnête homme ayant été fort innocentes, elle sent pourtant dans son coeur toutes les fois qu'elle y fait réflexion, un petit dépit qui l'irrite contre elle-même, & qui lui reproche un peu de foiblesse; ce sont de ces choses qu'on n'est pas fâché d'avoir faites, & dont on ne voudroit plus se souvenir. Cela me persuade que notre sexe ne sçauroit avoir trop de retenue.

*Les faveurs des filles bien nées
Ne sont pas fort à condamner;
Il ne faut pourtant pas se hâter d'en donner;
Car on n'a plus de choix dès qu'on les a données.*

IX. DESSEIN DE NE PLAIRE A PERSONNE.

On pourroit vous accuser de paresse, si vous demeuriez davantage au lit; il est tems de vous en tirer, aussi-bien ma Montre marque-t-elle neuf heures. Souvenez-vous que je suis absente, & ne prénez pas beaucoup de soin à vous parer.

*En vous parant que prétendez-vous faire?
Ce soin est un grand embarras:
Tant que je suis absente il n'est pas nécessaire;
Ne vous parez donc pas pour plaire,
Parez-vous seulement pour ne déplaire pas.*

Dites en vous-même: Ah! plutôt au Ciel qu'il me fût possible de voir Iris; mais hélas il est impossible: toutes les choses que je puis voir aujourd'hui me sont des objets indifferens c'est Iris que je voudrois voir.

Quand je ne la vois pas ma peine est infinie,

*Je néglige tout entretien,
Si je ne la compte en une Compagnie,
Je compte le reste pour rien.*

C'est de semblables pensées que votre esprit doit être occupé, & vous êtes trop sçavant en amour pour ignorer.

*Que par une effet du destin
Qui rend l'absence un mal extrême,
Des qu'un Amant ne voit pas ce qu'il
 aime,
Il voit tout avecque chagrin.*

X. LECTURE DE BILLETS.

Ma montre vous apprend que vous devez entrer dans votre cabinet, & que vous avez passé une heure à vous ajuster. Pour un Amant qui est assuré de ne paroître pas devant sa Maîtresse, vous y avez employé un peu trop de tems, mais je veux croire, que vous ne songiez à rien moins qu'à ce que vous faisiez. N'en perdez donc pas davantage, & ouvrez votre Casette pour lire une partie des Billets que vous avez recus de moi. Quel plaisir n'a-t'on pas en lisant ceux d'une Maîtresse!

*L'on a des plaisirs incroyables,
L'on ne peut trop les souhaiter,
L'on en goûte peu de semblables;
Mais qui n'est point Amant ne sçauroit les goûter.*

La lecture de mes Billets peut vous occuper une heure, j'ai eu la bonté de vous en écrire assez pour cela: je me la reproche quelquefois cette bonté; mais malgré tous mes scrupules je me vois toujours disposée à vous donner des marques de tendresse. Si la vôtre est aussi forte que vous dites, vous devez baiser mille fois mes Billets, vous devez les lire avec attention, en peser même tous les mots. Scachez qu'il est plus aisé d'entendre cent paroles flatteuses d'une Maîtresse, que d'en obtenir un Billet. Une Dame dit bien des choses à un Amant qu'elle auroit bien de la peine a lui écrire, & quand elle a cette complaisance, il faut être fortement persuadé que son affection est au-dessus des médiocres.

*Le moindre vent peut emporter
Mille parolles dans une heure,
Rien ne sçauroit les arrêter,
Mais tout ce qu'on écrit demeure.*

Je ne doute pas que vous ne soyez satisfait d'une lecture qui vous doit être si agréable. Que de plaisirs que vous goûterez! A peine le souvenir de mon absence pourra-t-il les diminuer.

*Les Billets d'un objet aimé
Font oublier aux Amans leurs miseres:*

*Et le mal de l'absence est bien souvent char-
mé
Par ces aimables caractères.*

XI. HEURE A ECRIRE.

Quand ma Montre ne vous avertiroit pas de m'écrire, je crois que votre coeur vous le diroit. Je serai bien aise que vous y employiez une heure, & que, vous ne perdiez jamais l'occasion de m'envoyer de vos Billets.

*Tous les Billets d'un Amant
Ont je ne sçai quoi de charmant,
Quand l'Amant plaît à la Maîtresse:
Ces doux plaisirs me sont assez connus;
Et vous ne doutez pas connoissant ma tendresse,
Que vos Billets ne soient les bien venus.*

Celui qui a trouvé le moyen de se communiquer les pensées hors de la portée de la voix, étoit quelque chose au-dessus de l'humain.

*Pour moi, quoiqu'on en veuille dire,
Je crois que l'amour seul a trouvé l'art d'é-
crire.*

C'est un art trop ingénieux pour avoir été trouvé par les hommes, & trop utile aux Amans pour n'avoir pas été inventé par l'Amour. Mais je ne prétens pas exiger de vous de ces Billets galants qui ne sont remplis que de belles pensées: je veux seulement que les vôtres soient tendres, amoureux & passionnés, & j'aime bien mieux y voir beaucoup d'amour que beaucoup d'esprit. Toutefois ne pensez pas m'écrire de ces Billets qu'on a lûs dans un moment: en amour les longs Billets font les longs plaisirs.

*Et l'on peut assurer, cher Damon, qu'en tous lieux
Tout ce qui plaît au coeur est agréable aux yeux.*

Au reste, un Billet est un merveilleux Agent auprès d'une Maîtresse; il la persuade presque toujours, & il retouche dans son coeur des impressions que l'absence pourroit bien effacer. Graces à l'Amour, il vous est permis de m'écrire: peut-être que je ne serai pas toujours d'humeur à le vouloir, & il pourroit arriver que vous seriez privé en même-tems & de ma présence & des moyens de m'envoyer de vos Billets. Je veux croire que ce seroit un grand malheur pour vous; car j'ai toujours oui dire,

*Pour faire souffrir le martyre
A l'Amant le plus heureux,
Il ne faut qu'un jour ou deux
Lui défendre de voir, de parler & d'écrire.*

Serez-vous du tems, vous ne sçauriez me donner trop de marques de votre passion. Ecrivez donc durant toute cette heure, & n'apprehendez point que je vous reproche de ne sortir pas assez-

tôt de votre cabinet.

*Quand vous y passerez du matin jusqu'au soir,
Vous n'en recevrez point de honte,
Le tems que vous mettez à ce petit devoir,
Et un tems dont je vous tiens compte.*

Vous devez pourtant en sortir puisqu'il est déjà midi, & que ma Montre vous avertit d'aller au Temple.

XII. DEVOIR INDISPENSABLE

Il est certains devoirs qu'on ne doit jamais oublier: celui d'adorer les Dieux est de cette nature. Nous devons le faire du fonds du coeur, & c'est en ce tems-là seulement que je vous dispense de penser à moi. Mais je ne voudrais pas que vous allassiez à ces Temples ou les Galans de profession ne vont que pour voir ou pour être vûs, & où la plupart des Dames se trouvent, plutôt pour faire parade de leur beauté que pour honorer les Dieux.

*Les Dieux pénètrent dans nos ames,
Ils savent quel motif nous mene dans ces lieux:
Ce n'est pas-là qu'on doit chercher les Da-
mes,
On n'y doit chercher que les Dieux.*

Si vous me croyez, vous n'irez qu'aux moins fréquentez, & vous n'y paroîtrez que comme un homme qui a de la vénération pour toutes les choses sacrées.

*Les Dieux veulent que les mortels
Portent leurs coeurs aux pieds de leurs Au-
tels,
Sans qu'à ce saint devoir aucun autre s'op-
pose:
Vous pouvez bien sans enfreindre leur loi,
Me préférez à tout autre chose,
Mais préférez les Dieux à moi.*

I. ENTRETIENS FORCEZ.

Je vois bien qu'il est difficile qu'en sortant du Temple vous ne soyez environné de ces gens qui s'affligent ou se rejouissent de cent choses où ils n'ont nul intérêt.

*De ces Politiques crédules
Qui font amas de nouveautez,
Pour débiter de tous cotez
Milles nouvelles ridicules.*

Ou bien de ces conteurs d'avantures, qui s'informent toujours de toutes les intrigues, & qui disent en secret à cent diverses

personnes les bagatelles qu'ils ont apprises.

*De ces gens curieux, dont le sot entretien
Excite de justes coleres,
Qui font de tout de grands mysteres,
Qui s'empressent toujours de rien,
Et qui disent au monde en secret cent affaires
Que déjà le monde sçait bien.*

Ecoutez-les sans empressement, autant que la civilité vous le permettra: répondez-leur sans approuver leurs sottises; mais sans vous eriger en Censeur.

*Toutes ces petites nouvelles
Ne sont que pures bagatelles,
Qu'on écoute impatiemment:
Elles choquent souvent ceux qui les disent
même,
Et le parfait Amant
N'en demande jamais que de l'objet qu'il aime,*

II. HEURES DU REPAS.

Quittez tous ces entretiens forcez, vous pourriez vous faire attendre à dîner, & ma Montre vous dit que c'en est l'heure. Je ne prétends pas que l'Amour vous oblige à vous en passer; mais je ne règle point vos repas, cela n'est pas de ma juridiction.

*Mangez si l'appetit vous presse,
Soyez, si vous voulez, tous les jours en festin,
Je ne vous règle point, je suis votre Maîtresse,
Et non pas votre Médecin.*

Si vous dînez en compagnie, faites comme les autres, ce n'est point-là l'heure des chagrins & des inquietudes: il faut parler.

*Il faut répondre à ce qu'on vous propose,
Je ne vous prescris point de loi:
Mais s'il vous faut songer à quelque chose,
Il vaut autant songer à moi.*

III. VISITES D'AMIS.

Ma montre est plus juste que vous ne croyez: elle ne veut pas que vous viviez en solitaire, & vous permet d'aller faire des visites.

L'amour & l'amitié peuvent trouver place dans un même coeur, & un honnête-homme seroit bien malheureux, si dès qu'il a une Maîtresse il devoit renoncer à la société de ses amis. Je ne voudrois pourtant pas que vous eussiez autant d'empressement pour eux que pour moi; car j'ai ouï dire qu'on ne sçauroit être ardent Amant, sans être un peu tiede ami. Vous n'ignorez pas que lorsque l'Amour établit son empire dans un coeur, il y regne en tyran, &

qu'il n'y souffriroit point l'amitié, si elle prétendoit partager sa puissance.

*Il est jaloux de son autorité,
Il hait toujours l'égalité,
Et d'abord qu'il commence à naître,
Il prétend commander en maître,*

Je serois fâchée surtout, que vous eussiez de ces amies qui ont toutes les qualitez que l'on pourroit souhaiter à une Maîtresse. Il arrive souvent qu'on a pour ces aimables personnes des sentimens un peu trop tendres, & alors ceux de l'amitié & ceux de l'amour sont tellement confondus, qu'on ne sçauroit les discerner.

*Si vous avez une semblable attache
Je serois pour vous sans pitié;
Car je sçai que l'Amour se cache
Sous le voile de l'amitié.*

Ce n'est pas qu'un Amant ne puisse avoir de ces illustres amies qu'on est bien-aise de voir une fois le jour.

*Il peut bien en avoir d'aimables & de
belles,
Mais l'Amour ne doit pas l'attacher auprès
d'elles.*

Je vous estimerois moins si vous agissiez autrement, & je serois peut-être en état de vous chasser de mon coeur, ou du moins d'y donner place a bien d'autres personnes.

*Vous devez demander par grace
De n'en être jamais chassé:
Le Coeur d'une Maîtresse est une belle place;
Mais il faut s'y voir seul pour être bien placé.*

IV. CONVERSATIONS GENERALES.

Comme vous n'êtes pas chez vos amies pour garder le silence, vous devez entrer en conversation avec eux. Elle doit pourtant être générale & vous ne devez pas faire de vos amis les confidens de vos amours. Il me déplairoit fort d'apprendre que vous leur révelez toutes mes confidences; bien qu'elles ne soient que de bagatelles, elles ne laissent pas parmi les Amans d'avoir toutes les douceurs du secret.

*Tous ces petits secrets que dit à tout moment
Une Maîtresse à son Amant,
Sont beaucoup plus doux qu'on ne
pense:
Ils font naitre en nos coeurs mille innocens dé-
sirs;
Mais ils ne donnent de plaisirs
Que tant qu'ils sont sous la loi du silence.*

J'ai toujours cru que le secret étoit un des plaisirs de l'amour : on doit le garder inviolablement : & puis tout le monde ne juge pas sainement des choses.

