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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Shape of Intimacy: Private Space and the British Social Imagination, 1650-1770

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“The Shape of Intimacy” explores the significance of a growing material culture of privacy to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British literary history. In recent years, places such as the drawing room and coffee house have come to exemplify emergent norms of domestic and civil sociability. My project shifts our focus to less familiar spaces: the many variations of the closet, the period’s quintessential private room, and the carriage, sometimes characterized as the closet’s mobile counterpart. Closets and carriages, I argue, are not merely incidental settings in an increasingly quotidian literary landscape; rather, for many British writers of the period, they serve as vehicles for an array of charged and unstable extrafamilial encounters. Tracking the wide range of formal innovations and affective investigations associated with closets and carriages, my dissertation illuminates the double movement of the period’s social imagination, which retreats into real and projected intimacies even as it reaches out into ever more expansive, abstract, and anonymous public realms.

The first chapter studies the convention of naming printed collections after closets and cabinets. I argue that publishers invoked these elite, exclusive spaces to affirm the cultural capital of knowledge circulating faster and further than ever before, thereby

shoring up an enduring paradigm of reading as voyeurism. Turning from printed closets to courtly ones, Chapter Two considers the slippery navigations of power and pleasure in Anthony Hamilton's *Memoirs of Count de Gramont*, suggesting that the orientalist flourishes in an intrigue set in a Restoration bathing closet – an interior Charles II had redesigned in Ottoman fashion – work to underscore the declining political stakes of homoerotic alliances. Chapter Three centers on Jonathan Swift's poem about the pair of privies he built on his friends' country estate. Composed a few decades before water closets would become the newest site of intra-domestic retreat, "Panegyric on the Dean" links the breakdown of communal values to the excretory solitude that seems a travesty of closet prayer. The final chapter contrasts carriage sociability in Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* with earlier satirical scenes of awkwardness between strangers on the road. The vehicle called the *Vis-a-vis* is Sterne's figure for the possibility of intimate anonymity.

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Introduction: The Shape of Intimacy, 1650 - 1770

Intimacy is still a very flexible category of experience, just as it was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Naming a sense of interpersonal connection or, more generally, the pull we feel towards any object of interest as we come to know it better, intimacy draws into a conceptual continuum many different forms of closeness: physical, verbal, erotic, emotional, and intellectual alike. Stronger than mere acquaintance, intimacy insists on intensity rather than endurance: an attachment that flares up then fades away is not for that reason any less eligible for the category. We can easily grasp intimacy's ongoing and essential breadth if we compare it to *conversation*, for instance, or *intercourse*, words that were roughly interchangeable with it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but whose common meanings have narrowed considerably in recent usage.¹ Intercourse defined a wide range of commercial, verbal, sexual, and spiritual transactions, and could also refer to a physical space, a passageway or entrance. Conversation originally denoted what we would call "co-presence," the "action of... having one's being *in* a place or *among* persons." It was crucially a physical relation, hence "criminal conversation," the legal term for adultery in the period.

Despite intimacy's ongoing resonance and reach, however, our literary and historical research in this area has tended to focus on the feelings and relationships we can most easily recognize and name, such as marriage and the family, romantic love (and romanticized forms of erotic love, straight and queer alike), and friendship.² This dissertation calls attention to some of the less familiar – in many ways less conventionalized and institutionalized – forms of intimacy of the past by approaching them from the outside in as it were, through the lens of two prevalent and prominent

intimate spaces in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain: the many variations of the closet, the period's quintessential private room, and the carriage, sometimes characterized as the closet's mobile counterpart. Closets and carriages, I argue, give shape to some of the most compelling interpersonal dramas in the writing of the period. Focusing particularly, though not exclusively, on the moment of closets' and carriages' concomitant proliferation in British material and literary culture, from around the time of the Interregnum, when closets (and texts called closets) began filling up with all kinds of curios and collections, to the later eighteenth century, when the thrill of driving displaced the primacy of the passenger seat in carriages (and writing about carriages), I show how these spaces probe and frame the fleeting, often unruly edges of intimate experience – not least of all, the strangely virtual relationships produced by the burgeoning market for print in this period.

I have found that in material culture these spaces were remarkably resilient in the face of substantial changes to British social structure over more than two hundred years. Closets and carriages – or coaches as they were first known – had origins at court, serving in the sixteenth century as potent emblems of its hierarchical and performative culture. As small enclosures, both spaces were or could be private in the basic, intuitive sense of that word, but both were also crucial channels of traditional public power. Tucked away in royal and noble apartments' remotest corners, closets accommodated the shifting alliances on which absolutist politics depended. Admission to the closet, unlike most other parts of the court, was entirely contingent on its royal or noble owner's approval – or that of a great favorite who stood in as her proxy – and the criteria for admission were necessarily opaque. Courtiers already appointed special roles, such as

secretaries, courtesans, and other favorites, might well be invited in; but so too could random petitioners from remote regions of the city or beyond. A breeding ground of arbitrary power and secrecy, the closet gave an unmistakable charge to the experience of proximity. Coaches, on the other hand, were elaborately decorated vehicles of spectacle. Parading themselves before their subjects, the monarchy and nobility enacted in them the unbridgeable distance between the ranks.

Yet even as the balance of political and economic power and cultural interest drifted away from the court and towards diverse new public institutions and ideals throughout the long eighteenth century, closets and carriages thrived – their box-like structures proving temptingly simple to reconceive and refashion to suit changing needs and desires. In the houses of people of quality and, increasingly, those of the middling sort, closets morphed into prayer closets, curiosity cabinets, dressing rooms, libraries, and galleries. Merging with the bath and the privy – each having its own intricate English prehistory – closets were remade as bathing closets and water closets. Beyond the home, cabinets of curiosity provided the basis for laboratories and museums, new scientific institutions of learning to which all men and some women were (in theory) granted access. Coaches survived the emergence of a more diffuse and inclusive public culture with equal aplomb. Privately-owned carriages crowded the streets as merchants and the gentry acquired vehicles of their own, making it difficult to identify honor and rank on the road. Still more confusingly, the cast-off vehicles of the nobility were made available for hire, entitling anyone who could afford the fare to ride “in state” in a hackney coach. As roads multiplied, their surfaces smoothed and otherwise improved through the seventeenth century, stage-coach businesses formed what amounted to an accessible

transportation network linking many British cities. Inside stage coaches, anonymous fellow travelers found themselves forced, on the spot, to develop strategies to share this oddly intimate space.

This study proposes that closets and carriages became such important settings and figures for interrogating affective relations in British imaginative discourse owing to their flexible combination of private and public qualities, their singular capacity to evoke and reflect the intimate repercussions of broad social changes. The dynamic presence of coaches and closets in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writing is all the more striking if we take into account the fact that careful consideration of the material details of everyday life would only become a widespread literary convention with the commodity-obsessed realist novelists of the nineteenth century. Cynthia Wall has recently argued in *The Prose of Things* that early eighteenth-century narrative writers generally understand the representation of space to be ancillary to other features of plot. In a chapter called “Implied Spaces,” Wall observes that

specific interior details appear precisely – and in isolation – when they are needed, rather than being presented as connected visual wholes. Windows, closets, and wainscotings emerge when jumped out of, hidden, in or faded against, and not a moment sooner; space is created in the act of narrative. Occasional set pieces of long description are remarkable for their rarity – and their length. They tend to visualize the exotic or perform some seductive function for character or reader.³

Closets and carriages beg our notice then because they are the interiors that British writers very often wrote about before they wrote about interiors as such.

In the past several decades, literary and cultural historians have identified a variety of powerful spatial symbols of the changing faces of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British subjectivity and sociability. In *Family, Sex, and Marriage, 1500-1800*,

Lawrence Stone observed that the advent of the corridor and other changes to eighteenth-century house designs allowed family members to interact at length without the intrusion of servants, proposing that smaller, warmer, communal rooms helped to establish the home as the heart of emotional life.⁴ In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Jürgen Habermas found in the intimate English living room in particular a kind of rehearsal space for critical dialogue and debate outside the home, a mode of public sociability he saw encapsulated in coffee houses, the more-or-less inclusive hubs of social, economic, and literary activity new to England in the mid-seventeenth century.⁵ In the wake of Habermas and Stone, scholars have further illuminated the social importance of new domestic architecture and of the many other lively public centers of heterogeneity in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England including salons, parks, pleasure gardens, masquerades, and the networks of institutions and practices that constituted Grub Street.

Closets and carriages too have not gone altogether unnoticed as “Spaces of Modernity,” to borrow the phrase that historical geographer Miles Ogborn has coined in his own study of new sites of private and public life in eighteenth-century London. For the most part, however, closets and carriages have been represented as crucially personal spaces. In works such as Richard Rambuss’s *Closet Devotions*, Jeffrey Schnapp’s “Crash (Speed as Engine of Individuation),” John Dussinger’s “‘The Glory of Motion’: Carriages and Consciousness in the Early Novel,” and Tita Chico’s *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, solitary selves take the lead, where on analysis they commonly emerge as “bourgeois modern subjects,” exemplars, that is, of a mode of selfhood that is essentially autonomous, inward-looking,

and gendered to the core.⁶ My dissertation emphasizes the way in which closets and carriages, situated at the peripheries of the domestic and civic spheres, make room for less familiar and extrafamilial interpersonal encounters, real and imaginary alike.

Each of four chapters finds interconnections among literary structures, intimate spaces, and the charged connections they accommodate or project. The first chapter introduces the printed closet and cabinet. This now-obsolete genre, comprising several hundreds of compilations (of everything from Christian dictums to jam recipes), participated in the development of a variety of modern anthology forms throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including encyclopedias, erotica, and epistolary fiction. The chapter begins by drawing links between three kinds of closets that have largely been considered as distinct structures: courtly closets, prayer closets, and cabinets of curiosity. I show how, notwithstanding their very different external orientations – toward absolute power, God, and science and nature respectively – all three spaces share a similar intimate and exclusive knowledge economy. Examining the title pages, frontispieces, and dedications of printed closets and cabinets, I demonstrate that claims to closet or cabinet origins register publishers' ambivalence about their upstart new medium. represent an attempt to reconcile print with the intimate mode of producing and exchanging knowledge associated with elite and exclusive private spaces, yet in clinging to that older model, publishers project their own readers into a kind of no-man's-land between shifting intellectual cultures. In the last section of the chapter I argue that scenes of illicit entry and peeping in pornographic cabinets of love serve a reflexive function within this discourse of media shift, dramatizing and mocking the disembodied and subsidiary experience of learning virtually by reading print.

Chapters two and three focus on two precursors to our bathrooms: a bathing closet in Whitehall Palace and a privy-for-two on an Irish country estate. Both settings actually existed (though both have long since been consumed by fire) and both, in their literary contexts, give us views of some of the most embodied aspects of intimate relations in an age before the advent of personal hygiene. The second chapter considers bonds between women in a secret history of the Restoration court. After Charles II redesigned his Palace bathing closets in Ottoman fashion, Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley depicted such rooms – displaced to foreign settings – as hotbeds of despotic control and sexual ambition. In *Memoirs of Count de Grammont*, by contrast, Anthony Hamilton exoticizes his English bathing closet by eliciting unflattering comparisons between his lady courtiers and Roxana, the manipulative sultanness popular in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century orientalist writing. The bathing closet evokes what Hamilton takes to be the diminishing possibility of strategic homoeroticism between noblewomen, I argue, as new domesticated ideals of femininity seep into the royal household's most libertine recesses.

The equally complex symbolism of the pair of his-and-hers privies Jonathan Swift built on his friends, Lord and Lady Acheson's, country estate then commemorated in a poem called "Panegyric on the Dean," is the subject of my third chapter. Country-house poems traditionally celebrate abundant fields and communal feasts in the great hall. In the "Panegyric," Lady Acheson, the poem's putative speaker, presents the privies as the antitype of such places. At odds with natural cycles of growth and regeneration, and at odds with feudal hospitality, these small interiors send the mind in and down, away from nature, the cosmos, and other people, in a parody of closet prayer. At the same time, paired as they are and set at the edge of the estate, the privies also memorialize Swift's

awkward flirtation with his married friend. Though the invention of flushable water closets in the late sixteenth century had styled a modern ideal of autonomous cleanliness, few people paid it much mind before the late eighteenth century. Psychoanalytic concepts of sublimation and infantile anality have directly and implicitly governed our analyses of the “Panegyric” and of the scatological love poems that Swift would write soon afterwards, such as “A Lady’s Dressing-Room” and “Strephon and Chloe.” The “Panegyric” invites us to recognize that Swift’s much-discussed “excremental vision” also offers a prescient critique of the period’s evolving architecture and discourse of bodily privacy.

My final chapter leaves the domestic sphere altogether to examine narratives of proximity set in carriages. I trace through them the deterioration of status-bound rules of decorum and the emergence of more flexible forms of interpersonal responsiveness between strangers. I show how, in contradistinction to satirical representations by Richard Steele, Samuel Johnson, and others, which portray fellow travelers trying (but generally failing) to ignore or one-up one another in coaches, Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey* finds in the face-to-face interactions of the carriage a model for his own direct and warm engagement with an infinite number of unknown addressees. A chaise called the *Vis a vis* in particular becomes Sterne’s figure for the fleeting relationships represented in and made imaginable by his text. Recalling the print-cultural tropes of the closet and cabinet discussed at length in the first chapter, *A Sentimental Journey* – with its unflinching embrace of strangerhood – registers a clear difference from predecessors as well, positing that the potential for pleasurable and mutually beneficial conversation exists between *any* two people, regardless of gender, rank,

nationality, and other differences, and that even a mass-produced printed text can become an authentically intimate space.

The loose chronological movement of the chapters two through four maps an affective development: the uncomfortable close encounters in the *Memoirs of Count de Grammont* (first published in English in 1714) and “Panegyric on the Dean” (1730) give way to the essentially fulfilling ones in *A Sentimental Journey* (1768). This trajectory seems to imply that the literary and cultural accumulation of private spaces contributed to the evolution and articulation of a universal ethics of intimacy – that is, sentiment, sympathy, and sensibility – in the second half of the eighteenth century. This seems plausible to me. Yet the dissertation also complicates this progressive momentum. Each chapter illuminates a distinct set of affective, spatial, and literary associations – that linking the peeping tom, the closet, and the printed cabinet of love; the female favorite, the bathing closet, and the secret history; the family friend, the privy, and the country house poem; and the stranger, the carriage, and the mock-travelogue – such that each piece stands as a separate literary and historical strand. In this way I try to make room for a variety of continuities and discontinuities in the period’s history of intimacy and intimate space.

The juxtaposition of chapters two and three, for instance, reveals the extent to which the histories of the bathing closet and the water closet, despite their common investment in cleanliness and plumbing, unfold – and often loiter – across very different timelines and, in the literary contexts through which I approach them, help to emblemize very different kinds of social worlds (the court versus the country) and cultural associations (orientalism versus pastoralism). Whereas the publishers I study in

chapter one consistently imagine the closet as an intimate space of knowledge exchange, we find this image inverted in the final chapter, by writers who reinvent it as a space of elitist solipsism, and an anathema to new public ideals of learning. Taken together these discrete inquiries culminate in a full philology of the closet in the period, a lexical complex that also encompasses the denotations and connotations of many auxiliary intimate spaces and related terms: *cabinet*, *privy*, *peeping tom*, *seraglio*, and *vis a vis*, to name a few.

Certain authors also recur intermittently, producing alternate rhythms of continuity. Elizabethan gentleman of letters John Harington may have been the early modern period's greatest closet enthusiast: author of an early poem set in a cabinet, disciplined practitioner of private prayer, he was also the inventor of England's first flushable privy, and so is a dominant voice in the discourse of privacy in the period preceding the one this study focuses on. He turns up in both the first and third chapters. Restoration diarist Samuel Pepys, interested in intimate spaces as a rule – especially when they're also status symbols – also speaks up at several points (though not nearly as often as he might have). Throughout most of the *Diary* Pepys longs to have a vehicle of his own: to “be a Knight, and keep my coach,” as he says to his wife. In the meantime he makes expert use of coaches he has hired for himself or shares with friends and colleagues, for business and especially for pleasure, as we shall see in chapter four. But he comments interestingly on closets as well.⁷ At a certain point the one intimate space serves as a substitute for the other, when Pepys notes, “in lieu of a coach this year, I have got my wife to be contented with her closet being made up this summer, and going into the country this summer for a month or two.”⁸ In chapters four and two respectively,

satirist Delarivier Manley investigates the erotics and politics of proximity in her *Stage-coach Journey to Exeter*, a domestic travelogue, with no less acuity than she does in *New Atalantis*, an allegorical secret history of the English court that overflows with scenes of closet extravagance. Because of their playful formal engagement of physical spaces and the thoughts, feelings, and relationships to which they give rise, Laurence Sterne and two of his imitators occupy prominent places at the beginning and end of this study.

It's hard to name a work from this period that *doesn't* make use of a closet or a carriage, or both. Though this dissertation touches on the diversity of genres of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British writing in which these intimate spaces appear, it by no means exhausts them. Novels by Eliza Haywood, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding might well have made significant appearances. (In *Pamela*, it is the disclosure of secret closet documents – Pamela's letters – that makes it possible for him to imagine marrying the serving girl, but it is also arguably the dressing-room bond between Pamela and her late mistress, Lady B, that has inflated the maid's desirability within the household in the first place.) And there are many road narratives besides *A Sentimental Journey* whose plots turn on the close encounters of the fellow coach passengers. *Humphrey Clinker* envisions the Bramble family as a group of diverse strangers who can nevertheless learn to be sociable in part thanks to their time spent together in a carriage; in *Evelina*, the novel's single women, the young heroine and her gauche grandmother, Madame Duval, are continually forced to depend on the kindness of men with carriages, a combination of properties all too hard to come by. Closets and carriages appear as seemingly negligible circumstantial details in countless seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British poems as well, such as when Rochester's speaker observes

his once-beloved Corinna going out of St James's Park with a band of social climbers – “Three confounded asses” – in a hackney coach,⁹ or when, having “raped” Belinda's lock, the Baron, in the poem by Alexander Pope, fantasizes that his fame for this heroic act will endure as long as “Birds delight in Air, / Or in a Coach and Six the *British Fair*”¹⁰ (the relationship between women and vehicles in eighteenth-century British writing could probably fill a book on its own), or when in his other long mock-epic, *The Dunciad*, Pope's speaker sneers at a scholar “in closet close y-pent, / Of sober face, with learned dust besprent.”¹¹ In such instances too closets and carriages perform important roles within their respective texts, and cumulatively, by pointing to the changing forms of circulation – of knowledge, power, writing, and desire – as the court and Church lose their hierarchical hold over British social imagination. The serial structure of this study means finally to suggest that the stories gathered here represent only a fraction of those that might be told.

¹ *Intimacy* also draws a more direct link between the present and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than does the more common scholarly category, *sexuality*. Sexuality, coined in the nineteenth century and ensconced in psychoanalytic, medical, and humanities' discourse in the twentieth, promises to strip us down, scientifically, to one central itch. Key words like conversation, intercourse, and commerce evince the degree to which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century discourses of the passions and of sentiment and sensibility understood mental, physical, and affective states to be crucially intertwined in the period.

² Consider the following list of works of literary scholarship on marriage and the family, queer sex, and prostitution from the past decade or so. On the family and family feelings see, for instance: Karen Bloom Gevirtz, *Life After Death: Widows and the English Novel, Defoe to Austen* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Sharon Harrow, *Adventures in Domesticity: Gender and Colonial Adulteration in Eighteenth-Century British Literature* (New York: AMS Press, 2004); Susan Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance: Frances Burney to Jane Austen* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002); Eve Tavor Bannet, *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Christopher Flint, *Family Fictions: Narrative and Domestic Relations in Britain, 1688-1798* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Ewha Chung, *Samuel Richardson's New Nation: Paragons of the Domestic Sphere and "Native" Virtue* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998); and Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). On prostitution, see: Melissa Mowry, *The Bawdy Politic in Stuart England, 1660-1714: Political Pornography and Prostitution* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Bradford K. Mudge, *The Whore's Story: Women, Pornography, and the British Novel, 1684-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). On queer

sex, see: *Love, sex, intimacy, and friendship between men, 1550-1800*, eds. Katherine O'Donnell and Michael O'Rourke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Elizabeth Susan Wahl, *Invisible Relations: Representations of Female Intimacy in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Netta Murray Goldsmith, *The Worst of Crimes: Homosexuality and the Law in Eighteenth-Century London* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998); Lisa Moore, *Dangerous Intimacies: Toward a Sapphic History of the British Novel* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); and Cameron McFarlane, *The Sodomite in Fiction and Satire, 1660-1750* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

³ Cynthia Wall, *The Prose of Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 4.

⁴ Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (1977) (Abridged Edition) (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 169 and 245-46.

⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962), trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 43-51.

⁶ Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Jeffrey Schnapp's "Crash (Speed as Engine of Individuation)," *Modernism/Modernity* 6.1 (1999), 1-49; John Dussinger, "'The Glory of Motion': Carriages and Consciousness in the Early Novel," *The Country Myth: Motifs in the British Novel from Defoe to Smollett* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 207-220; Tita Chico's *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005).

⁷ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (Volume 3), eds. Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), March 2, 1662, 40. When Pepys finally gets his coach, (Volume 9), December 2, 1668, 381, it is the mightiest of his many mighty pleasures: "And so back home and abroad with my wife, the first time that ever I rode in my own coach, which do make my heart rejoice, and praise God, and pray him to bless it to me and continue it."

⁸ Pepys, *Diary* (Volume 9), March 1, 1668, 98.

⁹ Rochester, "Ramble in St James's Park," *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Harold Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 78, lines 81-82.

¹⁰ Alexander Pope, "Rape of the Lock," *Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope*, ed. Aubrey Williams (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 3.164, 92.

¹¹ Pope, "The Dunciad," *Poetry and Prose*, 3.185-6, 347.

Closets Broken Open and Cabinets of Love: Figuring the Intimacy of Print

The other Cabinet Miss C---Y had, and which coming in to my Hands I broke open, was very curious... ---I turned the various Papers in it over and over, and determined to publish such as were the most to my Liking.

—“Tristram Shandy”¹

...to whom does the gentleman leave his papers and the knowledge and subsequent power they contain? To his widow? To his son? Or to his secretary?