*Ne faites point de confidence,
Et soyez sur que le silence
A pour moi des charmes puissans :
Le monde a d'étranges maximes,
Les plaisirs les plus innocens
Passent quelquefois pour des crimes.*

C'est en de semblables conversations où se mêlent souvent ces indiscrets, qui s'imaginent obliger un honnête-homme, en lui faisant connaître qu'ils savent qu'il est aimé. Ne faites pas en ces occasions comme beaucoup de gens font, qui ne s'opposent à ces railleries que foiblement,

*Et qui par leurs souris, leur geste, leur silence,
Approuvent ce qu'on dit, & disent ce qu'on
pense.*

Je ne condamnerois pas un honnête homme qui répondroit un peu brusquement à ces indiscrets. Je sais bien qu'il est difficile qu'on ne connoisse pas que vous êtes Amant.

*Mais s'il est inévitable
Qu'on devine l'objet dont vous êtes charmé,
Paraissez Amant aimable,
Et non pas Amant aimé.*

V. VISITES UN PEU DANGEREUSES.

J'avois bien prévu que vos amis vous obligeroient à visiter quelques Dames de leur connoissance ou de la vôtre, ma Montre ne vous le défend pas ; toutefois ces visites sont un peu dangereuses, & il me semble que vous devez prendre garde à vous, & ne me pas donner lieu de vous soupçonner.

*Ne soyez guères auprès des Belles ;
Car il est de certains momens,
Où les plus fidelles Amans
Peuvent devenir infidelles.*

Je sais que la civilité vous oblige à les voir, & ce seroit porter la prudence amoureuse trop loin de vous le défendre ; tenez-vous seulement sur vos gardes : la plupart des Belles ne vont qu'à la conquête des coeurs, leurs civilitez sont presque toutes intéressées, & on en trouve qui ont un je ne sais quoi qui est à craindre, surtout lorsqu'il est accompagné de la jeunesse & de l'enjouement. Il n'est pas aisé de se gouverner juste en ces rencontres ; le moyen le plus sûr est que vous vous imaginiez que je lis toutes vos pensées, que j'observe tous vos regards, & que j'écoute toutes vos paroles :

*Un Amant dont l'ame est constante,
Voudroit qu'une Maîtresse examinât ses pas,
Et bien qu'elle n'y soit pas,
Il doit croire qu'elle est presente.*

J'approuve pourtant le remede dont vous vous servez, pour vous défendre des attaques que les Belles donnent à votre coeur, & il me souviendra toujours que vous m'avez dit dans un de vos Billets:

*Pour vous être toujours fidelle,
Et me garentir de leurs coups,
Mon coeur songe d'abord à vous,
Et tout me dit alors, que vous êtes plus belle.*
Mais je sçai que tous les Amans sont flatteurs; aussi n'ajoutai-je pas beaucoup de foi à ces paroles: & à parler serieusement,

*Je passerois pour ridicule,
Si je prenois cela pour une vérité;
Mais qu'il soit faux ou vrai, l'on doit être cré-
dule,
Quand le plaisir se joint à la crédulité.*

VI. PROMENADE SANS DESSEIN.

Vous avez encore le tems de faire une promenade, & ma Montre a prévu que vous ne sçauriez refuser vos amis. Vous trouverez dans le Jardin du Roi des personnes bien faites, & les Belles aiment trop un si beau lieu pour ne s'y rendre pas.

*Prenez garde qu'Amour n'y soit en embusca-
de:
C'est pourquoi, cher Damon, examinez-vous
bien,
Et conduisez vos yeux durant la promenade,
En Amant qui ne cherche rien.*

Ne faites point l'admirateur perpetuel de toutes celles que vous y verrez: ne les louez point avec exageration on ne loue jamais ainsi qu'une Maîtresse. Je vous conseille de songer à ce que vous direz, & de ne vous arrêtez pas long-tems dans ces lieux.

*Parmi tant de Beutez, il faut appréhender
D'admirer trop long-tems ou la blonde ou la
brune:
On les peut toutes regarder,
Mais on ne doit s'attacher à pas une.*

Vous ne serez pas à blâmer de paroître un peu rêveur durant cette promenade, on vous en fera la guerre, & je ne doute point que vos amis ne vous demandent plus d'une fois, pourquoi vous êtes si mélancolique;

Mais quand on vous dira, pourquoi?

*Faites que votre bouche aussi-tôt leur repli-
que,
Ha! l'absence d'Iris me rend mélancolique,
Et quand vous aimerez vous serez comme
moi.*

VII. RETRAITE VOLONTAIRE.

Prenez congé de vos amis, il est nuit, & vous devez vous retirer chez vous. C'est durant cette retraite que votre esprit doit songer à toutes les choses dont vous avez à me rendre compte dans vos Billets. Vous ne sauriez m'en cacher la moindre partie, sans être criminel de leze-Amour. Nous sommes tombés d'accord, que la confiance est une des plus grandes preuves de cette passion, & qu'un Amant qui en manque pour la personne qu'il aime, doit être soupçonné de n'aimer que médiocrement, c'est à dire de n'aimer point. Songez-donc à tout ce que vous avez fait durant cette journée, afin qu'au premier Billet je sois instruite de tout. Mais agissez de bonne foi, sans grossir ni diminuer les objets quand vous auriez manqué à quelque chose, j'aimerois mieux l'apprendre de vous que par autrui; car c'est une marque de repentir de s'accuser soi-même, & je suis assez indulgente pour vous pardonner. La qualité la plus essentielle de l'honnête-homme, c'est la Probité et on en doit avoir en amour aussi-bien qu'en toute autre chose: cependant la plupart des hommes n'en font pas beaucoup d'état,

*Et vont chantant chaque jour
Par tous les coins de la terre,
Qu'il est de ruses d'amour,
Comme des ruses de guerre.*

VIII DEMANDES EMPRESSEES.

D'abord que vous serez chez vous, faites venir dans votre cabinet celui à qui vous avez confié le dernier Billet que vous m'avez écrit, & qui me doit avoir été rendu. Dès qu'il entrera, demandez-lui de mes nouvelles; ayez même de l'inquiétude de ce qu'il ne satisfait pas assez-tôt votre curiosité:

*Car il est certain, ou je meure,
Que lorsqu'on aime tendrement,
On veut sçavoir dans un moment
Tout ce qu'on ne sçauroit raconter dans une
heure.*

Demandez-lui comment je me porte; de qu'elle façon j'ai reçu votre Billet; s'il a examiné l'air de mon visage, si je l'ai lu attentivement; si ça a été avec joie; enfin, demandez-lui ce que je lui ai dit, & s'il a ma réponse. Vous devez vous faire rendre compte de tout ce qui s'est passé en sa présence, & vous devez ensuite lire ce que je vous écris, pour vous instruire de ce qui se passe dans mon coeur.

*C'est par-là seulement que vous pourrez appren-
dre
Ce que ma bouche fait, & ce que mon coeur
dit,
Dans ces Billets ou l'amour est si ten-
dre,
Le coeur dicte ce qu'on écrit.*

IX. FACHEUX SOUVENIR

Vous n'aurez pas bien de la peine à expliquer ce que ma Montre vous marque, & il n'est point de plus fâcheux souvenir que celui de l'absence d'une Maîtresse.

*Car l'absence en amour est un cruel martyre,
Et vous le ressentez si votre coeur soupire.*

Prenez-donc cette heure-là pour songer à votre malheur; il n'est pas médiocre pour une ame qui connoît toute l'étendue de la tendresse, & chacun sçait qu'un Amant privé de la vue de la personne qu'il aime, est privé de tous les plaisirs du monde.

*Qu'on souhaite un Amant sans cesse,
Que l'on en parle à tout moment,
Que l'on réponde à sa tendresse,
Cela lui plaît infiniment:
Mais à parler sincèrement,
Et c'est ce que l'amour confesse;
La félicité d'un Amant
Est d'être auprès de sa Maîtresse.*

En effet, Damon, l'absence d'une Maîtresse est une éclipse funeste au repos d'un Amant, & rien ne peut la dissiper que le seul retour de l'objet aimé. Dans cet état il voit tous les autres objets avec dégoût: il se fait de grands malheurs des moindres maux: tout ce qui ne lui parle pas de ce qu'il aime, lui déplaît, & tout ce qui lui en parle, en le faisant ressouvenir qu'il ne le sçauroit voir, augmente sa douleur. Je veux croire que ce sont vos sentiments. Vous êtes assuré de ne me voir pas de quelques jours, & si votre coeur ne dément toutes vos paroles, ces jours doivent être fort longs pour vous.

*Eloigné d'un objet aimé
L'on n'est jamais accoutumé
Aux ennuis, aux chagrins de ces longues jour-
nées:
Et c'est alors que les Amans
Prennent les jours pour des années,
Et pour des jours tous les momens.*

Je ne veux pas toutefois que votre mélancolie soit extrême; vous pouvez être persuadé que je la partage avec vous, & cette pensée doit la diminuer

*Comme la plus belle des fleurs
N'est jamais sans épine,
Ainsi les soupirs & les pleurs,
Selon que je me l'imagine,
Accompagnent l'amour & troublent ses douceurs:
Mais quoique l'on en puisse dire;
L'amour n'est pas un grand martyre,
Quand on est deux à souffrir ses douleurs.*

X. REFLEXIONS.

Mais après le fâcheux souvenir de mon absence, faites quelques réflexions sur votre bonheur, supposé que vous soyiez persuadé que c'en est un que d'être souffert de moi. La première chose que vous devez considérer, est que j'ai à la fin reçu vos soins assez agréablement, & que le présent que vous me fîtes de votre coeur, m'est fort cher.

*Le présent du coeur d'un Amant
Donne un plaisir indicible.
Et bien que ce présent soit toujours invisible,
Il touche sensiblement.*

Il est vrai que je ne l'acceptai pas d'abord et vous me l'offrîtes, & que vous m'avez dit plus d'une fois:

*Quoi! puis-je éviter d'expirer,
Si vous ne voulez pas qu'à vos yeux je soupire?
Ou vous devez m'entendre soupirer,
Ou vous devez consentir que j'expire.*

Mais toutes les rigueurs que ma severité vous fit souffrir, doivent passer présentement dans votre esprit pour des sujets de plaisirs, & vous devez juger du prix de mon affection par les difficultés que vous eûtes à toucher mon coeur.

*Lorsqu'après mille soins & mille inquietudes,
Ce que nous souhaitons succède à nos desirs,
Le souvenir des maux qui nous sembloient si rudes,
Nous donnent de nouveaux plaisirs.*

Souvenez-vous encore que je vous ai préféré à tous ceux qui m'ont servie, bien qu'ils fussent dignes de mon estime, & que j'ai fermé les yeux à leur mérite pour ne regarder que vous.

*Tous ces Amans avoient beau faire,
Je répondois à peine à leurs civilités.
Ils avoient mille qualités
Sans avoir celle de me plaire:
Et j'avoué enfin à mon tour,
Sans qu'on m'en sollicite,*

*Que vous les passiez en amour,
Aussi-bien qu'en mérite.*

Considerez ensuite que non seulement vous avez eu le bonheur de me plaire; mais que vous avez eu encore celui de le deviner.

*Lorsque je connus votre feu,
Vous connûtes celui que vous aviez fait naître;
Mais ce fut sans mon aveu
Que je vous le fis connoître.
J'en cachois le secret dans le fonds de mon
cœur,
Il est vrai que mes yeux en disoient quelque
chose:
Mais sur la foi des yeux un pauvre Amant
s'expose
A tomber souvent dans l'erreur.*

J'eus pourtant la bonté de vous l'apprendre par ma bouche, malgré toutes les délicatesses de mon ame, & tous les scrupules où vous sçavez que mon humeur panche.

*Il n'est obstacle enfin, que l'amour ne surmon-
te,
J'avoüai ma faiblesse en poussant un soupir:
Il m'en souvient avec plaisir,
Mais il m'en souvient avec honte.*

Je portai ma tendresse plus loin, & je voulus vous en donner des marques innocentes en toutes les occasions qui se présenterent: Car après que mes yeux & ma bouche vous eurent cent fois assuré des sentimens de mon cœur, je vous confirmai cette vérité par mes Billets. Avoüez, Damon, que si vous faites toutes ces réflexions, vous passerez une heure bien agréablement.

XI. REPAS DU SOIR

En effet, vous y trouvez tant de douceurs, que si on ne vous avertissoit qu'on a servi, vous passeriez en cet état bien des momens. Mais il faut aller où vous êtes attendu: n'abandonnez pourtant pas tout votre cœur à la joye, quoique vous ayiez lieu d'être content.

*Où l'ame d'un Amant doit être satisfaite,
Quand d'une noble ardeur il se trouve en flâmé:
Mais la plus grande joye est toujours impar-
faite,
Si l'on ne la partage avec l'objet aimé.*

XII. COMPLAISANCE

La civilité exige un peu de complaisance après le repas, & je suis assurée que vous n'en manquez jamais. Je sçai que l'on vous a accusé que la vôtre est trop générale, & que vous en aviez quelquefois pour des personnes qui vous devoient être indifférentes.

*L'on n'en est pas moins aimable,
En ayant plus qu'il ne faut:
Cet excès est un défaut,
Mais un défaut excusable.*

Ayez-en donc pour ceux avec qui vous serez: vous pouvez vous entretenir de cent choses indifférentes, & en même tems penser à moi. Si vous entendez louer quelque aimable personne, ou de sa beauté ou de son mérite, faites-m'en l'application; & si vous n'oser répondre tout haut,

*Faites que votre coeur réponde en son langage:
Celle que vous louez a mille qualitez,
Son esprit & son corps sont riches en beautez,
Mais Iris en a davantage.*

L'on n'a jamais parlé devant moi d'un Amant fidelle que je n'aye songé à vous, & toutes les fois que quelqu'un en parle,

*C'est avec plaisir que j'écoute,
Et que je lui reponds de la bouche ou des yeux,
Cet Amant sçait aimer sans doute,
Mais Damon aime encore mieux.*

Et bien que je n'aye pas toutes les qualitez qui se rencontrent aux Belles personnes, je suis pourtant bien-aise que l'amour vous préoccupe à mon avantage:

*Il n'est pas besoin de vous dire,
Qu'un veritable Amant doit se persuader,
Que tout autre objet doit céder
Au seul objet pour qui son coeur soupire.*

I. IMPOSSIBILITE DE DORMIR.

Vous avez assez veillé, songez à vous aller mettre au lit! Peut-être ne dormirez-vous pas d'abord que vous y serez, & vous pourrez bien y passer une heure avant que le sommeil ferme vos yeux. Dans cette impossibilité de dormir je trouve à propos que vous vous imaginiez tout ce que je puis faire tous les jours aux lieux où je suis. Faites faire un petit voyage à votre esprit pour venir m'observer quelque tems en cachette: il prendra garde que je m'ennuye souvent, & que j'ai du dégoût pour bien des choses, où ceux qui sont avec moi, trouvent des plaisirs.

Enfin dans les lieux où je suis

*Je partage tous vos ennuis,
Et je vois presque tout avec indifférence:
Je trouve pourtant assez doux
De penser quelquefois que durant mon
absence,
Votre coeur songe à moi, quand le mien
songe à vous.*

Mais peut-être que je me trompe, & que dans le même tems que vous occupez tout mon souvenir, je ne suis plus dans le vôtre, & que vous songez à quelque ouvrage qui vous puisse donner cette immortalité que les Muses promettent, ou bien que vous projetez quelque voyage dans les pays étrangers, pour aller chercher cette gloire qu'on acquiert dans les Armées. Si cela est, vous n'êtes pas sans inquiétude: car

*Les Poètes & les Guerriers
Sont quelquefois chagrins à l'ombre des lau-
riers,
Quoiqu'en veuillent chanter les filles de Mé-
moire:
Sous les mirthes fleuris on passe mieux le jour,
Et les couronnes de la Gloire
Valent souvent bien moins que celle de l'A-
mour.*

*Cette gloire que donne un peu de renommée
N'est rien qu'un amas de fumée,
Que le hazard produit & dissipe à son tour:
L'amour plus noblement occupe une belle
ame,
Et lorsqu'un digne objet répond à notre flâ-
me,
La gloire accompagne l'amour.*

Mais endormez-vous, l'heure est passée, & c'est presentement au songe à vous entretenir!

II. CONVERSATION EN SONGE *

Je ne doute pas que vous ne trouviez ma Montre un peu hardie, de prétendre régler jusques aux songes, qui ne sont que des pensées déréglées: en effet la raison ne les conduit point, & ils ne passent que pour des chimères de l'imagination. Toutefois j'ai bien voulu qu'elle vous en marquât quelques-uns, & je suis assurée qu'après avoir tant songé à moi durant le jour, vous y songerez durant la nuit. Le premier songe que ma Montre vous permet de faire, est que vous croyez être en conversation avec moi.

*Croyez dans ce songe flatteur,
Qu'après m'avoir montré l'ardeur de votre
flâme,
Je vous montre à mon tour jusqu'au fond de
mon ame:*

*Et que je donne coeur pour coeur,
Parole pour parole, & douceur pour dou-
ceur.*

Imaginez-vous que vous me parlez de votre passion avec transport, que je vous écoute paisiblement & que je vous donne mille innocens témoignages de ma tendresse. Peut-être que si vous vous éveillez en ce tems-la,

*Vous paroîtrez sensible à ce bien menson-
ger,
Et vous direz dans cette joye extrême,
Ah! qu'il seroit doux de songer
Si l'on songeoit toujours de même!*

III. CAPRICES A SOUFFRIR EN SONGES.*

Il est juste de mêler un peu d'amertume à ces douceurs, & je veux que votre imagination me représente à vous comme la plus capricieuse fille du monde. Je vois bien que vous me direz d'abord.

*Ne contentez pas votre envie,
N'accablez pas en songe un miserable Amant:
Helas! j'aimerois mieux veiller toute ma vie,
Que de tant souffrir en dormant.*

Mais vous ne sçauriez éviter les songes que ma Montre vous marque; c'est une nécessité. Vous croirez dans celui-ci que la coquetterie occupe presque toute mon ame: vous croirez, dis-je,

*Que mon coeur jamais ne s'arrête,
Et qu'il court d'Amant en Amant;
Que loin de se donner lors même qu'il se prête,
Il ne se prête qu'un moment.*

Je vous permets de m'offenser, mais c'est en dormant que je vous le permets; car je ne vous pardonnerois pas le mal que vous auriez pensé de moi, si c'avoit été autrement qu'en songe. Ce n'est pas tout de me croire coquette, vous croyez encore que vous avez à essuyer cent caprices de mon humeur; que je veux exiger de vous cent choses injustes; que je prétends que vous rompiez avec vos amis, & que vous n'ayez point d'amies; que je veux faire les choses que je condamne en vous: que je veux avoir pour d'autre que pour vous de cette amitié tendre qui ressemble à de l'amour, ou plutôt de cette amour à qui on donne le nom d'amitié, & que je ne veux pas que vous osiez vous en plaindre. Enfin, soyez ingénieux à vous tourmenter, & croyez que je suis devenue injuste, ingrate & insensible. Tout de bon votre amour seroit-elle à l'épreuve de ces malheurs, si ces malheurs n'étoient pas des songes?

*Mais sçachez qu'il faut pressumer
Que je n'ai jamais de foiblesse;*

*Et qu'un coeur qui sçait bien aimer,
Doit tout souffrir d'une Maîtresse.*

IV. JALOUSIE EN SONGE.

Ne pensez pas encore à vous éveiller, il faut que vous souffriez un peu davantage: il faut que la jalousie vous préoccupe qu'elle séduise votre raison, & que dans un troisième songe vous croyez en dormant ce que vous ne pourriez croire en veillant. Il est tems que vous expliquiez toutes mes actions au desavantage de votre amour, & que la jalousie vous accable de chagrins.

*Le propre de la jalousie
Est de causer des maux pires que le trépas,
Elle trouble les sens, & cette frenesie,
Fait qu'on croit voir souvent ce que l'on ne
voit pas.*

Vous croirez donc qu'un de vos Rivaux est auprès de moi, & que je n'aurai point d'attention pour tout ce que vous me direz tout haut, afin d'écouter ce qu'il me dira tout bas. Vous croirez qu'il me suit par tout, & que vous l'avez toujours sur vos pas, que je suis d l'humeur de ces Belles, qui croient que c'est la mode de donner toujours des Rivaux à son Amant.

*C'est une fort méchante mode,
D'avoir toujours un Rival sur ses pas;
Car soit qu'on soit aimé, soit qu'on ne le soit
pas;
Un Rival est un incommode.*

Je veux encore que vous vous imaginiez que mes yeux approuvent toutes ses pensées, qu'ils le flatent de quelque espoir, & que je vous ai arraché mon coeur pour lui en faire un present. Vous souffrirez en ce tems-là tout ce qu'une cruelle jalousie peut faire souffrir à une ame amoureuse.

*La jalousie est redoutable,
Ses traits percent un coeur de leurs terribles
coups:
Et nous pouvons dire entre nous,
Comme une chose veritable,
Que pour rendre un Amant tout-à-fait mise-
rable,
Il faut le rendre Amant jaloux.*

Vous le serez, Damon, & dans ce songe vous n'aurez que des sentimens tumultueux: vous roulerez dans votre esprit cent desseins qui se confondront l'un l'autre. Enfin, la colere, la haine & la vengeance s'empareront de votre coeur.

*Elles y regneront malgré tout votre amour,
Tantôt toutes ensemble, & tantôt tour à tour.*

V. RUPTURE EN SONGE.

Je vois bien que vous ne sçauriez souffrir toutes ces injustices,
& cependant vous en faites une vous-même: vous croyez dans ce
songe que je me plains de vous, & que je suis tout à fait irritée;
sur cette croyance vous m'accusez de faiblesse, vous cessez de me
voir, vous vous emportez contre l'amour, & selon toutes les
apparences vous croyez que je suis toujours coquette, & vous ne
m'aimez plus.

*Une coquette assurément
Ne paroît jamais aimable,
Son esprit peut être agréable,
Quoiqu'elle soit sans jugement.
Mais à mille défauts elle est toujours sujette,
Venant de sa legereté;
Et quand elle seroit un miracle en beauté,
Ce n'est jamais qu'une coquette.*

Enfin, Damon, durant ce songe nous sommes en état de nous
broûiller pour toujours, & il semble que tout y contribue.

*Chacun de son côté tache à briser sa chaî-
ne,
Chacun de son côté croit le faire sans peine,
Mais c'est fort inutilement,
On ne peut rien sur soi des que l'on est Amant.*

Vous avez donc beau faire, vous n'en venez pas à bout, & vous êtes
forcé de dire, en parlant de votre Maîtresse,

*Ah! qu'il seroit nécessaire
D'abandonner ses appas!
La raison voudroit le faire,
Mais l'amour ne le veut pas.*

Ne soyez plus irrité, cette heure incommode va finir, & vous ne
devez pas desesperez de rentrer en grace avec moi. Il ne faut pas
que votre coeur murmure,

*Soyez toujours Amant soumis:
Un songe fait notre rupture,
Un songe nous doit faire amis.*

VI. RACCOMMODEMENT EN SONGE.

En effet lorsque nous faisons tous nos efforts pour chasser la
tendresse de notre coeur, & dans le plus fort de notre
broûillerie,

*Amour voit toute la querelle;
Et comme nous en sommes-là,
Pour renouer une amitié si belle
Amour vient faire le hola.*

D'abord vous revenez de tous vos emportemens, vous me demandez cent fois pardon, vous me dites que vous êtes prêt à tout souffrir; votre imagination vous fait voir que je suis devenu sensible, juste & reconnoissante, que ma colere s'est évanouïe, & que nous jurons entre nous une paix inviolable.

*Après tous ces petits débats
Une paiz fait goûter mille douceurs nouvelles,
Et quoique bien souvent elle ne dure pas,
On la croit pourtant éternelle.*

Joüissez donc de tous les plaisirs dont un coeur fortement amoureux peut joüir. Ne vous souvenez point de toutes les inquiétudes que vous avez souffertes: benissez l'amour de ses faveurs, remerciez-moi de mes graces, & resolvez-vous d'endurer toutes choses avant que d'en revenir à de nouvelles broüilleries.

*Après ces raccommodemens,
Où quoique nous fassions notre penchant nous
porte,
Notre amour en devient plus forte,
Et tous ses plaisirs plus charmans.*

Ce n'est pas qu'il arrive souvent bien des maux de ces broüilleries, & je crois que le meilleur conseil qu'on puisse suivre, est de les éviter; & quand on ne le peut, on doit se souvenir,

*Si l'on prétend que l'amour dure
Entre la Maîtresse & l'Amant
Il faut à la moindre rupture
Courir à l'accouplement.*

VII. SONGES DIVERS.

Voici la dernière heure de votre sommeil, & la dernière de ma Montre; elle vous laisse en liberté, & vous pouvez presque choisir vos songes: laissez aller votre imagination sur sa foi, pourvû que l'Amour respectueux la conduise car quoique je vienne de dire, je prétends donner des bornes à vos imaginations.