—Alan Stewart²

First appearing in England in the late sixteenth century, for over two centuries the term *cabinet*, and its near-synonym *closet*, served as primary designations for a vast array of printed texts. The hundreds of works thus named include books we might now classify as memoirs, such as *The Cabinet Open'd, Or the Secret History of the Amours of Madam de Maintenon, With the French King* (1690); recipe and remedy books, such as *The Queen-Like Closet, or Rich cabinet stored with all manner of rare receipts* (1675); political polemics, such as *The Devils Cabinet-Councell Discovered, Or the Mistery and Iniquity of the Good old Cause* (1660); spiritual treatises, such as *The Golden Cabinet of true Treasure: Containing the summe of Morall Philosophie* (1612); do-it-yourself guides, such as *The Golden Cabinet; Being the Laboratory, or Handmaid to the Arts* (1773); and literary anthologies, such as *The Cabinet of Genius* (1787).³ This chapter seeks to make sense of the now-obsolete textual category. What *were* closets and cabinets in this period exactly? And what compelled their figurative appeal to so many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century purveyors of print?

Weaving together histories of the court, collecting, and Protestant prayer, architecture and print, sexuality and intimacy, my story of this genre unfolds in three parts. I begin by exploring the variety of purposes closets and cabinets served in

seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British material culture. Different kinds of closets and cabinets have generally been considered in relation to discrete fields – such as politics, religion, science, and the domestic arts.⁴ Notwithstanding their very different uses, I suggest that closets and cabinets of all kinds share a fundamental role in the period as intimate hubs for the production and exchange of knowledge, where, in the process, intense, affective relationships might be forged across hierarchical divides. Turning from material culture to the print-cultural context in which closets and cabinets emerged as a genre, I attend to the self-justifications that publishers write on their title pages and in other front matter. Both the status of these private spaces and their affective qualities contribute to their metaphorical appeal, I argue; alluding to them, publishers attempt to reconcile the upstart arena of print with older systems of patronage and manuscript circulation. Recent studies following on Jürgen Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*, including Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Charles Taylor's *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Michael Warner's *Publics and Counterpublics*, and Michael McKeon's *Secret History of Domesticity* have demonstrated that the proliferation of print in general in this period helped to produce a new sense of connection (and alienation) between people from across the socioeconomic spectrum, a broad shift in ideas of public-ness with dramatic repercussions for British sociality. Setting the stage for the more focused studies of eighteenth-century intimate spaces and their generic effects in the chapters that follow, my exploration of closets' and cabinets' roughly concurrent development as material, cultural, and literary structures suggests that these private spaces were also structures of thought through which publishers tried to give concrete form to this abstract dimension of modern social life.

Courtly Closets

An important context of the closet's status was the early modern English court's embrace of absolutism. More specifically the closet's rise was the result, initially, of the Tudor monarchs' strategy of physical withdrawal at court and, subsequently, of the influence of French palace architecture on the Stuarts. Under Henry VII the primary chamber where the monarch sat in state had been split into a presence chamber, accessible to all suitors, and a more remote privy chamber, for informal receptions and meals. The division represented "at once an architectural and an administrative innovation," as Curtis Perry puts it in the introduction to *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England*.⁵ Henry VIII later finessed the use of this frontier by dividing the privy chamber into separate withdrawing and bedchambers and furthermore by choosing "to staff [his private rooms] with men of sufficient status to capitalize on the unique access made possible by their intimate service."⁶ Thus, Perry explains, the King established a buffer zone between himself and the court, in the form of a special class of courtiers who alone were granted the privilege of serving both of his two bodies – not only that of the divinely-ordained ruler, but also that of the man, who retreated to more remote rooms for food and rest.⁷ (Apparently Elizabeth took even greater advantage of the new prerogative to withdraw from the public spaces of the palace: dining quietly in the privy chamber while important guests banqueted in state in her presence chamber – with the "full ceremony" extended also "to an imaginary queen at an empty table."⁸) Transformations of court interiors and their uses ensured that the majority of royal servants could make contact with the king or queen only in formal settings, while those on the intimate side of the buffer zone, such as gentlemen or ladies of the bedchamber

and the master or mistress of the robes, had many more and better opportunities to communicate with the monarch and were more liberally rewarded.⁹ Perry points out that it was towards the end of Elizabeth's reign that the over-powerful royal favorite, whose manipulative hold on the heartstrings and pursestrings of the monarch endangers the whole nation, first emerged as a stereotype in British writing.¹⁰

Throughout the early phase of the absolutist court, closets themselves played a relatively minor role in the establishment of royal and noble prerogative. Bedchambers did often have closets attached to them – and their owners retreated to these small lockable rooms to study or pray alone; or they used them as privies or sleeping quarters for close servants. They were, in the words of architecture historian Mark Girouard, “useful but not essential.”¹¹ However, in the seventeenth century, the influence of the French on the Stuart kings shifted the interplay of private and public at court once again. This was especially true of the second half of the century, when Louis XIV's codes of etiquette proved irresistible to King Charles who had encountered them during his Interregnum exile in France. Under the new Frenchified scheme, the withdrawing chamber and bedchamber lost a degree of exclusivity in English royal apartments as they were turned into sumptuous reception rooms, where visitors from across the social spectrum might be received either at a *levée* in the morning or at a *couchée* in the evening, according to elaborate codes that Charles imported and adapted.¹² At the same time, the closet was increasingly singled out as the only place of guaranteed privacy, taking on the same particularized social role as the *cabinet* in French *appartements*. The linear arrangement of rooms in this scheme infused the approach to the king's most private space with an unmistakable sense of urgency and drama (fig. 1). As Girouard

explains, “usually [cabinets] were small rooms but very richly decorated... They were like little shrines at the end of a series of initiatory vestibules.”¹³ Being permitted to join the King in his closet thus indicated or bestowed a higher degree of respect and prestige on the invitee than had been possible anywhere in the English court when the privy chamber, withdrawing chamber, and bedchamber were all considered intimate spaces in their own right:

Since each room in the sequence of an apartment was more exclusive than the last, compliments to or from a visitor could be nicely gauged not only by how far he penetrated along the sequence, but also by how far the occupant of the apartment came along it—and even beyond it—to welcome him. The situation changed radically depending on whether the visitor was grander or less grand than the person he or she was visiting. The less grand visitor hoped to penetrate as far as possible along the line, but did not always succeed. The grander visitor was pressed to penetrate to the inner sanctuary, but could not always be tempted.¹⁴

As Girouard notes elsewhere, “nothing in the least bit private could be discussed in the crowd in the outer room. That was reserved for the bedroom or better still, the closet or cabinet.”¹⁵ Emulating Louis XIV, Charles II appointed a senior page of the backstairs and keeper of his cabinet-closet to ensure that only those who had been granted permission could penetrate his private sanctum, an eclectic group that included close family members, ministers, favorites, and prostitutes, as well as any petitioner whom it would have been imprudent to receive in a more public place. What this layout offered the monarch, then, was space in which to enact the ongoing drama of his or her shifting political affiliations and affections. A setting for institutionalized secrecy, the closet sparked more efficient, if less enduring, alliances than those unfolding in public, hierarchical, and patriarchal settings, such as marriage, courtship, and other kinds of gallantry. The king’s closest ministers came to be known as cabinet-councilors.¹⁶ Before

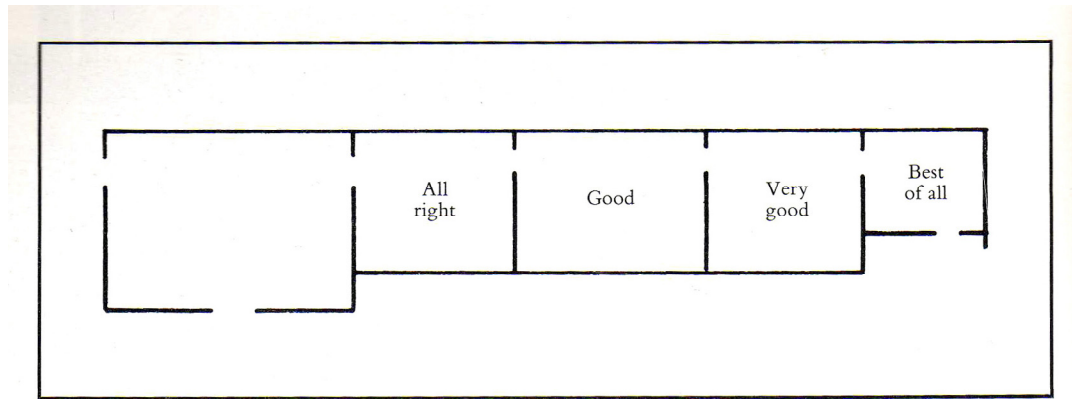


Figure 1. The axis of honor in a formal house.

long, British aristocrats and gentry integrated *appartements* in their house designs, thereby gaining the means to choreograph intimacy within their own households as well.

Because of the general inaccessibility of closets, a special status was conferred on the information exchanged in them, and confidential conversations were charged with a visceral sense of privacy that was sometimes latently, often blatantly eroticized. Margaret Hunt generalizes about fluid homoeroticism among the early modern elite:

Acceptable desire had a markedly different social location in the Renaissance than it does today... It was a setting... where deep emotional bonds between men (at least the right sorts of men), including physical displays of affection, sleeping in the same bed, etc. were esteemed rather than disparaged. And it was one in which 'sodomy' itself was less an 'utterly confused category'... than one whose unstable meanings mirrored the shifting preoccupations of groups in power, or, at times, those anxious to replace them.¹⁷

As Thomas King explains in his study of masculinity in this period, the absolutist court in particular sustained an economy of pederasty in which sex was continuous with other forms of deference to one's superiors, and courtiers displayed their submissive proximity to power as visibly as possible at court, as "the mark of their favor."¹⁸

A frequent visitor to a monarch or nobleman's closet was his secretary. Alan Stewart has studied the discourse of the men entrusted with the most secret records of family or state, pointing out that a master's dangerous dependence on his secretary might be expressed by way of analogy with the locked rooms where the men worked, alone together.¹⁹ As Angel Day puts it in *The English Secretorie* (1592), "To a *Closet*, there belongeth properly, a *doore*, a *locke*, and a *key*: to a *Secretorie*, there appertaineth incidently, *Honestie*, *Troth*, and *Fidelitie*." Stewart also cites Robert Cecil who, in a subsequent conduct book on the same topic, represents the charged relationship between the secretary and his superior as a reciprocal passion akin to romantic love: "As long as

any matter of what weight soever is handled onely between the Prince and the Secretary: Those Councells are compared to the mutuall affections of two lovers, undiscovered to their friends.”²⁰ Cecil further advises that such an administrative confidant needs inherent ability and appropriate social standing, as well as the quality of having been “of his own making” rather than indebted to another master for his training. The intensity of connection between master and secretary thus seems to stem not only from the high stakes of the closeted information the secretary managed on his master’s behalf but also from the built-in obsolescence of the secretary’s skills in storing and retrieving that information – localized, internalized skills at once more valuable and less durable than the closet’s written contents.²¹