*Gardez-vous bien en sommeillant
D'écouter un flateur mensonge;
Vous êtes si sage en veillant,
Ne le seriez-vous pas en songe?*

Eveillez-vous, Damon, le tour de ma Montre est achevé. Après cela vous ne pouvez ignorer de ce que vous devez faire, pendant mon absence. J'ai crû qu'il n'étoit pas à propos de vous parler de Bal & de Comedie; vous sçavez qu'un Amant, privé de la presence de sa Maîtresse ne s'y trouve guère: toutefois si vous ne pouvez éviter ces divertissemens ou d'autres semblables, je ne suis pas

assez injuste, pour vous en sçavoir mauvais gré. Défendez-vous-en, mais allez-y, si la civilité ou quelque'autre devoir vous y oblige. Je veux seulement qu'à ma consideration vous ne vous laissiez toucher que mediocrement à tous ces plaisirs. Que l'on connoisse que vous vous y rencontrez.

*Paroissez négligé, reveur, plein de souci,
Et que tout dise en vous, Iris n'est point ici.*

Je ne vous parle point aussi de faire la Cour à notre Prince, parce qu'il doit passer tout le Printems à la campagne, & que vous ne pourrez pas être auprv'es de sa personne. Lorsque vous serez en pouvoir de le faire, je vous conseille de ne pas vous en dispenser. Vous devez avoir soin de votre fortune, & je ne suis pas du sentiment de ceux qui disent,

*Qu'il est bien mal-aisé de suivre en même jour
La fortune & l'amour,
D'aimer une Maîtresse, & de servir un Maître,
Que l'on ne doit jamais se partager ainsi,
Et que c'est le moyen, quelque adroit qu'on
puisse être
De perdre sa fortune & sa Maîtresse aussi.*

Ce sont des erreurs que je condamne, je sçai que l'amour & l'ambition ne sont pas incompatibles, & que l'on peut-être attaché auprès de son Souverain, & n'en aimer pas moins sa Maîtresse

*Pour servir votre Maître avec votre Maîtresse,
Joignez l'ambition à beaucoup de tendresse:
Ce conseil doit être suivi;
De ce partage égal l'ame n'est point blâmée,
Car le Maître en tout tems peut être bien servi,
Et la Maîtresse bien aimée.*

Le Monarque que vous servez, Damon, est si aimable, que je suis assurée que lorsque vous vous trouvez auprès de lui, l'inclination que vous l'avez pour sa personne, vous y porte autant que votre devoir.

*Ce Monarque est aimé de Mars & de l'Amour,
Les Muses, les vertus sont toujours à sa Cour,
On ne voit rien d'égal dans le siècle où nous
sommes:
Ah! que l'on est heureux d'obéir à ses lois!
C'est le plus grand de tous les Rois,
Et le mieux fait de tous les hommes.*

Voilà tout ce que j'avois à vous dire; maintenant je ne vous dois plus rien, & je vous ai payé votre discretion. Si vous ne la trouvez pas assez belle, je ne m'y sçaurois que faire. Soyez-en donc satisfait, & souvenez-vous, si vous m'aimez encore, qu'elle merite que vous preniez la peine de la conserver.

En effet, elle est digne, & la belle Iris n'a pas fait un laid present à Damon en la lui donnant. L'invention en est ingenieurse & galante: & la Germanie, qui s'est renduë celebre en Horloges, n'en a peut-être point fait qui l'égale, sans en excepter celle d'une de ses Villes, dont on parle par tout le monde.

*Oüi, cette Montre est des meilleures,
Damon ne doit point la changer:
L'on y trouve toutes les heures,
Excepté l'heure du Berger.*

Chapter IV

A DEATH AND A WAGER

I

Cruel persécuteur de la Terre & des Cieux,
 Qui paroïs aux humains le plus méchant
 des Dieux,
 Amour de qui les traits se glissent dans les
 ames,
 Y causant du desordre, & des feux & des flâ-
 mes,
 5 Falloit-il que tes coups tombassent tous sur moi?
 Et voit-on un démon plus injuste que toi?
 Aux pieds de tes Autels j'ai passé mes années;
 Tes seules volontez ont fait mes destinées,
 Je t'ai servi sans cesse, & de tous les Amans,
 10 J'étois le plus soumis a tes commandemens.
 J'ai chanté ton pouvoir sur la terre & sur
 l'Onde,
 J'ai conté des douceurs à la moitié du monde,
 Et si l'on m'en eût crû, tout ce qui voit le
 jour,
 Fût venu se soumettre à l'empire d'amour.

II

15 Demandes-le, cruel, aux Nymphes de la
 Seine,
 A la belle Caliste, à la jeune Climeme?
 Toutes deux te voyant exalte dans mes Vers,
 T'ont rendu redoutable à tout cet Univers:
 Cependant, inhumain, après tant de services,
 20 Pour me récompenser tu n'as que des supplices,
 Et ton ingratitude est venue à ce point,
 Que voulant te parler, tu ne m'écoutes point,
 Pour exercer sur moi ta plus noire malice,
 Tu m'as fait[e] admirer les charmes de Florice,
 25 Et dès que leur pouvoir m'a soumis à sa loi,
 Ingrat, tu l'as rendue aussi sourde que toi.
 Florice à qui le Ciel prodigua sans mesure
 Les plus rares trésors que cache la nature,
 M'a toujours fait connoître adorant ses appas,
 30 Que ses yeux font un mal qu'elle n'entendoit
 pas;
 Aux plus tendres soupirs elle paroît cruelle,
 Les rochers les plus durs y repondent plus
 qu'elle,
 Et dès lors qu'à ses pieds j'implore son secours,
 L'inhumaine me quitte, & change de discours.
 35 En vain pour la fléchir je lui dis chaque jour,
 Florice, on ne voit rien de si doux que l'amour:

III

Elle se divertit, elle ne fait que rire
Des douceurs que je pense, ou que je lui veux
dire:
Si l'amour est si doux, dit-elle en se moquant,
40 Pourquoi m'avez-vous dit que vous enduriez
tant?
Je ne puis lui répondre, & ma langueur ex-
trême,
Fait bien voir que je souffre en montrant que
je l'aime;
Et que tous ces plaisirs dont je peins la
douceur,
Se trouvent dans ma bouche & non pas dans mon
cœur.
45 Hélas! il est bien vrai qu'en l'amoureux empire,
La plus grande douceur est un cruel martyre.
Et que tous ces appas qui nous charment si
fort,
Font naître des langueurs qui nous donnent la
mort.
Depuis le jour que j'aime, à peine je respire,
50 Si je veux respirer, il faut que je soupire,
Et depuis que je sers mes ingrates amours,
J'ai trouvé le secret de mourir tous les jours:
Le repos que la nuit laisse au plus misérable,
Ne vient jamais flatter le tourment qui m'ac-
cable,
55 Et le Dieu du sommeil, ennemi de l'amour

IV

S'accorde avec lui pour me fuir à son tour;
 Ce Démon inquiet, ou par ruse ou par rage,
 Vient me donner la mort, & m'en ôte l'ima-
 ge;
 60 Tout ce que je connois parle de mon trépas,
 Il n'est que le sommeil qui ne m'en parle pas:
 Lorsque le Dieu du jour quitte le sein de l'on-
 de,
 Pour apporter la joye & la lumière au monde,
 Ma tristesse m'éloigne & du monde & du bruit,
 Et laisse dans mon âme une éternelle nuit;
 65 Les rochers & les bois témoins de mon sup-
 plice,
 Sont ceux que j'entretiens des rigueurs de Flo-
 rice,
 Et je leur dis cent fois que je serois heureux,
 De pouvoir devenir insensible comme eux.
 Je rêve solitaire, & dans un lieu sauvage
 70 Je pense voir Florice & trouver son image:
 Quoique rien ne ressemble a ses divins appas,
 Je crois les voir partout, & je ne les vois pas:
 Là, comme si mes yeux decouvroient ce que
 j'aime,
 Je me plains de Florice à son image même;
 75 Et par mille soupirs qui sortent de mon coeur,
 Je lui dis mon amour, & lui peins ma douleur:
 Ingrate, dis-je alors, inhumaine Florice,
 Pourquoi me traitez-vous avec tant d'injustice?
 Le bel Astre du jour ne voit rien parmi nous,

V

- 80 De plus soumis que moi, de plus cruel que
vous:
Je vous aime, Florice, & le Dieu d'amour
même
Ne sçauroit pas aimer au point que je vous
aime;
Imitez pour le moins les tigres & les ours,
Qui se laissent dompter aux plus petits Amours
85 Des plus fiers animaux le naturel sauvage
S'adoucît aux plaisirs ou l'amour les engage;
Tous parlent de l'amour & s'en laissent char-
mer,
Vous seul êtes farouche, & refusez d'aimer.
Quand de l'Astre du jour les premiers traits eclatent.
90 Les oiseaux éveillez s'entr'aient & se flattent;
Ils se cherchent l'un l'autre, & leurs gazouillemens
Sont les témoins publics de leurs contentemens.
Les plus hideux poissons dans le fond des abîmes,
Des ardeurs des amours deviennent les victimes;
95 Et cet aimable enfant qui commande en tous lieux,
Charme les animaux, les hommes & les Dieux:
Ces Dieux que vous servez, ces maîtres du tonnerre,

VI

Abandonnent le Ciel, pour aimer sur la terre;
 Et les Divinitez de tous les Elémens,
 100 Affectent pour tout bien la gloire d'être Amans.
 Pensez-vous faire mieux que tous tant que nous
 sommes,
 Mieux que les animaux, & les Dieux & les hom-
 mes?
 Et si tous de l'amour recherchent les appas,
 Serez-vous inflexible, & n'aimerez-vous pas?
 105 Pour moi de qui l'amour est le souverain maî-
 tre,
 Je veux aimer toujours, ou je veux cesser d'être;
 tre;
 Mais puisque de l'amour je dois sentir les
 coups,
 Ce ne sera jamais pour d'autre que pour vous:
 Fussiez-vous plus ingrate & plus inexora-
 ble
 110 Fussiez-vous plus cruelle, & moi plus miséra-
 ble:
 Je bénirai les maux qui me feront mourir;
 Car les braves Amans se plaisent à souffrir.
 Mon amour est si beau que rien ne le seconde,
 Je méprise pour vous la fortune & le monde,
 115 Et je ne veux des biens qu'on cherche tant d'a-
 voir.
 Voilà, cruel amour, une image fidèle

VII

Du mal que fait Florice, & que je sens pour
 elle?
 Mais quoi! de tous les maux que causent ses
 appas,
 Florice est innocente, elle n'y consent pas,
 120 C'est toi seul qui les fais; & ton humeur cruel-
 le,
 Pour accabler nos coeurs te retient aupres
 d'elle:
 Je te vis dans ses yeux dès la première fois,
 Comme un cruel Tyran qui fait suivre ses loix,
 Je ne résistai point à leur plus douce amorce,
 125 Me voulant degager, tu me vainquis par force;
 Tu me suivis partout, & tu vins te placer
 Au milieu de mon coeur qui vouloit te chas-
 ser.
 Mais, trop ingrat amour, que servent mes re-
 proches?
 J'amolirois plutôt & la bronze & les roches,
 130 Je puis me rendre heureux sans tous ces vains
 propos:
 Car qui cherche la mort, peut trouver le repos.
 C'est ainsi que Lisandre en des lieux solitaires,
 N'accusoit que l'amour de ses longues mise-
 res,
 Et que demi-mourant il nommoit tour-à-tour,
 135 Et l'ingrate Florice & le cruel amour,
 Quand ce Dieu, dont les coeurs ne se peuvent
 defendre,

VIII

Apparut à l'instant où soupiroit Lisandre;
Et brillant de ces traits qui percent les hu-
 mains,
S'approcha près de lui & lui tendit les mains;
140 Il n'avoit plus alors ces fiertés redoutables,
Par qui Florice a fait tant de coeurs miséra-
 bles:
Il paroissoit rempli de ces divins appas,
Qui font qu'on sent l'amour, mais qu'on ne le
 fuit pas.
Lisandre en fut surpris, & soupirant encore,
145 Eut pris le Dieu d'amour pour celle qu'il ado-
 re;
Mais le regardant bien, il consulta son coeur,
Et trouva que Florice avoit plus de rigueur.
A ce ressouvenir ses soupirs redoublerent,
Son âme fut troublée, & ses larmes coulerent,
150 Quand l'amour l'embrassent, & touché de ses
 pleurs,
Tacha, par ses discours, d'appaiser ses dou-
 leurs:
Console-toi, dit-il, & cesse de te plaindre
De ce feu violent que je ne puis éteindre,
Ne m'en accuse plus, ne m'en fais point l'au-
 teur,
155 Et du mal que tu sens, ne t'en prens qu'à ton
 coeur:
Le malheureux qu'il est, quoique je l'avertisse
De ne se jouer pas aux beaux yeux de Florice,

IX

- S'en approcha toujours, & sans y résister,
 Il fit si bien enfin, qu'il ne put la quitter.
 160 Si lors dans ces beaux yeux je parus redouta-
 able,
 C'étoit de ton malheur le signe inévitable:
 Il devoit pour ton bien l'avoir mieux entendu,
 Non pas a ses beaux yeux courir comme un
 perdu.
 Quand il n'en fut plus tems, il cherche sa fran-
 chise,
 165 Mais Florice a des yeux qui retiennent leur
 prise:
 Après l'avoir cent fois vainement entrepris,
 Puis il se rebella, plus il se trouva pris.
 C'est un mal sans remède, & je n'y puis rien
 faire,
 Lorsque j'en veux parler, Florice me fait taire,
 170 Et mes discours sur elle ont si peu de crédit,
 Qu'autant vaudroit pour toi que j'eusse rien
 dit;
 Je ne puis pour moi-même obtenir quelque
 grace,
 Des que j'ouvre la bouche, elle fuit & me
 chasse;
 Et m'estime si peu, qu'en tous lieux qu'elle soit,
 175 L'insensible me donne au premier qu'elle voit:
 J'ai voulu m'en fâcher, & j'ai tout fait contre
 elle,
 J'ai lancé tous mes traits dessus son coeur re-
 belle;

X

- Mais ils se sont rompus, ainsi que sur les eaux
 Se brisent aux rochers les fragiles vaisseaux:
 180 Heureux encore, apres avoir perdu mes armes,
 D'en trouver dans ses yeux, d'ou naissent tant
 de charmes;
 Si lors pour mon malheur elle eût été sans
 yeux,
 J'abandonnois la terre & revolois aux Cieux.
 Mais enfin, cher Lisandre, acheve sans mur-
 mure
 185 D'accoutûmer ton coeur aux tourmens qu'il en-
 dure;
 Quand un coeur est touché, qu'il se laisse en-
 flâmer,
 S'il ne sçait pas souffrir, il ne sçait pas ai-
 mer:
 Souffre, espere & poursuit, le tems change les
 choses;
 Quand l'hyver est passé, l'on voit naître les ro-
 ses:
 190 Tes maux te donneront peut-être un meilleur
 sort;
 Il est des mauvais vents qui conduisent au
 port.
 Lors il quitte Lisandre, & d'une aîle étenduë
 Disparoît a ses yeux, emporte sur la nuë;
 Et loin de soulager cet Amant malheureux,
 195 Laisse tomber sur lui des chaînes & des feux.
 Ah! dit Lisandre alors, que servent tes paroles;

XI

- Tu m'accables, cruel, lorsque tu me consoles:
 Comme dois-je esperer de voir finir mes maux,
 Si tes propres douceurs m'en donnent de nou-
 veaux?
 200 Au moins, cruel amour, va conter mon sup-
 plice,
 A celle qui me tuë, à l'ingrate Florice.
 Il voulut la nommer une seconde fois,
 203 Mais les soupirs mortels étoufferent sa voix.

Chapter V

COMMUNITY OF WOMEN

- Il est enfin parti, cet homme incomparable,
 Ce Tirsis, que mes yeux trouvoient si
 redoutable;
 Je ne le verrai plus annoncer à mon coeur,
 Les funestes perils d'une nouvelle ar-
 deur;
- 5 Je ne les verrai plus, ces tiraniques char-
 mes,
 Livrer à ma fierte tant de rudes alar-
 mes.
 Agissez, ma raison, par cent efforts
 puissans,
 Soutenez mes desseins, & détrompez mes
 sens.
 Dites-leur que ce port, & cette noble
 audace,
- 10 Dans mes preventions trouvent toute leur
 grace.
 Découvrez, s'il se peut, dans ces grands
 sentimens,
 Des affectations & des déguisemens.
 Peignez-moi la douceur dont je suis
 enchantée,
 Moins auguste, & moins tendre, ou du
 moins affectée.
- 15 Dans ce charmant esprit, dans cet air,
 dans ces traits,
 Trouvez-moi des défauts, qu'on n'y trouva
 jamais.
 Cherchez, parlez, pressez, arrachez
 de mon ame
 Le trait empoisonné d'une naissante flâme.
 Le moment de l'absence, est un moment
 heureux,
- 20 Pour qui veut surmonter un penchant dan-
 gereux,
 N'allez pas negligez un temps si favora-
 ble,
 Tirsis peut revenir, & revenir aima-
 ble.
 Mais, fatale raison, de quels sensibles
 coups,
 Accablez-vous un coeur, qui n'esperoit
 qu'en vous?
- 25 Loin de blâmer mes feux, & loin de les
 détruire,
 Vous semblez ne parler, que pour mieux
 me seduire.

- A qui dans mon malheur pourrai-je avoir
 recours,
 Si vous me refusez vôtre juste secours?
 Sera-ce à tous mes sens enchantez de
 ses charmes?
 30 Sera-ce à mon orgueil, troublé de tant
 d'allarmes?
 Ou sera-ce à mon coeur, qui ne semble
 formé,
 Que pour enseigner l'art d'aimer, &
 d'être aimé?
 Je l'ai déjà surpris, qui traître envers
 lui-même.
 Se faisoit de ses fers une gloire supreme,
 35 Et disoit que par eux, on verrait effa-
 cez,
 La honte & les regrets de tous ses feux
 passez.
 Mais il se flatte en vain, d'une fausse
 espérance,
 Rien ne peut surmonter la froide indiffé-
 rence
 Que cet ingrat oppose à ses tendres desirs,
 40 Et tu perdras, mon coeur, tes vœux, &
 tes soupirs.
 Combien en as-tu fait sans fruit, & sans
 salaire?
 Je ne t'ai point donné licence de les
 faire:
 J'en ai défavüé les transports indiscrets,
 Mais je les ai sentis, & j'en sçai le
 progres.
 45 A ce dur souvenir, à cette triste idée,
 Ma raison pouvez-vous encore être obsédée?
 Pouvez-vous remarquer d'invincibles
 attraits
 Dans qui ne m'aime point & ne m'aima
 jamais?
 Est il donc des vertus, de talents &
 des charmes,
 50 Contre qui la froideur ne fournisse des
 armes?
 Ah! respirons, ma Gloire, & calmons
 nôtre effroi,
 Ce dangereux Tirsis n'a plus d'attraits
 pour moi:
 Il faut pour m'enflamer une brûlante
 flame,
 Mon coeur veut tout un coeur, mon ame
 toute une ame:
 55 Hors l'amour, dans l'amour, je compte
 tout pour rien,
 Et le coeur d'un Amant peut seul payer
 le mien.

Mais d'où vient qu'en faisant des Loix
si légitimes,
Certains troubles secrets démentent mes
maximes?
Je ne sçai quoi me dit, qu'un homme si
charmant,
60 Merite d'être aimé, pour l'aimer seule-
ment.
Non! je n'écoute point cette ardeur
insensée;
Sortez, fatal Tirsis, sortez de ma pen-
sée;
Je sens que ma fierté me ramene mon
cœur,
64 Et ce dernier transport est ma dernière
erreur.

APPENDIX II

OTHER WORKS

("madrigaux", "chansons", "stances" etc.)

Chanson III

Air de M. Lambert

Au défaut de ma voix recevez mes soupirs,
Ils vous diront, Tirsis, en leur langage,
Que si le Ciel secondoit mes desirs,
Je vous donnerois davantage.

(1653) *Poésies de Mme la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1666).

Madrigal III

Ce n'est point pour Lisis que je verse des larmes,
Il en est innocent, bien qu'il ait quelques charmes:
L'auteur de mes ennuis n'est pas mal avec vous;
Sans le nommer, ie veux vous dire
Que vous avez grand tort de paroistre jaloux
De celuy pour qui ie soupire.

(1653) *Poésies de Mme la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1666).

Chanson II

Air de M. Lambert

Laisse moy soupirer, importune raison,
Laisse, laisse couler mes larmes,
Mes déplaisirs sont doux, mes toumens ont des charmes,
Et i'aime ma prison:

Ah! puis qu'Amarillis me defend d'esperer,
Au moins en expirant laisse moy soupirer.

(1653) *Poésies de Mme la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1666).

Madrigal IV

Non, ce n'est point Philis qui cause mon martire;
Et bien que la Beauté dont ie ressens les coups
Soit brune jeune, & belle comme vous,
Ah! Melite, i'ose vous dire,
Que vostre Esprit ne peut estre jaloux
De celle pour qui ie soupire.

(1653) *Poésies de Mme la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1666).

Jugement definitif
sur un Plaidoyer d'Amour

Nous Amarillis qu'on revere
Parmy les Peuples de Cithere,
Iuge des droicts du jeune Dieu
Que l'on adore dans ce lieu,
Sans nul delay ny surseance,
Voulons donner breve Sentence
Dessus quelques poincts indecis
A la requeste d'Alexis,
Contre Climeme qu'il accuse
De ne le payer que d'excuse.
Or d'autant que nous sçavons bien
Qu'elle ne manque pas de bien,
Qu'elle a du fonds à suffisance,
Des tresors de grande importance
Que nous avons veus & touchez,
Et mesme des tresors cachez.

Nous ordonnons, comme equitable,
Puis que cette Belle est soluable,
Sans chicaner un pauvre Amant,
Qu'elle luy donne payement,
Pour l'avenir voulons nous dire,
Car il pouroit bien en déduire
Les interests depuis six ans
Qu'il la poursuit à ses despens;
Et dans cette poursuite vaine,
Bien qu'il luy couste assez de peine,
De voeux, de larmes, de soupirs,
Pour le ruiner en desirs:
Comme il est Homme raisonnable,
Ciuil, accort, doux & traittable,
Sans suivre la rigueur des Loix,
Il luy pourra quitter sews droicts,
A tout le moins on se propose
Qu'il en rabattra quelque chose;
Mais à l'avenir il pourra
Se payer comme il luy plaira,
Sans que Climene ait la puissance
D'appeler de cette Sentence

Si la cruelle encor cherchoit quelques moyens
Pour maintenir son heresie,
Alexis en ce cas pourra faite saisie
Sur le plus beau de tous ses biens.

(1653) *Poésies de Mme la comtesse de la Suze*, (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1666).

Stances

Il est vray que l'amour me tient sous son
 Empire,
 Je ne le puis nier:
 Quand on sent une fois un semblable martyre
 Il est doux d'en parler:
 De l'aymable Tirsis la passion extreme,
 A vaincu ma rigueur:
 Et c'est, ie le sens bien, la raison d'elle mesme
 Qui le met dans mon coeur.
 Ses hautes qualitez où mon amour se fonde
 Pourroient tout enflammer,
 Et ie ne connois rien de si farouche au monde
 Qui n'apprist a l'aymer.
 L'on voit briller en luy tant de merite ensemble
 Qui brillent en la Cour,
 Mais de tant de tresors, le plus grand ce me semble
 Est son extreme amour.
 Ah! que ne dois-ie point à son inquietude,
 A ses soins, à ses vœux,
 Pourrois-ie plus long-temps sans trop d'ingratitude
 Resister a ses feux.
 Orgueilleuses beautez, qui ne pouvez comprendre
 Un sentiment si doux,
 Si d'un mal si charmant, ie n'ay peu me deffendre,
 Pourquoi me blasmez-vous?
 Un merite puissant, une amitie fidele,
 Peut bien nous esmouvoir,
 Sans que nos sentimens soient tousiours en querelle
 Avec notre devoir.
 Mais quand sur nostre coeur un amant qu'on estime
 A pris quelque credit,
 On commence à douter si l'amour est un crime
 Aussi grand qu'on le dit.
 La vertu qu'on nous fait importune & severe
 Ne l'est pas iusqu'au point,
 Qu'elle oblige tousiours un coeur qui la revere,
 A ne se rendre point.
 Mes plus tendres pensers n'offencent point ma gloire,
 Et malgré mes desirs,
 Je suis tousiours pour elle, encor que la victoire
 Me couste des soupirs.
 On peut facilement sauver sa renommee
 Dans les vœux que ie fais,
 Et le feu que ie sens est un feu sans fumée,
 Qui ne noircit iamais.
 (1658) *Les muses illustres* (Paris: David et Champhoudry, 1658) 236.