Prayer Closets

The King James Bible had retranslated a crucial passage in Matthew: “But when thou prayest enter into thy Closet; and when thou hast shut thy Door, Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” Answering the basic Protestant impulse to strip away Roman Catholic mediations, closet prayer enabled personal and direct relationships to God. Dozens of manuals, printed and reprinted throughout the period, elaborated the procedures and spiritual rewards of closet devotion. In one such work, *The Privie Key of Heaven, or, Twenty Arguments for Closet-Prayer* (1665), Thomas Brooks explains that in ancient Greek the key word in the passage from Matthew had referred to a variety of different enclosures, including a secret chamber and a cupboard for food or for treasures.²² Before the sixteenth century, English theologians had interpreted the term allegorically, stressing the inwardness of the

suppliant, rather than the place where he or she prayed. But Brooks, like other closet-prayer advocates, contends that past interpreters have missed the point: making room for solitary communion with God is crucial to the biblical command. A man is most properly himself in his closet, Brooks insists: he “is that certainly, that he is secretly.”²³ Solitary prayer is thus more effective than more public, mediated modes of prayer in churches or family oratories. The structured program of spiritual discipline in William Dawes’s *Duties of the Closet* (1695) is typical (fig. 2). In eight chapters, Dawes outlines “how we ought to behave our selves, at our first coming into our Closets” (Chapter I), “the Qualifications of Mind, with which we ought to read” the Holy Scriptures (Chapter II), a list of categories for “Self-Examination” (Chapter III), the “Posture in which we must confess our Sins” (Chapter IV), followed by chapters on prayer, thanksgiving, meditation, and in Chapter VIII, “An Office of Humiliation to be used by private Christians, every Friday in the Year.”²⁴ Piety was exercised through a series of reading, writing, and other spontaneous forms of self-expression. Some prayer manuals concern themselves with the interior decoration of the closet. Wettenhall suggests that devotional space should, along with its bible and other books, be stocked with a table and “an hard Couch or a great Chair” – and the walls should be covered with what Richard Rambuss imagines as “a tabula rasa of drapery” – “to the end that, when there kneeling at my Prayers,” writes Wettenhall, “I might have in mine eye nothing to call away or divert my thoughts.”²⁵ Other manuals express concern that the new emphasis on architectural interiors unfairly privileges those who have space and time enough to accommodate private prayer. Dawes explicitly excludes the vast majority of Protestants: “I designed not this Book for the ordinary People, but for those who are in some measure Masters of

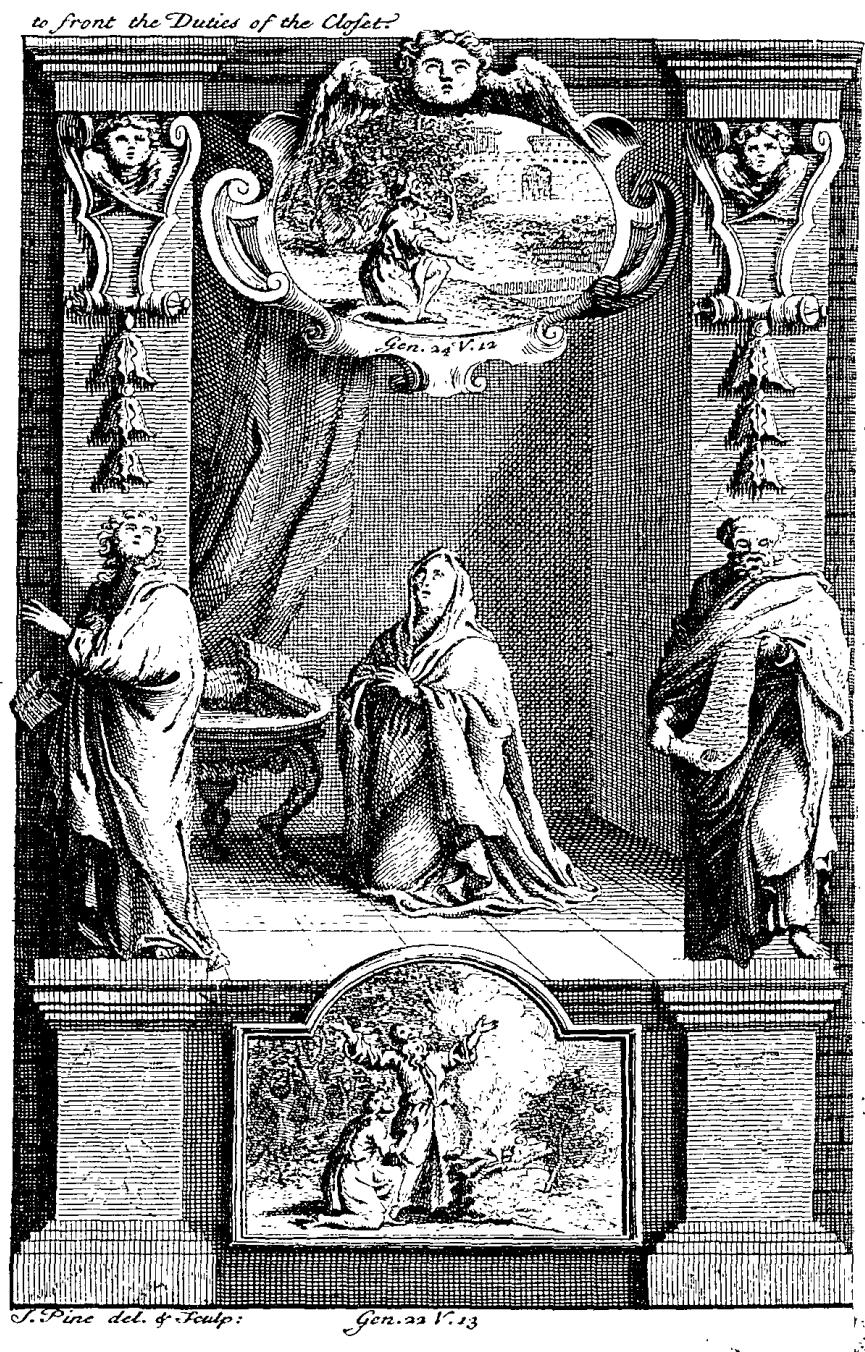


Figure 2. Frontispiece of William Dawes, *Duties of the Closet*.
Engraving by J. Pine.

their own Time, and therefore I have prescribed much longer Devotions, than are suitable to the condition of labouring People.”²⁶ Taking a slightly different tack, Benjamin Bennet suggests in his *Christian Oratory; or, the Devotion of the Closet Display’d* that less fortunate, busier people can heed the call for private prayer by rigging up closet-like space in other rooms, and then by praying more efficiently: “They that want Leisure or Parts, their meaner and shorter Services in the Oratory may be effectual to obtain the Blessings and Comforts, and be accepted of God... A Quarter of an Hour may, by the special Blessing of God, to be hoped for in such a Case, turn to a better Account with a Servant or poor Labourer... than an Hour with those that have the whole Time at their own Disposal.”²⁷

Significantly, for all their focus on solitude, prayer closets are nevertheless characterized as conversational spaces.²⁸ “Retire thyself from others, if thou wouldst’t talk profitably with thyself,” Bishop Joseph Hall instructs.²⁹ Closet devotion may also be represented as a courtly cabinet encounter in which the faithful are favored by the supreme patriarch. “[Y]ou know that many times a Favourite at Court gets more by one secret motion, by one private request to his Prince, than a Trades-man, or a Merchant gets in twenty years labour and paines, &c,” Brooks reasons, “So a Christian many times gets more by one secret motion, by one private request to the King of Kings, than many others doe by Trading long in the more publick Duties of Religion.”³⁰ The rewards of regular tête-à-têtes with the King of Kings (as over against both the slogging, undistinguished and undistinguishable efforts of church prayer, and those forms of absolution, penance, and confession requiring a clergyman to intervene on one’s behalf) are qualitative as much as they are quantitative. God’s favor and a feeling of mutual closeness await the

devout. “If... we desire to become Friends of God, if we would enjoy his Conversation, it must be in our Closets,”³¹ Dawes insists, and Oliver Heywood echoes the sentiment: “Soliloquy in the heart, helps to a colloquy with God.”³² Brooks promises that “God will more familiarly communicate himself to the soul in secret.” Though sinful thoughts lodge deep within and are dangerously elusive, with scrupulous searching closet prayer enables us to retrieve them, account for them, for and before the Lord—and preferably on a daily basis, since, as Dawes puts it, “our Memories are short and treacherous.”³³ Giving structure to a penetrating mode of self-governance, prayer closet exchanges can also become, as Richard Rambuss has argued, erotically embodied.³⁴ Brooks uses traditional gendered images of the soul and Christ to suggest how intense spiritual devotion assumes the heat of clandestine sex. “Lovers love much to be alone, to be in a corner together,” he writes: “What place can be so proper for the Soul to meet her Beloved in, as the Closet where there shall be nothing to disturb or interrupt their Heavenly Conversation? ...Here she may enjoy him, as fully as possibly she can in this Life... Oh the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret whispers, the secret cheerings, the secret sealings, the secret discoveries... that God gives to his people when alone...”³⁵ No less than the courtly closet then, the prayer closet was an intimate space, where feelings of trust, favor, and affection flourished out of the public eye.³⁶

Cabinets of Curiosity

That closet and cabinet conversations were mediated by the Bible and other printed books as well as documents, manuscripts, and journals might also call to mind their ongoing utility as storage space. Books were often plentiful and esteemed enough

to merit separate household libraries over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³⁷ At the same time, the number and variety of other objects kept in British closets and cabinets increased, people's feelings about them intensified, and a new kind of affective closet emerged: the cabinet of curiosities.

The difference between Andrea Palladio's view of closets in his *Four Books of Architecture* (1570), translated by Isaac Ware in 1738, and that of Ware's own *Complete Body of Architecture* (1756), gives a sense of the changing value placed on the closet as a domestic storehouse. Palladio focuses on the proportions of house interiors which he takes to be analogous to and no less divine than the microcosm of the human frame:

As our Blessed Creator has ordered these our members in such a manner, that the most beautiful are in places most exposed to view, and the less comely more hidden; so in building also, we ought to put the principal and considerable parts, in places most seen, and the less beautiful in places as much hidden from the eye as possible; that in them may be lodged all the foulness of the house, and all those things that may give any obstruction, and in any measure render the more beautiful parts disagreeable.³⁸

Bigger is patently better for Palladio: the beauty of grand rooms "exposed to view" relative to the "less comely more hidden ones" appears to him as self-evident as the beauty of faces and chests and thighs relative to armpits, say, or toes. Small rooms enhance the feeling of expansiveness elsewhere, by hiding within them "all the foulness of the house, and all those things that may give any obstruction." Palladio moderates this grudging appreciation for closets only a little as he continues: "The small rooms may be divided off, to make closets where studies or libraries may be placed, riding accoutrements and other lumber, which may be everyday wanted, and would not be so proper... to be in rooms, where one either sleeps, eats, or where strangers are received."³⁹ The utility of designating special places as studies or

libraries is mentioned in passing, however the Italian architect attends to closets only insofar as they ensure the magnificence of the principal rooms.

Though Palladio's aesthetic of symmetry and grandeur significantly influenced British building in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, his lack of enthusiasm for small spaces did not often obtain in the British context. In his own mid-eighteenth century English treatise Isaac Ware discusses the design of closets with real urgency: "In the planning out of the several rooms, the architect must not forget, on any occasion, to make the best use of all natural recesses for closets," he insists, "and he must contrive for them where the disposition of the plan does not readily throw them in his way. There are a multitude of things that must be always at hand, and never in sight; and these are what furnish closets: nothing can be more needful than a place of reception for them."⁴⁰ The objects that "furnish" closets are here understood to be hidden, with some unsightliness implied. However, in a nice contrast with Palladio, who prioritizes the "rooms... where strangers are received" over closets, Ware characterizes these small rooms as "places of reception" in their own right for "a multitude of things."