Réponse de Mme de La Suze aux Louanges
de L'Abbé Cotin

Aupres de moy, ce dites vous,
L'Amour pour sa mère est ialoux,
Et le Dieu qui donne bataille
La treuve de moins riche taille.
Vous iurez que tous mes écrits
Desesperent les beaux esprits,
Et qu'ils estendent leur conquête
De la Seine aux glaces du Nort:
Ah! cessez L'Encens est trop fort
I'aprenhende qu'il ne m'enteste.
(1659) *Oeuvres meslées de Mr. Cotin*, (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville,
1659) 65.

Vaudeville

Ah! fuyons ce dangereux sejour
Ces verds ombrages,
Ces doux rivages
Ou Tirsis me fit voir tant d'amour.
Détournons nos troupeaux de ces bois
Ou l'ingrat m'attira cent fois
Mais mon coeur à mes desseins rebelles
Ne peut bannir
Ce cruel souvenir
Helas un infidel
Le me fait aimer
Ces lieux et malgré mes détours
I'y viens toujours.....
(1661) *Bibl. nat., Départ. des Impr., Mss. Vm7 501, p. 85.*

Chanson
Air de M. Le Camus

Forests solitaires & sombres,
Où la fraîcheur, le silence & les ombres
Se conservent malgré le jour
Ne sçauriez-vous charmer le mal qui me possede?
Et n'avez-vous point de remede
Contre un cruel & malheureux amour?
(1661) *Bibl. nat., Départ. des Impr., Mss. Vm7 501, p. 213.*

Chanson I
Air de MM. Lambert et Le Camus

J'ay juré mille fois de ne iamais aimer,
Et ie ne croyois pas que rien me pût charmer:
Mais alors que ie fis ce dessein temeraire,
Tirsis, vous n'aviez pas entrepris de me plaire;
Ma raison contre vous ne fait plus son devoir,
Et de l'Amour enfin ie connois le pouvoir.

Helas! de mon erreur trop tard ie m'apperçois,
Ie pensois que ce Dieu ne rangeât sous ses loix
Que ceux qui de ses traits sçavent mal se defendre;
Mais ie sens que mon coeur malgré moy se va rendre,
Ma raison contre vous ne fait plus son devoir,
Et de l'Amour enfin ie connois le pouvoir.
(1661) *Poésies de Mme la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1666).

Chanson IV
Air de M. Le Camus

Vous ne m'attirez point par vos attraits charmans,
Beaux lieux où tant d'heureux Amans
Trouvent de douces aventures:
Ah! ie ne songe point à chercher des plaisirs,
Et ie viens seulement sous vos ombres obscures
Entretenir ma peine, & cacher mes soupirs.
(1661) *Poésies de Mme la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Charles Sercy, 1666).

A Philis sur le Voyage de L'Isle d'Amour
(par l'abbé Paul Tallemant)

A une Dame en luy envoyant le Voyage
de l'Amour.

Lisez, belle Philis, à loisir cet ouvrage,
Il parle d'un pais charmant, aimable & doux;
Il n'est pas mal-aisé d'en faire le voyage,
Vous le pouvez sans partir de chez vous.
(1663) *Recueil des plus belles épigrammes des poètes françois depuis Marot jusqu'à présent* (Paris: Nicholas Le Clerc, 1698).

Chanson*
Air de M. Le Camus

J'aime ie suis aimé; cependant nuit et jour,
 Je souffre des ennuis, des tourments et des gesnes.
 Helas! pourquoy cruel Amour,
 A tes plus doux plaisirs mesles-tu tant de peines?
 Mesles-tu tant de peines, mesles-tu tant de peines?
 (1665) Bibl. nat., Départ. des Impr., Mss. Vm 7 501, p.88.

Madrigal

Quand vous prîtes mon coeur, Amour me fut témoin
 Que vous promîtes avec soin
 De n'abuser jamais d'une telle victoire;
 Mais vous en perdez la mémoire,
 Et vous êtes, Tirsis, infidèle & léger.
 Pour imiter votre inconstance,
 Je devrois de mon coeur à jamais vous bannir:
 Mais ne craignez point ma vengeance,
 Je me punirois trop en pensant vous punir.
 (1666) *Parnasse des Dames* (Paris: Ruault, 1773) tom. V. 1773.

Chanson*
Air de M. Le Camus

Ah! qui peut tranquillement attendre,
 N'eut jamais le coeur tendre:
 Transporté d'un amour dont les loix
 Reglent ma vie,
 I'ay prevenu l'aurore dans ces bois
 Pour voir Sylvie.
 Je languis dans ces espoirs charmans
 Ah! que vostre approche est lente
 Hastez-vous, venez, heureux momens:
 Helas! quand l'amour est pressance
 La plus douce attente
 Est un grand torment
 Je languis dans ces espoirs charmans
 Ah! que vostre approche est lente
 Hastez vous, venez, heureux moments
 Helas quand l'amour est pressance
 La plus douce attente
 Est un grand torment
 Ah! qui peut tranquillement attendre,
 N'eut jamais le coeur tendre.
 (1668) Bibl. nat., Départ. des Impr., Mss. Vm7 501, p. 86.

Chanson
Air de M. La Camus

Je m'abandonne à vous, amoureux souvenir,
Venez m'entretenir,
Loin de l'aimable Objet qui seul pouvoit me plaire:
Helas! vous me serez aussi cruel que doux;
Mais malgré tous les maux que vous allez me faire,
Amoureux souvenir, ie m'abandonne à vous
(1668) *Nouveau recueil des plus beaux vers mis en chant augmenté de tous les airs nouveaux, et de tous les derniers coupletz de Mme la Comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Guillaume de Luyne, 1680).

Chanson
Air de MM. Lambert et Dambruis

Sous ces ombrages verts au Amant le plus tendre
Que l'amour ait jamais charmé,
Un soir voyant qu'Iris ne pouvoit se deffendre
Des violens transports qui l'avoient enflâmé;
O nuit, s'écria-t-il, devenez plus obscure,
Et cachez mon bonheur à toute la Nature.
Celle pour qui je meurs se rend à mes desirs:
A ces mots, eperdu d'amour & de plaisirs,
Il n'en put dire davantage,
Et l'on n'entendit plus dans le sombre bocage
Qu'un murmure confus de languissants soupirs.
(1668) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) tom. I, 213.

Chanson*
Air de M. Le Camus

Bois escartez, demeures sombres
Redoublez vos ombres
Mon coeur pressé de l'amour
De mon berger languis, soupire,
Luy va dire qu'il aime à son tour.
Ah! c'est un grand mal que d'aimer et
Ce mal toutefois a dequoy nous charmer
D'un amour si tendre
Peut on se deffendre
J'y voudrois resister mais helas
En vain l'on veut ce qu'on ne peut pas.....
(1670) *Bibl. nat., Départ. des Impr., Mss. Vm7 501, p. 70.*

Chanson
Air de M. Dambruis

Le doux silence de nos bois
N'est plus troublé que de la voix
Des oyseaux que l'Amour assemble,
Bergere qui fais mes desirs,
Voicy le mois charmant dew fleurs & des zephirs,
Et la saison qui te ressemble;
Ne perdons pas un moment des beaux jours,
C'est le temps des plaisirs & des tendres amours.
(1670) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) tom. I, p. 214.

Air
B. D. B.

Savourons à longs traits cet excellent Muscat,
Abandonnons nos sens a ce goust délicat,
Et gardons bien qu'Amour vienne dans ceste feste
Mesler quelque secret ennuy:
Le fumeux vin nouveau dont la vapeur enteste,
N'est pas si dangereux que luy.
(1671) *Recueil de tous les plus beaux airs bachiques avec les noms des auteurs du chant & des paroles* (Paris: Guillaume de Luyne, 1671) 266.

Chanson
Air de M. Le Camus

Il n'est rien dans la vie
Qui ne lasse & qui n'ennuye,
Quand on n'a point d'amour;
Et peut-on sans aimer passer un heureux jour?
(1678) *Recueil de tous les plus beaux vers mis en chant augmente de tous les airs nouveaux, et de tous les derniers coupletz de Mme la comtesse de la Suze*, (Paris: Guillaume de Luyne, 1680).

Chanson
Air de M. Le Camus

Un berger plus beau que le jour
Me disoit dans ces bois au lever de l'aurore,
Iris, si tu voulois que j'y revinsse encore,
Tu me verrois mourir d'amour.
Ah! dût-il m'en coûter ma vie avec la sienne,
N'importe, amour, faites qu'il revienne.
(1678) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684)

Sarabande de M. Le Camus

Ah! c'est trop verser d'inutiles larmes,
 Perfide, enfin, je trouve ailleurs des charmes;
 Un coeur fidelle
 Languit pour mes yeux:
 Mais, ô Dieux,

Ta passion m'estoit toujours nouvelle,
 Ingrat, pardons-en tous deux
 La memoire cruelle.

(1680) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) tom I, p. 215.

Recit de Basse B. D. B.

Dans ce bocage, où brille une jeune verdure,
 Amarillis resvoit au murmure des eaux,
 Et laissoit ses troupeaux
 Errans a l'avanture,
 Quand l'amoureux Berger qu'enflament ses regards,
 Rassembloit les troupeaux espars.
 Lors remarquant ce soin fidelle,
 Retirez-vous Berger, dit-elle,

Je sçauray bien garder tous mes troupeaux des loups,
 Mais mon coeur ne scauroit se deffendre de vous.

(1680) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) tom. I, p. 215.

Chanson

Recit de Basse B. D. B.

Etoiles d'une nuit plus belle que le jour,
 Qui penetrez ces lieux solitaires & sombres,
 Et qui venez malgré les ombres
 Jusqu'au fonds de ces bois découvrir mon amour,
 Jugez si le Berger dont mon ame est charmee
 Scait mieux aimer que moy;
 Soyez les temoins de sa foy,
 Voyez si j'aime & si je suis aimée;

Et si vous prenez soin de flater les amans,
 D'une si douce nuit prolongez les momens.

(1680) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) tom. I, p. 216.

Chanson
Air B. D. B

Je fuyois sous ces verts ombrages
Un berger qui sur moy prenoit trop de pouvoir,
Et j'avois resolu de ne jamais le voir,
Quand il vint me surprendre au fonds de ces bocages.

Ah! que son air estoit amoureux, triste & doux!

Que l'on est foible quand on aime!
Et que mal-aisément dans ce peril extrême,
Amour, on auroit pû se deffendre de vous!
(1680) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) tom. I, 214-215.

Chanson
Air de M. Le Camus

Je sens au coeur un nouveau trouble
Qui m'inquiete & qui me plaist.
En vous voyant il se redouble,
Je ne sçay pas quel trouble c'est.

(1680) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) tom. I, p. 214.

Chanson
Recit B. D. B.

O vous, dont le langage & sensible & flateur
Sçait si bien penetrer jusques au fonds du coeur!
Par quels charmes nouveaux sçavez-vous faire
naitre
L'estime & l'amitié sans vous faire connoître?
Helas! si vous avez ce dangereux pouvoir,
Que ne feriez-vous point si l'on pouvoit vous voir?
O vous, cruelle autant que vous estes flateuse,
Pourquoy derobez-vous à mes justes desirs
Un bonheur qui pourroit faire tous mes plaisirs?
Me tiendrez-vous long-temps cette loy rigoureuse.
Quel plaisir prenez-vous à me faire souffrir?
Et dans une recherche inquiete & douteuse
Me faire si long-temps languir?
Helas! je suis trop sensible & trop tendre,
Pour supporter cette injuste rigueur;
Quand une douce idée a rempli tout le coeur,
On n'a pas la force d'attendre.
Si j'ay sceu me faire estimer,
Pourquoy se cacher à ma veuë?
Ah! si je sçay jamais quelle est cette inconnuë,
Elle sçaura si je sçay bien aimer.

(1680) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) 216.

Chanson
Air B. D. B.

Qu'il est propre à se faire aimer,
L'amoureux Berger qui m'enflâme!
Tout ce qui peut plaire & charmer,
Est dans ses yeux & dans son ame.
Ah! que ses doux regards & ses tendres soupirs
Servent bien ses jeunes désirs.
(1680) *Recueil de pièces galantes en prose & en vers de Madame la comtesse de la Suze* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1684) p. 215.

Epigramme

Amans tant que vous aimerez
Vous craindrez, vous espérez;
Malgré toute votre prudence,
Lorsque l'on peut être un seul jour
Ou sans crainte ou sans esperance,
On se peut dire sans amour.
(1698) *Recueil des plus belles épigrammes des poètes françois depuis Marot jusqu'à présent* (Paris: Nicholas Le Clerc, 1698) 213.

Madrigal
A Babet sur ses lettres

Babet, qui que tu sois, que tes lettres sont belles!
Que pour toucher les coeurs elles ont de pouvoir!
Ce sont des beautés naturelles
Qu'on ne se lasse point de voir.
Quand Tircis, insensible aux accens de ma lyre,
Pour ne pas m'écouter, portoit ailleurs ses pas,
Que ne te connoissois-je, hélas!
Tu m'aurois appris à lui dire
Ce que je ne lui disois pas.
(1720) *Annales poétiques depuis l'origine de la poésie française*
(Paris: Merigot, 1782) tom. XXIII.

Vers de Mme de La Suze au sujet de Ninon endormie
sur ses genoux dans un bal où elle avoit beaucoup dansé

Jouissez, jouissez de cette paix profonde;
Que vous offre un heureux sommeil,
Et laissez-lui fermer les plus beaux yeaux du monde,
Puisque demain, à leur réveil,
Ils doivent effacer tous les traits du Soleil.
(1751) *Mémoires et lettres pour servir à l'histoire de la vie de Mademoiselle de L'Enclos* (Rotterdam: Douxmenil, 1751).

SENTIMENS D'AMOUR

Amour Naissant

Et tout ce que ie sçay c'est que i'ay veu Thirsis,
 Qu'avant que de le voir i'avois moins de soucis,
 Et que depuis ce iour i'ay tousiours eu dans l'ame,
 La peine, la douleur, le desordre, & la flâme,
 Rien ne me divertit, ie ne dors point la nuit,
 I'aime la solitude, & le monde me nuit,
 Ie ne scaurois penser qu'aux peines que i'endure,
 Ie prens mesme plaisir d'irriter ma blessure,
 I'entretiens des pensers que ie devrois bannir,
 Ie pousse des sanglots que ie veux retenir;
 Lors que l'on parle a moy, ie ne sçaurois rien dire,
 Ie reve, ie languis, ie pleure, ie souûpire,
 Au seul nom de Thirsis ie change de couleur,
 Quand il es prest de moy i'ay bien moins de douleur,
 Si-tost qu'il est party, ie ne suis plus la mesme;
 D'ou vient ce changement, n'est-ce point que ie l'aime!
 Ce Dieu que ie fuyois a-t-il surpris mes sens?
 Et si ce n'est Amour, qu'est-ce donc que ie sens?
 Voilà tous les tourmens qu'on souffre en son Empire.

Beauté

Donc inutilement le devoir m'y con[u]ie,
 Ie ne sçaurois quitter mon aimable Silvie,
 Raison, tous vos efforts sont icy superflus,
 Vous avez beau parler ie ne vous entens plus,
 M'avez-vous dit qu'elle est si parfaite, & si belle,
 Pour m'ordonner apres que ie m'eloigne d'elle?
 Et m'avez-vous appris, qu'il n'est rien icy bas
 Qu'on doive comparer à ces moindres appas?
 Que, comme sa Beauté, sa Grace est admirable;
 Enfin m'avez-vous dit combien elle est aimable;
 Pour n'estre pas d'accord qu'on doit assez aimer.
 Celle que vous disiez qui me devoit charmer;
 Pour m'opposer les loix de ce devoir bizarre,
 Qui veut que ie la perde ou que ie m'en separe,
 Et qui peut m'enlever hors de ce beau sejour
 Est sans cesse en querelle avec mon Amour.

Colère

Thirsis de tous les coeurs le charme inévitable;
 Ah que de te hayr, ie me sens peu capable,
 Et que ie doute encore en ce funeste iour,
 Si ma Colere égale mon Amour!
 Que ne te repends-tu, ta grace est toute preste!

Devoir

Ouy, ie le vois déjà vous tenir ce langage,
 Que le jeune Tirsis, est un Esprit volage,
 Qu'il n'est rien de si fort qui le puisse arrester:
 Qu'un autre seroit mort avant que vous quitter,
 Que les loix du Devoir n'ont que de foibles Armes
 Quand on est retenu par de si puissans charmes,
 Que l'Amour, quoy qu'Enfant, est assez resolu,
 Et qu'il regne toûjours d'un pouvoir absolu,
 Que son Empire va iusqu'à la Tyrannie,
 Que chez luy la raison doit passer pour manie,
 Et qu'il se rend enfin, plus difficilement,
 Aux regles du devoir, quand il fait son tourment.

Douleur

Il n'a plus les attraits qu'il avoit de coûtume,
 Et toute sa douceur se change en amertume,
 Puis qu'il me persecute, & la nuit, & le jour,
 Puis qu'il n'a plus d'appas, l'Amour n'est plus Amour,
 Ce Dieu doux, & charmant, qui fit toute ma Ioye,
 Devient un fier Demon, à qui ie suis en proye;
 Mais bien que sa rigueur m'accable de mal-heurs,
 Ie cherais tout de luy, iusques a mes douleurs,
 Mon coeur devroit sortir d'un si rude esclavage,
 Mais ce foible captif n'en a pas le courage,
 S'il songe à s'affranchir, il sent qu'il ne le peut,
 Il combat, il se rend, il ne sçait ce qu'il veut.

Esclavage

Après cette troupe gallante,
 On voit marcher de tous costez
 Et les Heros, & les Beutez,
 D'où vient de triompher la belle conquerante,
 Et de mille climats divers
 Les illustres captifs sont venus dans les fers,
 Et disputent entr'eux l'honneur d'en estre esclave;
 On les voit à ses pieds ces glorieux vainqueurs,
 Ils luy sont tous soûmis, & mesme les plus braves,
 Aiment mieux la servir, que triompher ailleurs.

Expression

L'honneur de nos Hameaux la divine Climene,
 Un soir que nos troupeaux païssoient parmy la plaine,
 Voyant qu'il m'abordoit, me vint dire tout bas,
 Si vous craignez d'aimer, ah ne l'écoutez pas!
 Son adresse en cet Art n'eust iamais de pareille,
 Il sçait comme on attire une Ame par l'oreille,
 Fuyez, fuyez Bergere, un si mortel hazard,
 Je ne sçaurois, luy dis-je, il est un peu trop tard.

Fortune

Je laisse à qui voudra cette peine importune,
 Je meprise Grandeurs, Richesses, & Fortune,
 Et ne veux, belle Iris, que disputer à tous,
 L'honneur de soupirer, & de mourir pour vous.

Force de l'Amour

Iusqu'icy, belle Iris, vous n'avez parmy nous
 Trouvé personne encore qui soit digne de vous,
 Vous ignorez d'Amour la puissance suprême,
 Enfin vous n'aimez point, vous que tout le monde aime.
 Mais quoy que vous fassiez vous aimerez un jour,
 Vous sçaurez tost ou tard le pouvoir de l'Amour,
 On ne peut point aller contre sa Destinée,
 Vous trouverez celui pour qui vous estes née;
 Vous l'aimerez, Iris, & le rendrez heureux,
 Vous qui n'avez iamais fait que des mal-heureux.

Force de l'Amour

C'est ce que j'opposois à ces plus doux poisons;
 Mais l'Amour est plus fort que toutes les raisons,
 Le Destin veut que i'aime, il faut le satisfaire,
 Je n'y resiste plus, mais qu'y pourrois-ie faire,
 Ces Maistres des Mortels, ces Dieux luy cedent bien,
 Tes conseils sont tous vains Daphné, ne me dis rien,
 Laisse-moy soupirer ma peine sans remede,
 Mon Coeur est tout charmé du feu qui le possede,
 Une douce langueur occupe mes Esprits...

Gloire

Mais si par un excez dont il fut prevenu,
 Aujourd'huy qu'il connoît tout ce qu'il a de charme,
 Il trouve de la gloire à luy rendre les Armes,
 Sanglots entre-coupez, soupirs mourans, & doux,
 Ennuis, transports, langueurs, ie m'abandonne a vous,
 En vain j'ay combatu vostre pouvoir extremes,
 Puisque vous me forcez de confesser que j'aime,
 Oüy, ma bouche apres vous va le dire à son tour,
 I'ayme, & ce que ie sens ne peut estre qu'Amour.

Jalousie

Ie ne suis point ialoux du bien de mes rivaux,
 Mais ie ne puis souffrir qu'ils ressentent mes maux:
 Ie ne veux point qu'on m'aide à supporter mes chaines,
 Leur mal croist mon mal, & leurs gehennes mes gehennes:
 Helas, c'est bien assez de souffrir mon ennuy,
 Sans estre tourmenté par les mal-heurs d'autrui!
 Beaux yeux, de mon Iris, vives sources de flame,
 Ne portez plus vos feux ailleurs que dans mon ame:
 Ie consens de languir sous vostre dure loy,
 Mais ne faites de mal à personne qu'à moy.
 Ah! si pour l'interest & l'honneur de vos charmes,
 Il faut que vos Autels soient arrosez de larmes,
 S'il leur faut des respects, des soupirs, & des vœux,
 Si vous prenez plaisir que l'on souffre pour eux;
 Ie vous satisferay, beaux yeux, car il me semble
 Que seul, i'endure assez pour tout le monde ensemble.

Inconstance

Et qui pis est, disois-ie, hélas, si ie m'engage,
 Peut-estre un iour Tirsis, infidele & volage,
 Fera dedans mon coeur naître autant de soupirs,
 Que i'aurois pris de soins à flatter ses desirs:
 On scait de cent beautez les tristes avantures,
 Et l'Empire amoureux, est tout plein de parjures.

Mérite

Ne vous étonnez-pas, ombres tristes, & vaines,
 Si i'ose decouvrir le sujet de mes peines,
 Si vous voyiëz Tirsis, sans doute il vous plairait,
 Et mal-gré vos froideurs il vous enflâmerait:
 Amour est dans ses yeux, il est dans son langage,
 Il aime, il fait aimer, se peut-il davantage?
 Il ne forma iamais que des desseins heureux,
 Ah l'on m'avoit bien dit, qu'il estoit dangereux!

Regards

Quand i'esperois encore de l'oster de mon Ame,
 Souvent dans le desir de surmonter sa flâme,
 I'évitois ses regards comme un charme fatal,
 Car ie me doutois bien, qu'aimer estoit un mal;
 Mais aimable Daphné, i'avois beau me deffendre,
 Ces subtils enchanteurs sçavoient bien me surprendre;
 Et c'est ainsi qu'Amour renversant mes projets,
 Va reduire mon coeur au rang de ses sujets.

Remede

Ie le connoissois bien, mais ie n'osois le dire,
 Et mon coeur qui sentoit ce beau feu s'élever,
 Vouloit bien le souffrir, & non pas l'avoüer:
 Il feignoit d'ignorer le mal qui le possede,
 De peur d'estre obligé d'y chercher du Remede;
 Il faisoit un secret du nom de son Vainqueur,
 De crainte d'alarmer la honte, & la pudeur:
 Enfin ce malheureux qui n'osait pas se rendre,
 S'entendoit avec luy, pour s'y laisser surprendre.

Sentimens Divers

Espoir, Crainte, Desirs, qui partagez mon Ame:
 Agreables transports, qui maîtrisez ma flâme,
 Violent mouvement, d'un Amant mal-heureux,
 Sortez pour un moment de mon coeur Amoureux,
 Donnez quelque relâche à mon cruel martyre,
 Et souffrez pour le moins, que ie le puisse dire;
 Vous reviendrez bien-tost faire sentir vos coups,
 Et ie ne pretens pas estre long-temps sans vous.

Sympathie

Fiere & vaine raison qui par de durs combats,
 Choque les passions, & ne les détruis pas,
 Ne me tourmente plus, tes forces sont bornées,
 Et l'on ne change point l'ordre des Destinées;
 Elles font à leur gré le tissu de nos jours,
 Et forment dans le Ciel les noeuds de nos Amours:
 Tu sçais bien que mon coeur pour se vaincre luy-mesme,
 S'oppose mille fois au Dieu qui veut que i'aime;
 Mais hélas! quoy qu'on die au mépris de ses Loix,
 Aimer, ou n'aimer pas n'est point de nostre choix;
 A son cruel pouvoir il faut enfin se rendre,
 Un Mortel, contre un Dieu, sçauroit-il se deffendre!

Souvenir

Helas! en tous endroits tu sçauras que sans cesse,
Cet aimable Vainqueur me tourmente & me presse,
Les Amours diligens à servir mes desirs,
A toute heure, en tous lieux, m'aportent des soupirs,
M'expriment ses ennuis, ses tourmens, & ses craintes,
Et d'un air languissant me redisent ses plaintes:
Enfin il suit par tout la trace de mes pas,
Et ie le trouve mesme, où ie ne le vois pas.