Early modern cooks, midwives, and apothecaries had long stocked their closets with the obscure ingredients and recipes needed for their arts. But Ware's attitude also bespeaks the more generic love of things gaining ground among elite Britons, along with the growth of international travel and trade, and of empirical modes of observation.⁴¹ Interest and attention were elicited by coins, medals, small creatures, shells, gems, artworks, and a plethora of other objects considered strange, wondrous, or rare – at first, by aristocrats who, on their Interregnum travels and Grand Tours, had witnessed their

European counterparts filling their closets with exotica.⁴² A secondary (now primary) meaning of the word *cabinet* – chest of drawers – emerged along with the noble pastime. Girouard explains that “pictures, medals, and rarities joined in naturally with... books and personal papers [in closets]. As collections grew the owner’s personal closet or cabinet was likely to prove inadequate to house them... Little extra cabinets appeared, devoted entirely to precious objects.”⁴³ Makers of these freestanding chests and other types of wooden storage furniture had a distinct and busy enough trade to form a guild apart from the joiners by the middle of the seventeenth century. A hundred years later, cabinetmaker Thomas Chippendale was becoming a household name.

In 1656 English collector John Tradescant published a catalogue of his cabinet’s contents:

1. Birds with their eggs, beaks, feathers, clawes, spurres.
2. Fourfooted beasts with some of their hides, hornes, and hoofs.
3. Divers sorts of strange Fishes.
4. Shell-creatures...
5. Severall sorts of Insects, terrestriall.
6. Mineralls, and those of neare nature with them... Outlandish Fruits from both the Indies, with Seeds, Gemmes, Roots, Woods, and divers Ingredients Medicinall, and for the Art of Dying.
7. Mechanicks, choice pieces in Carvings, Turnings, Paintings.
8. Other Variety of Rarities.
9. Warlike Instruments, European, Indian, etc.
10. Garments, Habits, Vests, Ornaments.
11. Utensils, and Housholdstuffe.
12. Numismata, Coynes antient and modern, both gold, silver and copper, Hebrew, Greeke, Roman both {Imperiall and Consular[.]}
13. Medalls, gold, silver, copper, and lead.⁴⁴

Tradescant’s collections exemplify the wild range of objects in seventeenth-century cabinets: ornaments and medals sit alongside “Outlandish Fruits” and eggs.

Significantly, the above list also evinces the type of attention collections occasioned.

Tradescant’s level of focus varies considerably as each new type of thing comes into his

hands. “Coynes,” for instance, are distinguished by age (ancient or modern), substance (gold, silver, or copper), and nation (Hebrew, Greek, or Roman – “both {Imperiall and Consular”), while objects classed among the catch-all “Other Variety of Rarities” evade his particularizing gaze altogether. Yet his list’s progression from natural objects (“Birds,” “Beasts,” “Fishes”) to cultural objects (“Warlike Instruments,” “Garments,” “Housholdstuffe”), and from category (“Fourfooted beasts) to subcategory (“hides, hornes, and hoofs”), reveals a definite concern with logical arrangement. The establishment of the Royal Society in 1660 institutionalized a disciplinary approach to collecting that is clearly in evidence in Tradescant. However, throughout the eighteenth century many private collectors nevertheless held fast to the eclecticism of the earliest English and European cabinets. Famously Horace Walpole turned his house at Strawberry Hill into an extended repository for everything “from miniatures, bronzes, enamels and cameos to the great seal of King Theodore of Corsica, a bronze phallus, and a set of Turkish beads.”⁴⁵

Much of the best-known scholarship on collecting has stressed the radical privacy of the object-filled cabinet and the narcissistic individualism of the collector, who indulges his quirks for his own pleasure, for an ideal audience of one. Susan Stewart in *On Longing*, for instance, envisions the cabinet as a place emptied of “any relevance other than that of the [collecting] subject”⁴⁶ where the collector satisfies a yearning to stop the relentless flow of history, of labor and industry.⁴⁷ In *Cabinets of Curiosities* Patrick Mauriès reiterates, “It is possible to define the ‘collector’ as a psychological type, a man with a mania for completeness. By taking objects out of the flux of time he in a sense ‘mastered’ reality.”⁴⁸ Barbara Benedict’s study, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of*

Early Modern Inquiry, finds roots for this view of the collector as a transgressor in writing of the period. Curiosity, Benedict argues, was represented as a “desire to escape one’s social role and to possess, control, or dominate culture” and curious people were imagined to be “upstarts who challenge[d] the order of nature.”⁴⁹ In his broader cultural history, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, John Brewer notes that the image of collectors as *amateurs*, indulging their own whimsical pleasures, was “expressed in engravings of seventeenth-century cabinets and collections that included a figure of Venus.”⁵⁰

But if collectors’ solitary investigations reinforced their delighted sense of entitlement to proclivities and preferences, they did not necessarily do so at the expense of their awareness of a world beyond. Many proponents of collecting believed that collectors, far from losing themselves in the whirlwind of their own passions, were in fact tracking the wondrous diversity of the whole earth. Just as courtly closets provided intimate channels to absolute power and prayer closets provided intimate channels to God, cabinets of curiosities could serve as intimate channels to nature’s expanses. In an illustration in *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* John Locke evokes diverging views of this kind of private inquiry:

He that will not set himself proudly at the top of all things; but will consider the immensity of this fabric, and the great variety, that is to be found in this little and inconsiderable part of it, which he has to do with, may be apt to think, that in other mansions of it, there may be other, and different intelligent beings, of whose faculties, he has as little knowledge or apprehension, as a worm shut up in one drawer of a cabinet, hath of the senses or understanding of a man; such variety and excellency, being suitable to the wisdom and power of the maker.⁵¹

Fearing that the new empirical faith in the mind’s capacity to reason, learn, and think autonomously may lead to arrogance, Locke prescribes a mental exercise to keep the ego in check. If appropriately tapped, he suggests, the shift in perspective human beings feel

when they peruse lesser creatures – the proud sense of being “at the top of all things” – may rather become a vehicle for a healthy and modest skepticism. In Locke’s revision of the great chain of being, the honorable man of learning recognizes that his brilliance relative to the worm “shut up in one drawer of his cabinet” should at the same time trigger thoughts of his own worminess, as it were, relative to “different” – superior – “intelligent beings” who occupy higher planes – “other mansions” – within this immense “fabric.”⁵² With its domestic imagery, Locke’s thought experiment seems to map the whole world onto a grand cabinet of curiosities whose sections and subsections represent the relative understanding and awareness of its inhabitants.

As Thomas King points out, upon leaving a monarch’s closet, early modern courtiers found opportunities to make their preferred status visible in the more public spaces of the court.⁵³ Similarly, early modern English collectors understood that the value of their stash to some degree depended on others’ recognition. “To form a collection needed leisure, knowledge and money; the possession of one added to the owner’s mystique and helped to separate him from lesser men,” Girouard writes of the earliest English collectors, “...it added to the exclusiveness of the upper-class club.”⁵⁴ Samuel Pepys is bewildered upon first seeing a cabinet of curiosities. James Pierce, surgeon to the Duke of York and Pepys’s friend, shows him around two of the royal cabinets at Whitehall Palace. The tour of such rooms, intended as an honor for Pepys, also establishes his guide’s ease and rank at court. Pepys reports matter-of-factly that Catherine of Braganza’s closet is fitted out for prayer with “some pretty pious pictures, and books of devotion.” But a cabinet of the King’s elicits an impassioned response: it is crammed full of “such variety of pictures and other things of value and rarity” that, Pepys

exclaims, “I was properly confounded and enjoyed no pleasure in the sight of them; which is the only time in my life that ever I was so at a loss for pleasure, in the greatest plenty of objects to give it me.”⁵⁵ What Pepys decidedly does not feel in the King’s closet is curiosity, in the positive sense of a delighted inquisitiveness, rather he is alienated by the apparent chaos of the room. It was in an effort to elude these sorts of unschooled reactions to their cherished collections of antiquities and obscure curios that a group of aristocratic men formed the Society of Dilettanti in 1734. (Though he shared their interests, Horace Walpole did not join, since, he said, “the nominal qualification for membership is having been in Italy, and the real one, being drunk.”⁵⁶)

Virtual Closets and Cabinets

Thus small, highly-restricted spaces enabled their owners in various ways to exercise their prerogative vis-à-vis other people and things more often and generally in a more arbitrary and unconventional manner than when engaged in duties and rituals in rooms assigned more public purposes. The closet and the cabinet suffused individual preferences with the dignity of absolute power, the purest form of spirituality, or, in the case of the collector’s cabinet, natural historical, scientific, or antiquarian importance. They were crucibles of learning: some of the culture’s most prized subjects and objects of knowledge found or made a home in closets and cabinets. *And* they were intimacy machines, designed to generate feelings apposite to their status, secrecy, and the proximity to people and things they afforded. In what follows I will propose that closets and cabinets’ fusion of qualities made them particularly apt vehicles for purveyors of

print to confront the epistemological and affective questions raised by their odd transitional moment.

There can be no doubt that the numbers and kinds of printed materials and the means of accessing them – through booksellers, streethawkers, coffee houses, and circulating libraries – increased substantially over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially after the licensing act that endorsed royal prepublication censorship lapsed in 1695.⁵⁷ However, book historians have recently begun emphasizing the myriad conceptual stutters, delays, and overlaps produced as print, gradually, unevenly, displaced manuscript as the dominant medium of knowledge circulation rather than the differences between the modern moment and the one that preceded it. In *The Nature of the Book*, Adrian Johns suggests for example that various purveyors of print worked hard to create the impression that the medium was a seamless font of truth. “[Print] was dedicated to effacing its own traces,” he argues, “and necessarily so: only if such efforts disappeared could printing gain the air of intrinsic reliability on which its cultural and commercial success could be built.”⁵⁸ Likewise in his history of the interdependencies of scribal publication and print, David McKitterick warns that “[i]nfatuation with the printed book and with the history of printing led not just to a divorce between manuscript and print, but also, and more seriously, to misunderstandings concerning the relationships between the two that have so far been only partially recovered.”⁵⁹ Early eighteenth-century authors and printers faced criticism like that to which Jonathan Swift’s *Tale of a Tub* and Alexander Pope’s *Dunciad* memorably give voice. In the introduction to the latter, the fictional critic Martinus Scriblerus rants: “(after Providence had permitted the Invention of Printing as a scourge for the Sons of

the learned) Paper became so cheap, and printers so numerous, that a deluge of authors cover'd the land: whereby not only the peace of the honest writing subject was daily molested, but unmerciful demands were made on his applause, yea of his money, by such as would neither earn the one, or deserve the other.”⁶⁰

Announcing an intrinsic connection between the ideas and information they make widely accessible and traditional, elitist spheres of learning, printed closets and cabinets reveal a similar anxiety over the value of print in general and especially about the value of widely accessible knowledge.⁶¹ In their title pages, dedications, prefaces, and frontispieces, publishers, authors, and editors of printed closets and cabinets self-consciously narrate their real-life connections to older methods of amassing and circulating information. There are significant parallels and interconnections between the claims to historicity in early novels and the more specific claims to closet and cabinet origins in miscellanies and compilations: both types of claim reflect the period's increased sensitivity to the relationship between empirical truth and print. Yet their emphases are different. When *Robinson Crusoe*'s “Editor” calls his book “a just history of fact”⁶² and *Pamela*'s “Editor” asserts his book's “Foundation in Truth and Nature,”⁶³ they declare their loyalty to the truth of past events. The editors of printed cabinets or closets, by contrast, draw their authority from what they view as authentic *spaces* and from the elite and intimate processes of amassing and sharing knowledge associated with them.⁶⁴

Thus closet or cabinet compilations might anchor themselves in existing or historical places where over many years, information, ideas, documents, and things were or had been preserved, gathered and arranged, or tested and retested, often asserting roots

in the closets or cabinets of monarchs and aristocrats or the people who serve them. For instance, in the preface of a book of instruction in the domestic arts called *The Queen's Closet Opened* (1655), a secretary to the former Queen Henrietta Maria explains how the book came to be published:

My particular relation for many yeares to her Majesties service might easily, should I write my own history, rid thee of all scruples touching the truth of this collection, there being few or none of these receipts presented to her Majesty, which were not transcribed into her book by my self, the Original papers being most of them preserved in my own hands, which I kept as so many Reliques, and should sooner have parted with my dearest blood, then to have suffered them to be publick. But since my Sovereign Mistress her banishment,... I found no less then two other Copies [of her recipes] abroad... my friends... advised me to dispatch my original copy to the Press to prevent these false ones; for otherwise I should not have thought it less then Sacrilege, had not the lock been first pickt, to have opened the Closet of my distressed Sovereign Mistress without her Royal Assent.⁶⁵

That the contents of the former Queen's most private space are worthy of saving goes without saying: publication here is paradoxically – and regrettably to the servant – the only way to ensure the continued integrity of that now historical space. Another such claim, similarly linking published contents with the authority of an obsolete cabinet that have been preserved by a former favorite, prefaces a translation called *The Cabinet Open'd, Or the Secret History of the Amours of Madam de Maintenon, With the French King* (1690). “[A]ltho’ several persons, having wrote upon the like subjects, have deliver’d nothing but pure Romance, nevertheless what I have Wrote is an unquestionable truth;” the editor insists, “for the better part of the Memoires from whence this Little History is drawn, came out of the Cabinet of Madam de Maintenon, and were partly written with her own Hand. These we recovered of a certain Gentlewoman, who lived a considerable time with her, and who had not served her this trick [i.e. passing along her mistress's private writings for publication], but only to avoid a greater mischief

which was designed her, and she avoided by her flight.”⁶⁶ Here print once again is characterized as a last resort, a means to redress the scandals surrounding Madame de Maintenon’s experiences as the King’s courtesan that have already begun to circulate. In a related version of this sort of claim, the editor of a book called *Physical Rarities* (1651) insists on the origins of its “choice Receipts of Physick and Chyrurgerie” in “the Cabinet of a famous Doctor in this Nation; stored with admirable Secrets, and approved Medicines.”⁶⁷ Readers are asked to take the existence and identity of the “famous Doctor” on trust; the fact that the book’s information comes from the definitively private collection of this mysterious expert offers a compensatory assurance.

Other printed cabinets and closets are vague in the way they invoke elite physical points of origin, suggesting instead that the objects of learning they publish – whether natural-historical observations, spiritual reflections, or recipes for medicine, food, or love potions — have been collected and culled in the long-term, painstaking, and prudent fashion associated with these intimate spaces. That is, though this type of narrative claim might drop the name of an elite patron or two, the titular cabinet or closet directly refers not to an actual architectural space but to the method by which the published contents have been collected or to the virtual storage space of the text itself. For instance, Matthew Gilliflower and James Partridge, the publishers of *Modern Curiosities of Art & Nature. Extracted out of the Cabinets of the most Eminent Personages of the French Court* (1685) advertise that the contents of their book have been “Composed and Experimented by the Sieur Lemory, Apothecary to the French King.” In their dedication, Gilliflower and Partridge spell out their links to high society with some trepidation that the book will be taken for a Grub Street confabulation, a work neither socially nor

empirically viable: “look not on this as a Rapsody of Impertinent Recipe’s catch’t up by some Drudge of the Press, who never try’d other Experiment than that of Imposing upon the easie, as well Bookseller as Buyer,” they plead with their readers, “but rather (as indeed it is) a Collection of Approved Experiments, made by the Sieur Lemery, famous for his Excellent Course of Chymistry, who, as Apothecary to the French King, had great opportunities of communicating to, and receiving from divers Personages of the French-Court and *others, many curious Secrets and Experiments.*” The stakes of the claim to closet and cabinet origins are clearly outlined here: without establishing both the care taken in amassing information and their close ties to important people, publishers Gilliflower and Partridge fear they will appear to be hacks, “Drudge[s] of the Press” with nothing on their minds but the bottom line. Similarly, in the dedicatory epistle to her *Ladies Delight: Or, A Rich Closet of Choice Experiments & Curiosities, Containing the Art of Preserving & Candyng...* (1672), Hannah Woolley assures the well-bred “Ladies and Gentlewomen” who are her readers that she is offering them the cream of a lifetime of “Experiments & Curiosities” that have pleased those in the highest ranks:

I do assure you all, that they are very Choice Receipts, and such as I have not taken up on the Credit of others, but do Commend them to you from my own Practice, who have had the Honour to perform such things for the Entertainments of His late MAJESTY, as well as for the Nobility. I could have enlarged the Volum very much, had I not picked out only such as I thought to be the very best; and such as hath cost me much time, and great pains to gather together...⁶⁸

Nicholas Haym, the author-compiler of a volume called *British Treasury Cabinet the first of our Greek and Roman antiquities of all sorts* (1719), shores up his text’s cabinet lineage with an extensive autobiographical apology. Haym explains that when growing up in Rome, a city overflowing with antiquities, he became fascinated by coins and medals. Neither wealthy nor well-connected enough to collect them himself, he has

endeavored to “come to the understanding of them with the best Convenience [he] could.” Working in the charge of Lord Halifax in London has brought with it an irresistible opportunity to network his way into the best coin collections in England. A series of visits to the finest of cabinets have allowed him to make and annotate drawings of all “the hidden Treasures of this happy Island” which “have never yet been made publick.”⁶⁹ Unable to afford his own collection, Haym develops his passion and expertise in other people’s closets as he produces a virtual collection whose scope far exceeds that gathered in any single extant private space.

Claims to closet and cabinet authenticity might also actively emphasize the arcane and intimate system of value those spaces employ, and at once de-emphasize the emerging market economy that was beginning to commodify knowledge and the processes of its production. As we saw above, publishers Gilliflower and Partridge refer to private spaces in part as a way to preempt accusations of capitalizing on the credulity of “as well Bookseller as Buyer.” The figures of the closet or cabinet realign texts for sale with qualitative economies of learning. Authors and editors of printed closets and cabinets of spiritual knowledge seem particularly taken with images of collections of sparkling jewels and precious metals, for instance, perhaps because, produced without human labor and beautifully refracting light, these objects do not seem containable within any measurable system of value. In the dedicatory epistle of an early example of this subgenre, *The Golden Cabinet of true Treasure: Containing the summe of Morall Philosophie* (1612), translator William Jewell admonishes: “All things, for the which men labour and trade in this world, may bee reduced unto one of these three points, Honour, Riches, or Pleasure and yet notwithstanding, the greatest part of men are often

beguiled of their purposes, because their election erreth in the meanes, whereby they might attaine unto the same... For this reason,” he continues,

have I spent my best endeavours, to set befor your eyes that end and scope, whereunto all the actions and aberations of mankind should be directed: and not that alone, but the meanes also which conduce unto it, that so their election may be preserved free from delusion in the research and choice of true honour, true riches, and true pleasure. And these are the pretious and rich Iewels which are contained in the *Golden Cabinet of true Treasure*...⁷⁰

Jewell’s volume should aid the misguided elect among his readers to distinguish between false, worldly aims and the intangible “pretious and rich Iewels” of salvation by cultivating the right frame of mind. In fact, the mental struggle to distinguish between “true” (Christian) and worldly significations of words like “honour,” “riches,” and “pleasure” parallels the difficulty in choosing the right path with which the book proports to help. *The audi filia, or a rich cabinet full of spirituall ievvells*, composed by “the Reuerend Father, Doctour Auila,” translated from Spanish to English, then published in 1620,⁷¹ reiterates the divine nature of gems in its title. So too do two later cabinets published a century apart: Thomas Brooks’s *Cabinet of Choice Jevvels Or, A Box of precious Ointment*, “Being a plain Discovery of... what men are worth for Eternity, and how ‘tis like to go with them in another World” (1669)⁷² and Charles Bradbury’s *Cabinet of Jewels Opened to the Curious, by a Key of Real Knowledge* (1785).

Precious metals’ and stones’ vivid evocation of quality made them attractive to publishers of other kinds of arcane or specialized knowledge too. One vast miscellany of practical information called *The Golden Cabinet* (1773) begins, appropriately enough, with advice on how to gild things. Another encyclopedic *Golden Cabinet* (1790) offers to lay bare the arts of clairvoyance “not only in the Wheel of Fortune...; but also by those sublime Arts and Mysteries of Palmestry and Physiognomy.” A third encyclopedic work

in this category, John White's *Rich Cabinet with Variety of Inventions in several Arts and Siences* (1658), reinforces the sense that the volume is a simulacrum of "rich" – diverse and invaluable – cabinet space in its frontispiece (fig. 3). With its strange array of objects, including globes and mechanical instruments as well as monsters and mermaids and duelling men, the image celebrates the cabinet's capacity to accommodate vast and jumbled stores of knowledge – a sense of almost endless spaciousness that may in part be indebted to print, since that technology promises that knowledge might, theoretically, be amassed indefinitely. The image is accompanied by a poem from "The Authour to his Book":

As in a glasse herein you may behold
 A goodly Cascade set with pearls and gold;
 Not petty Gugau's to adorn the Brest,
 The Neck, the Arm, but jewels of the best,
 And choicest Learning such herein you'd find
 Will please your fancy & content your mind;
 Some for delight and recreation,
 And some for serious contemplation;
 Some in Arithmetick that lofty Art,
 Some likewise in Geometry are taught,
 Some in Astronomy that Art most hie,
 Others teach how to decorate the Skie,
 With splendent Stars, silver & golden Showers
 Which are th'effects of Philosophick powers...⁷³

White depicts his volume as a mirror that provides a clear if one-dimensional view of myriad, multifaceted fields of learning; readers, looking at themselves in it, ornament their own minds. Like other publishers of closets and cabinets, White's central concern is to show how his pearls of arithmetical, geometrical, astronomical, and philosophical wisdom retain their essential luster even as they enter the virtual space of print. In his dedication, White turns the metaphor again. "I have here unlock'd and open'd to your view a rich Cabinet of varieties," he announces: "If there be any thing therein contained