(1665) *Sentimens d'amour tirez des meilleurs poètes modernes par le
Sieur Corbinelli* (Paris: Barbin, 1671)

Two other printed versions of the "Sonnet sur l'Avorton"

Toy qui meurs avant que de naistre,
Assemblage confus de l'estre et du néant,
Foible avorton, difforme enfant,
Rebut du néant et de l'estre;

Toy que l'amour fit par un crime,
Et que l'honneur deffait par un crime a son tour,
Funeste ouvrage de l'amour,
De l'honneur funeste victime;

Laisse-moy calmer mon ennuy,
Et du fond du neant ou tu rentre aujourd'huy,
N'entretiens point l'horreur dont ta faute est suivie.

Deux tyrans opposez ont decide ton sort:
L'amour, malgre l'honneur, te fit donner la vie;
L'honneur, malgre l'amour, te fit donner la mort.

*Le nouveau cabinet des muses gaillardes réimprimé sur l'édition
origianale de 1665 (Genève: Gay et fils, 1867).*

Sonnet sur l'avorton

Toy qui meurs avant que de naître,
Assemblage confus du Neant & de l'estre,
Triste avorton, informe enfant,
Rebut du neant, & de l'estre.

Toy que l'amour fit par un crime,
Et que l'honneur defait par un crime à son tour,
Funeste ouvrage de l'amour,
De l'honneur funeste victime:
Laisse-moy calmer mon ennui,
Et du fond du neant où tu rentre aujourd'hui
N'entretiens point l'horreur dont ma faute est
punie
Deux tyrans opposez ont décidez ton sort
L'amour malgré l'honneur t'a fait donner la vie,
L'honneur malgré l'amour t'a fait donner la
mort.

*Recueil des plus belles épigrammes des poètes françois (Paris:
Nicholas Le Clerc, 1698).*

LETTER FROM LA SUZE

Puisque, Dieu mercy, je ne suis pas du temps passé et que le siècle vous est si oblige d'avoir dessillé les yeux de ceux qui tenoyent pour des oracles ces tyrans dont vous avez abattu la fierté, il est juste que je prenne part à cette obligation. Et pour vous faire voir de quellle sorte elle me regarde, je vous avoue ingenuement que jusques icy, j'ay suivi l'opinion de ces pauvres abusez qu'on prendroit pour des gens assez judicieux à moins de s'y connoistre comme vous et que j'ay tousjours cru avec eux que les oracles de M. Chapelain estoyent infaillibles; que M. Conrart savoit beaucoup plus qu'on ne sauroit apprendre; que les sonnets de M. de Gombaud estoyent incomparables et que l'admirable Sapho n'avoit pas tort d'estimer M. de Pelisson. Pour moy j'ay trouvé tant d'esprit en tous ses discours et je m'y suis tellement attaché quand je l'ay entendu parler que je n'ay jamais eu le loisir d'observer son visage, et je ne pensois pas que les hommes se deussent piquer de beauté. Je vous diray encore, avec ma sincérité ordinaire, que je me tenois fort assurée que M. Menage que vous blamez d'écrire trois ou quatre langues qu'il n'entend pas, en savoit pour le moins une aussi bien qu'on la peut savoir. J'ay mesme creu sur ce que plusieurs personnages m'en ont dit qu'il n'ignoroit pas les autres. Et je n'ay point douté que les écrits de M. Costar n'eussent, de mesme que ses discours, toute la pureté, la douceur et la force nécessaires pour autoriser agréablement les choses. Voilà l'erreur dans laquelle j'ay vescu avec beaucoup de gens plus habiles que moy qui, comme vous dites, n'osoyent témoigner le contraire, s'il est vray qu'ils le pensassent. Mais

aujourd'huy que le ciel vous a suscité pour estre le fléau de ces messieurs qui vous craignent plus qu'ils ne vous aiment et que vous avez généreusement commencé à publier leurs defauts, je ne doute pas que vos lumieres n'eclaircent les esprits et ne detrompent beaucoup de personnes. Puis donc que la commission que vous avez reçue du ciel pour leur faire la guerre vous oblige de les pousser à bout, je vous supplie de satisfaire la curiosite que j'ai de savoir combien ils ont encore de temps à vivre et d'avoir la bonté de ne les pas faire languir. Au reste je vous déclare que si j'avois un peu meilleure opinion de mon esprit, je me plaindrois de ce qu'après m'avoir tant asseurée que vous estiez de mes amis, comme vous faites profession d'estre des leurs, vous avez escrit contre eux et n'avez pas escrit contre moy. Mais ce seroit trop pour mon mérite et je dois me contenter de vos louanges pour lesquelles je vous rends tous les remerciements que je suis obligée de vous rendre et vous supplie de me croire votre très humble servante.

The letter is dated April, 1656. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Mss Conrart, n. 5420 tom. XI, in-fo, p.281. Also, Bibl. Ars., Mss Le Camus, n. 675, tom. V, p. 565.

The above letter is, apparantly, an ironic response to one written to La Suze by De Linières. There is the following, from another letter, concerning the quarrelling that seemed to go on between the two: "Ce que je trouve de plus rare en vostre aventure, c'est que vous ayez creu un moment que M.L.C.D.L.S approuveroit vostre procedé et que vous ayez esté assez capable d'implorer sa protection en une chose injuste. Cette charmante personne vous y a fait une response si galante et si judieuse que tous ceux dont elle parle ont sujet de s'en louer excepte vous. Vous ne l'avez pas comprise, puisqu'il n'y a rien de si clair et que tout ce qui est beau et raisonnable vous passe. Vous n'avez pas pris garde qu'elle vous y fait une severe leçon et qu'elle vous y raille d'une terrible force. Chapelain, *Lettre à [] Linières pour respondre à son libelle contre la Pucelle*, Bourgoïn, Valentin Conrart, pp 347-348.

ELEGY (ATtribution TO LA SUZE CANNOT BE ABSOLUTELY PROVEN)

La nuit se retiroit et l'Aurore à son tour
 Preparoit en naissant la pompe d'un beau iour
 Les cieux en blanchissoient & leur lumière sombre
 Tenoit également & du iour & de l'ombre;
 Quand l'amoureux Alcante accablé de langueur
 Par mille ardens desirs augmentoit sa douleur,
 Ses yeux presque mourans & son visage blesme
 L'avoient desia rendu different de luy-mesme,
 Et son coeur affligé de mille ennuis secrets
 Soupiroit sa disgrâce & formoit ces regrets.
 D'un cruel interest, victime infortunée,
 Dois-je encor en ces lieux traisner ma destinée?
 Quel funeste devoir exerçant sa rigueur
 M'arrache à mes plaisirs, me ravit mon bon-heur?
 Séparé de moy-mesme, éloigné d'Isidore
 Je sens croistre l'ardeur du feu qui me devore,
 Ma peine à tout moment redouble ses efforts
 Et sans pouvoir mourir i'endure mille morts.
 Ha c'est trop differer! retournons auprès d'elle,
 Courons sans consulter où l'amour nous appelle,
 Allons malgré les loix de mon sort rigoureux,
 Contenter dans ses bras nos desirs amoureux,
 Desia d'un doux espoir mon ame possedée
 De nos plaisirs passez se retrace l'idée,
 Desia je m' imagine embrasser ce beau corps,
 Où les Dieux ont uny leurs plus rares tresors:
 Fidele souvenir, favorable memoire,
 Icy dépeignez-moy ses beautez & ma gloire,
 Nos plus secrets plaisirs, nos doux embrassemens,
 Nos baisirs nos transports & nos ravissemens,
 Dans ces heureuses nuits nos charmantes tendresses
 Sollicitent nos sens aux dernières caresses,
 Une nouvelle ardeur r'anime nos desirs,
 Et nos coeurs enflammez commencent leurs plaisirs,
 Sans bruit, à la faveur de l'ombre & du silence,
 Mon amour emporté iusques à la violence,
 S'empresse à recevoir des baisirs precieux,
 Il en prend sur sa bouche, il en prend sur ses yeux
 Ses yeux dans ce moment cachent sous leurs paupieres
 Leur éclat redoutable & leur vive lumière,
 Tous deux font humectez d'une aimable liqueur
 Qui mesle avec leurs feux son humide chaleur:
 Je goute cent plaisirs & mes mains caressantes
 Touchent en liberté mille beautez charmantes,
 Sur cet amas de lys elles font mille tours,
 Et de cent petits ieux provoquent nos amours:
 Cependant Isidore aussi douce que belle,
 Cultive avec grand soin nostre ardeur mutelle,
 Ses doux embrassemens pour respondre à mes feux
 Secondent ou plustost devancent tous mes voeux;
 Enfin, dit-elle, enfin contentons nostre envie,
 Et cedons aux transports dont nostre ame est ravie:

Helas qu'attendons-nous! Alcante embrasse moy
Viens mourir dans mes bras, ie m'abandonne à toy;
Quel doute ou quel respect tient ton ame en balance?
Quand tout pour mos plaisirs semble d'intelligence,
A cet heureux moment l'Amour nous a conduit,
Mon aimable vainqueur profitons de la nuit.

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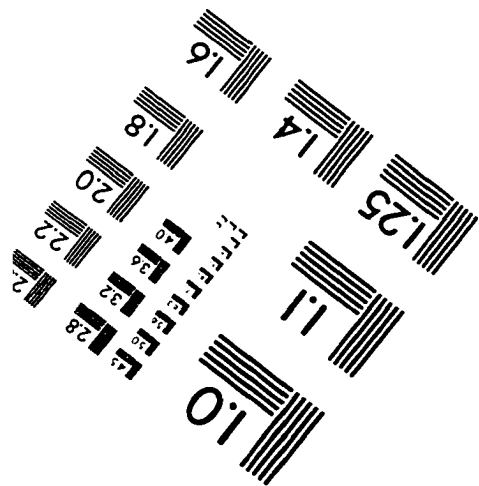
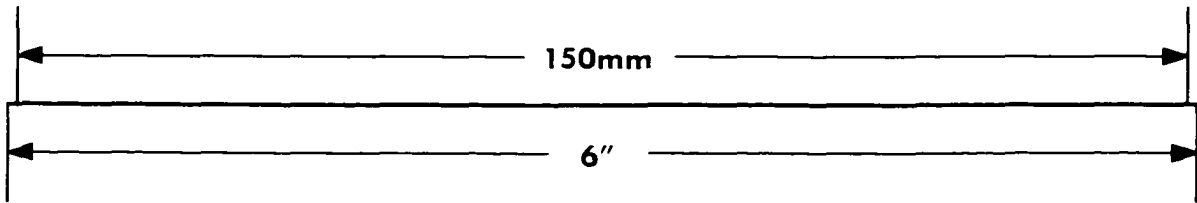
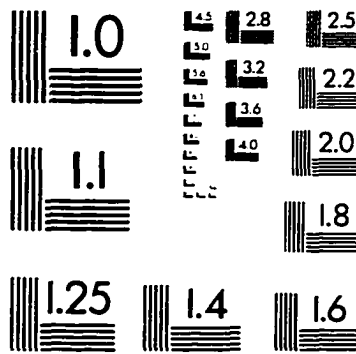
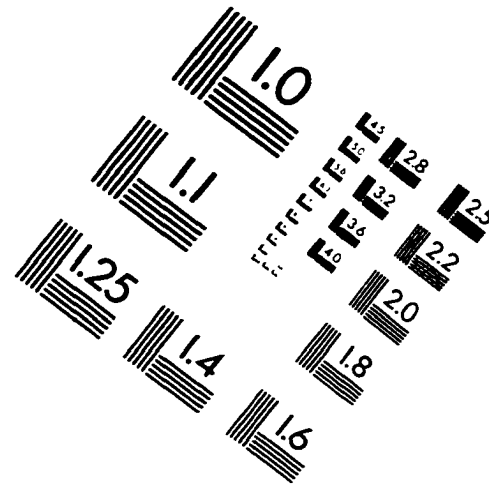
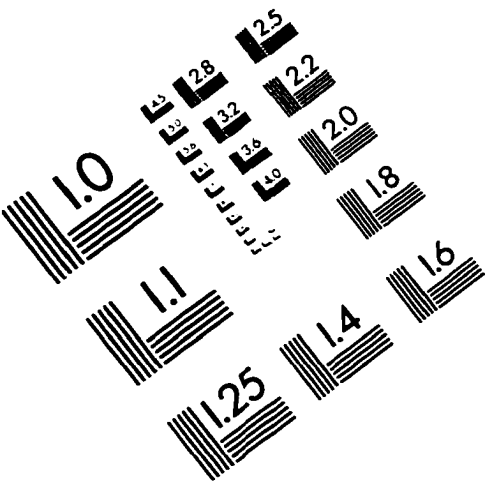
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