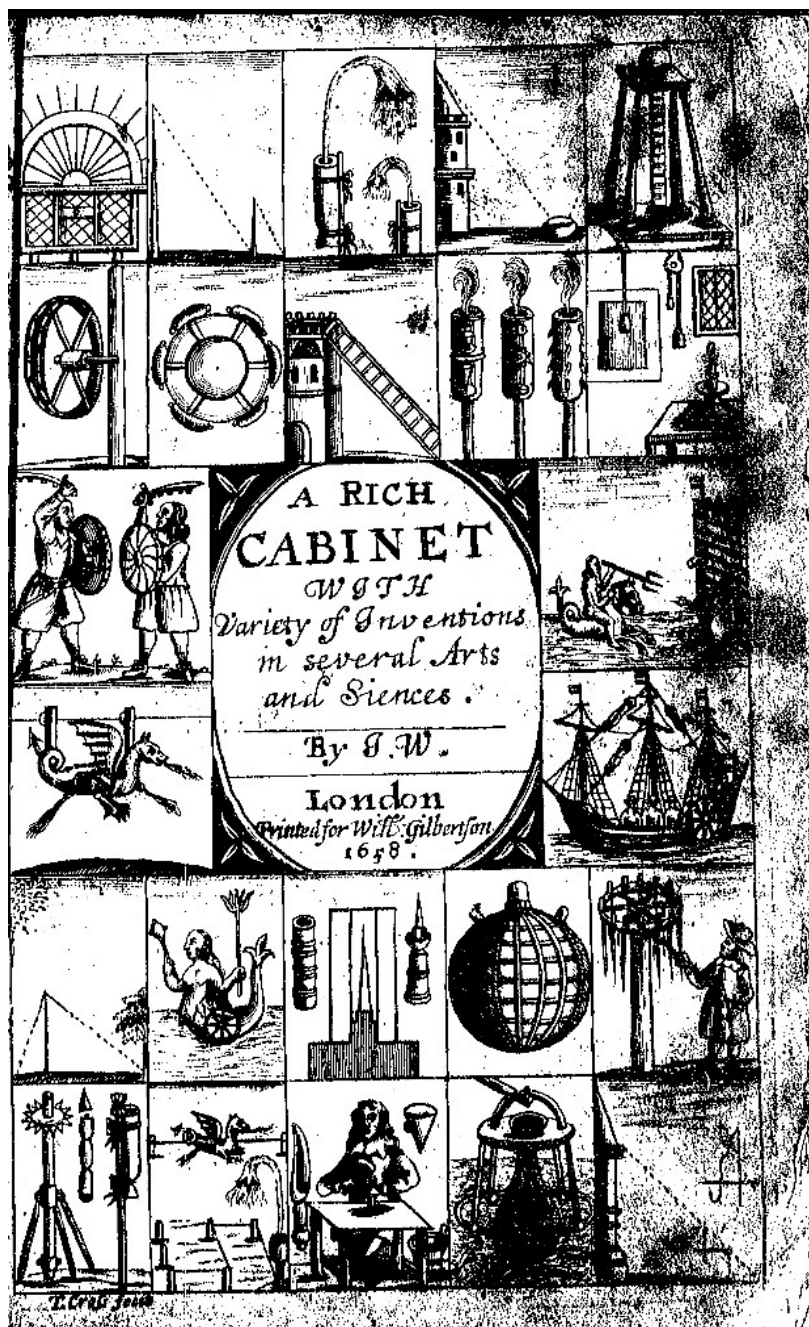


Figure 3. Frontispiece of John White's *Rich Cabinet*.

that may yield you profit, solace of the mind, recreation of the spirits, or content, I shall think my labour well bestowed, and be glad; If it be otherwise, I shall be sorry that I have nothing therein to please your mind, intreating you to shut down the lid again...” Here White literalizes the common analogy between textual and physical spaces for gathering knowledge, imagining the book with its covers as a receptacle that might just as easily be closed as opened.

Even when not concretized in this way, the idea that printed closets and cabinets had been “opened,” “unlocked,” or “broken open,” or their contents “discovered,” abounded throughout the genre, giving shape to a wide range of attitudes and perspectives on the accessibility of print. In the prefaces from the *Queen’s Closet Opened* and *The Cabinet Opened* cited above we see defensive postures struck. In these examples the figure supports a conservative rhetoric of publication that suggests that the exposure of secret documents in print is a last ditch effort by dutiful favorites to protect the reputations of their superiors against scandalous stories already in circulation.

More commonly, however, the figures of the closet and cabinet participate in the period’s emergent protodemocratic discourse of print publication, which endows the exposure of secrets with an immediate and radical political or scientific rationale. In this version of the trope, the display of elite intimate spaces seems to provide a tangible locus around which new kinds of intellectual collectives can begin to gather – and gather strength and a sense of purpose. In *The Kings Cabinet opened: Or, Certain Packets of Secret Letters & Papers; Written with the Kings own Hand, and taken in his Cabinet at Nasby-Field* (1645), the Parliamentary publisher’s preface suggests that Charles’s personal letters are printed by divine ordinance. He casts the act of exposing the letters

as a sacred reversal of the monarch's dangerous secrecy: "by Gods good providence the traverse Curtain is drawn, and the King writing to Ormond, and the Queen... is presented upon the stage. God grant that the drawing of this Curtain may bee as fatall to Popery, and all Antichristian heresie here now, as the rending of the vaile was to the Jewish Ceremonies in Iudea, at the expiration of our Saviour."⁷⁴ God's invisible hand, drawing back the entrance to the King's cabinet, remakes noble private space as a public theater, implicitly authorizing the exposure of Charles's true religious and political proclivities.⁷⁵

In the period's new scientific discourse, publishers of printed closets and cabinets found a secular rationale for the publication of formerly private knowledge. In the preface to his *Novum Organum* (1620), Francis Bacon had stressed the importance of first-hand experience, one of the founding principles of English empiricism, with reference to "Nature"'s private space, calling for "true sons of learning" to accompany him past the "outer halls of Nature, which any number of men have already trodden, to where at length the way into her inner chambers shall be revealed."⁷⁶ Later in the century, in his description of England's first scientific institution, *The History of the Royal Society* (1667), Thomas Sprat concretizes this image of the penetration and exposure of intimate intellectual spaces. Sprat decrees that independent experimenters should come to see the benefits of collective learning and should allow "all, or the greatest part of... domestick Receipts and Curiosities" to "flow into" the "publick Treasurie." If necessary, however, more active measures will be taken: "the Royal Society will be able by Degrees to purchase such extraordinary Inventions, which are now close lock'd up in Cabinets; and then to bring them into one common Stock..."⁷⁷ In this formulation, the Royal Society will become a macrocabinet, but one whose "Stock"

has been purchased and then, crucially, made completely accessible, being, as Sprat imagines, “upon all Occasions expos’d to all Men’s Use.” The scientific principle that knowledge progresses when shared instead of hoarded helped to promote more inclusive cabinet viewings and ultimately gave rise to the museum. The British Museum, England’s premier national collection, was founded by Act of Parliament in 1753 on the basis of a cabinet owned by Royal Society laureate, Sir Hans Sloane.⁷⁸ *General Contents of the British Museum*, a visitors’ guide published in London in 1761, reinforces the collection’s elite and intimate point of origin by calling the museum a *Noble Cabinet* in its subtitle. The guidebook seeks to bridge the gap between the privileged few who have had early and frequent access to the “Noble Cabinet” and the many – especially the many women – who have only now been given this opportunity for the first time: “The judicious Reader will observe, that I have endeavoured to be as intelligible as possible; making use of very few Words but what are generally understood: I therefore flatter myself, that my Readers among the Ladies will be very numerous; *many of them having, in my Company, lamented the want of something of this kind, to direct their Observations, and give them a general Idea of the Contents of this wonderful Collection.*”⁷⁹ The intellectual bridge the guide provides, notably, is not a complete one. It leaves finer points for those closer to the experiential nucleus of knowledge production, offering easily intelligible generalities to its heterogeneous multitude of reader-consumers.

In this way the motif of the publication of private space clings to the traditional authority of the closet and cabinet while tentatively embracing proto-democratic notions of collective discovery in the interest of a growing (modern) public. John White in his

Rich Cabinet artfully navigates this double orientation. He clearly establishes both his confidence in his learning and his generosity towards unknown others by writing in his preface that he has published the fruits of private experience out of concern for “the publick...good”: “no man (I think) should be born onely to himself, and hide his Talent,” he clarifies, “And therefore these few Receits which I have Collected with divers of mine own (gentle Reader) I dedicate freely to thy use.” In other instances the passing of knowledge from private to a more accessible venue might be rationalized as a form of inheritance. The publisher of *England’s Choice Cabinet of Rarities; Or, the Famous Mr. Wadhams Last Golden Legacy* (1700) claims to print its “Many Curious Physical Receipts for the Curing the most Dangerous Diseases and Grievance incident to Men, Women, and Children” as a means to preserve the precious yields of lifelong experience: “Age growing on [Mr Wadham] (he knowing he was but Mortal, and must dye) he thought fit to leave in Writing such things as might benifit after his Death, and be a living Monument of what he had formerly done: and[this] may be accounted his Golden Legacy to the World as being the last he Writ before his Death.”⁸⁰ The public efficiency of immortalizing a private collection appears in the *Second Part of Mother Bunch’s Closet Newly Broke Open* (1760). The titular midwife fearing she will soon die decides she wants to leave her “stock of knowledge” – recipes, spells, and strategies for success in love – to posterity. The text embeds a framing narrative that shows how the market for Mother Bunch’s special knowledge far exceeds the group of villagers who are in a position to consult with her in person. “Plac[ing] herself in the closet where her treasure lay,” Mother Bunch spreads the word among neighboring lovelorn women that they may come to her for advice. First a maltster’s maid approaches, wanting to know how to tell a

true lover from a false; then a sempstress enters, angered by unrequited love; next there's a miller's maid, who learns how to conjure a vision of her future husband. Before long a crowd of about forty heartsick women fills Mother Bunch's little room, all clamoring so insistently for the midwife's attention – "*Dear mother Bunch, remember me, O mother, remember me & c*" – "that they made the old woman deaf with their great noise." Mother Bunch corrals them, "My dear daughters... Sit you down and be quiet..." and she proposes a more efficient means of dispensing her advice: "I'll sit in the midst of you," she says, "and read you a lecture meaning to give you a large account of some extraordinary curiosities here in my closet newly broke open; declaring it as my opinion, that the things which are profitable for one maid, are so for another."⁸¹ Mother Bunch, standing in for her publisher, evinces the utility of her private collection of insights and procedures to all women. By generalizing and publishing her methods she can put the burden of diagnosis and cure in her listeners' and, implicitly, in readers' hands.

These last few examples, and that of *Mother Bunch* in particular, point to the imaginative dislocation of readers that is central to the printed closet and cabinet. Printed private spaces remind readers of the existence of intimate and experiential spaces of learning, even as they propel them into the disembodied posterity of print and the second-hand solitude of their own learning experience. The figure assigns readers a sense of intellectual curiosity or a desire for practical knowledge as strong perhaps as that of original owners of closets and cabinets and of the producers of print themselves who eagerly mediate between private and public forms of knowledge. Yet the figure also reinforces readers' sense of their distance – sometimes even their outright exclusion – from an originary time, place, and affect of learning that has already passed. Readers of

print have resorted to virtual cabinets, where they are consumers of knowledge that has been preprocessed, in a sense; artificially preserved. The author of *Wit's Cabinet: A Companion to Gentlemen and Ladies* (1715), for instance, first asserts the importance of travel to the development of skill in conversation, then offers his book for those who lack the breeding, connections, time, money, taste, or wherewithal to gain it at first hand: “since every one’s Stars have not been so lucky as to let them obtain it [wit] by their Observation of Men and Manners abroad, by travelling into Foreign Countries, it is Pity that such should not be assisted by Books, proper for their Instruction at Home, which is both the easiest and the cheapest Way: And to accomodate such, is the Design of this Book.”⁸² Similarly, the author of *Curiosities. Or The Cabinet of Nature* (1637) echoes but corrects Bacon’s claim that “true sons of learning” might accompany him through Nature’s “inner chambers.” In fact, only scholars are admitted to “the ever-vernant and private walkes of Naturall Philosophie.” *Curiosities’* author offers his book as a surrogate for such experience, but nevertheless seems to lord his intimate advantage over his witnesses. The frontispiece (fig. 4) depicts classical philosophers Pliny and Plutarch standing in front of Nature, a goddess, who entices her votaries to admire her “high priz’d gemmes” and enter into the closet between her legs. And an accompanying poem reinforces this gendered relation:

The Goddess (like her selfe so plac’t on high,
So open breasted, freely doth descry
Her love, which heretofore shee long conceal’d
Wisely, to make thee love what’s here reveal’d
She opens here her closet, richly set
With high priz’d gemmes, her richest Cabinet.

The author of *Curiosities* complies: I “[entered] the very bowels (as I may say) of her secrecies, not without infinite pleasure I penetrated her *Arcana*, and opening her *Cabinet*,

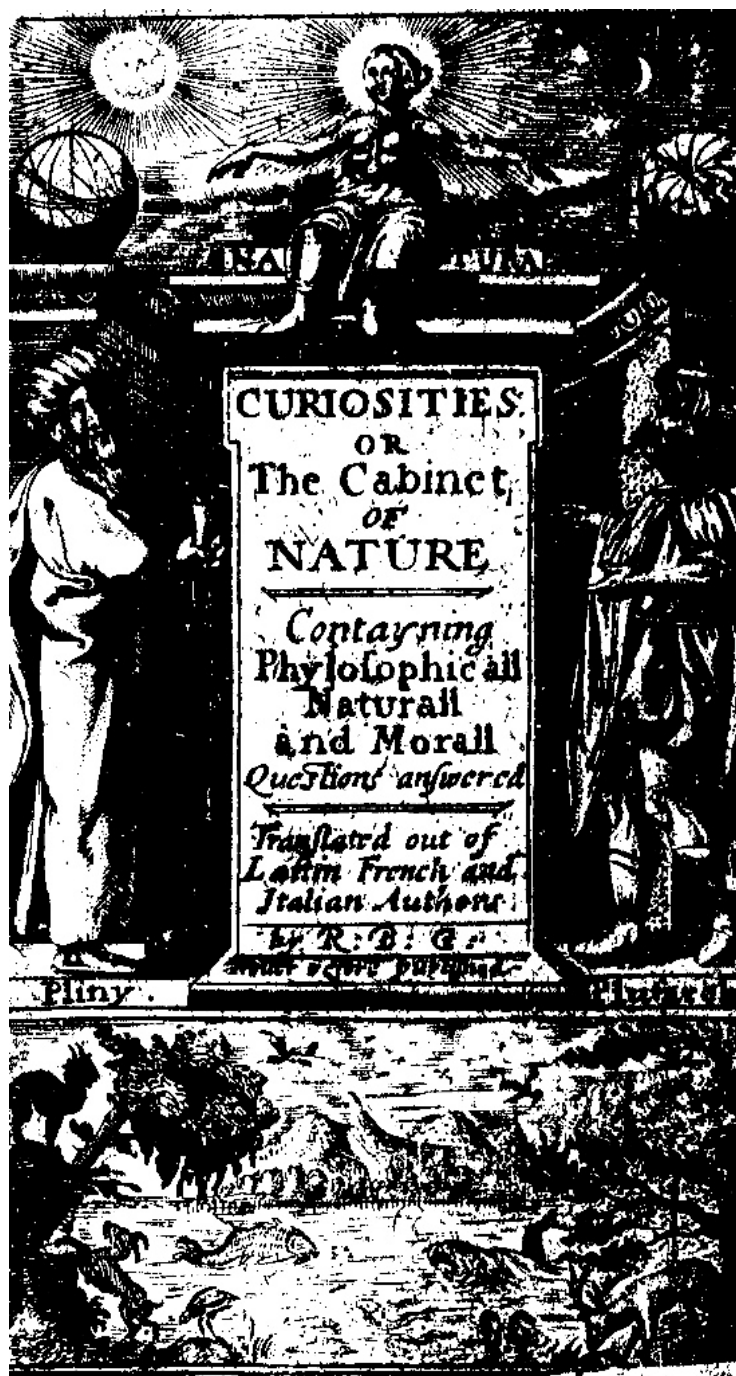


Figure 4. Frontispiece of Robert Basset, *Curiosities: Or, The Cabinet of Nature*.

finding her full of Curiosities, and having free-licence to take what I thought fit, selected none, but what I thought, might not only content my selfe, but generally recreate all.”⁸³

Despite that inclusive concluding caveat, the author’s language of pleasure, incursion, and license plays up the difference between his immediate and active mode of learning through hands-on experimentation and the reader’s secondary and passive one. More often than not, the metaphor of the closet relegates readers to a no mans’ land, where their education – an afterthought – depends on strangely disembodied encounters.

Peeping: Virtual Erotics in the Cabinet of Love

This final section of the chapter argues that one small subgenre of the printed closet or cabinet, the cabinet of love, plays a special metacritical role within the discourse of knowledge and learning I have been describing. Like other printed closets and cabinets, these volumes have material-cultural referents. Broadly speaking, *cabinet of love* denotes a place where any passionate relationship might be shielded from public view. In this sense, the term simply points to the affective, intersubjective charge that was, as I have shown, practically an inevitable feature of closet and cabinet encounters. More specifically, it could refer to a small receptacle where lovers locked up souvenirs of their most cherished or clandestine affairs. An example of this sort of archive turns up in Anthony Hamilton’s *Memoirs of Count de Grammont*, the secret history of the Restoration court that will be the focus of the following chapter. When the lover of a young maid of honor unexpectedly dies, a box from his closet addressed to her comes into the hands of the girl’s mistress, the Duchess of York. The Duchess is instantly intrigued. Opening it in the privacy of her closet, she discovers all manner of “love

trinkets,” including pictures, “hair of all descriptions, wrought into bracelets, locketts, and into a thousand other devices wonderful to see,” as well as “three or four packets of letters” which especially pique her curiosity.⁸⁴ Accordingly, printed cabinets of love present knowledge pertaining to the gallant or erotic arts, generally in the form of poems, letters, anecdotes, ballads, lists, or illustrations.

The earliest book belonging to this subgenre that I have found is a graphic guide to human reproduction published in London in 1658 called *Rare Verities: The cabinet of Venus unlocked, and her secrets laid open*. The work’s central metaphor combines the scientific impulses of the cabinet of curiosities with the eroticism of the cabinet of love. “Sinibaldus,” the putative author of the original Latin version of the text, “lay[s] open the mysteries of generation and its concomitants,” educating readers about sexuality under headings like “What is Copulation” or “Through what part is love at first received in,” while also promising his “Amorous Readers” that this “little store-house” will “augment [their] pleasing fires.”⁸⁵ Other examples of this subgenre include *Love’s Perpetual Almanack... From a Manuscript found in Cupid’s Cabinet* (1681) which provides, among other things, a guide to the sex trade (the “Fairs of Love”) in Turkey and on the continent, and *The Portal to the Cabinet of Love* (1807), which supplements translations of the “Nineteen kisses of Johannes Secundus” with other lyric poems on this subject. The form extends into the late nineteenth century with *Cabinet of Venus* (1896), an anthology of pornographic drawings. The publisher of this last love cabinet, the “Erotica-bibliomaniac Society,” bespeaks the affinity and overlap between collectors, especially book collectors, and pornographers evinced by the subgenre as a whole.⁸⁶

I have argued that publishers, editors, and authors of printed closets and cabinets variously – and carefully – elaborate their texts’ and their own connections to exclusive spaces of learning, but that the spatial metaphor does not easily extend to the experience of readers. In this concluding section I posit that in their frequent explorations of the motif of voyeurism, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century printed cabinets and closets of love dramatize and satirize the strangely charged margins of secret exchanges of intimate knowledge in these texts. Eve Sedgwick notes in the introduction to *Epistemology of the Closet* that the conceptual entanglement of knowledge, sex, and secrecy has ancient roots: “Cognition itself, sexuality itself, and transgression itself have always been ready in Western culture to be magnetized into an unyielding though not an unfissured alignment with one another...”⁸⁷ In her study of curiosity, Barbara Benedict shows how *peeping* acquired new layers of meaning over the course of the eighteenth century.⁸⁸

[Samuel] Johnson’s *Dictionary* initially defines ‘peep’ as ‘first ppearance,’ the sudden presentation of a new sight, like a bird, to the observer’s eye, but subsequently explains it as ‘curious looking.’ Finding no etymology for it, Johnson derives it from either the Dutch ‘to lift up’ or the Latin for ‘spy.’ Eighteenth-century meanings of the word burgeon to designate a looking-glass, an eye, and a one-eyed person; ‘Peeping Tom’ acquired its meaning as ‘an inquisitive person’ at midcentury... The rebelliousness of curiosity is correlated with the lust of the eyes.⁸⁹

From the idea of seeing something novel by a chance occurrence, “peeping” becomes a more active form of one-way spectatorship, a purposeful, even aggressive, mode of looking that turns first into a discrete desire to spy then into a wholesale identity category over the course of the century. The scenes of peeping I have found in printed cabinets of love reinforce the etymological trajectory Benedict has traced, as they articulate the longstanding association of looking, desiring, reading, penetrating, and knowing in a novel way.

John Harington's "Of a Ladyes Cabinet" (1613) provides a useful starting point.⁹⁰ Here a man passing his wife's closet accidentally catches a glimpse of the "Vertuous Lady sitting in a muse." Lost in her thoughts as she relaxes in private, the lady unwittingly spreads her legs and exposes herself. Her husband chides, "Wife, awake, your Cabinet stands open." "Then locke it if you list," the lady replies, "you keep the key." Playing on the bawdier connotations of *cabinet* and *key* as female and male genitals respectively, Harington's couple comment on the gendered nature of privacy. The wife is entitled (however briefly) to a degree of mental autonomy: she has a closet and sits in it musing. With her punch line the wife trumps her husband's quip. But the twist lies in the fact that it is she who has to remind him of her status as male property: all of her secret spaces – architectural, bodily, and cognitive alike – are finally subject to patriarchal intervention and control. Other printed love cabinets reiterate this pattern of intimate female experience and vexed or perplexed male spectatorship. Wherever there is a private space in such works there is sure to be a solitary woman losing her inhibitions in it – opening her cabinet in her cabinet – and wherever such a woman turns up, there is sure to be a man hidden within viewing distance watching her, and losing track of his male prerogative.

This complex, diffuse imaginative relationship is explored, for instance, in a poem (falsely) attributed to Rochester called "The Discovery," from the period's most frequently republished *Cabinet of Love*⁹¹ and another – "On Florinda" – from a midcentury *Lover's Cabinet*. In "The Discovery," the first-person speaker steals into the chamber of a girl he has admired just as she climbs out of bed in the morning. Sliding his gaze over Sylvia's naked body – from her "little, pretty, panting Bubbies" which are

“white as Snow” down to “something..., which was but thinly hair’d, / ...not too bushy, nor too bald” – the speaker experiences an excess of pleasure in his silent and secret possession:

Oh! there I thought I could for ever dwell,
Partaking Bliss beyond what Tongue can tell;
The Sight would nourish me ten thousand Year,
Give solid Joys, which are unmix’d with Fears.
I bless’d my Eyes, and would not change my Seat
For all the pompous Riches of the Great...

The classic trope of the inexpressibility of beauty mingles here with an implicit critique of reciprocal, embodied sensuality: whereas the “Sight” of Sylvia gives the speaker “solid,” nourishing “Joys,” the other pleasures he can imagine taking with her would not, like this one, be “unmix’d with Fears.” The speaker’s excitement continues to build:

She turn’d her round, then sate upon the Bed;
Her Lilly Hand pull’d open her Maiden-head.
She strove to view what I more plain could see,
Which rais’d my Passion to an Extasy.
The Sight alone soon made me shed my -----,
And spill that-----of which she stood in Need.

At first the speaker views the girl’s actions through his own voyeuristic lens, believing she “[strives] to view” herself. But as Sylvia, reading a pornographic book, begins to penetrate herself, the speaker burns with a violent jealousy that is nevertheless arousing to him. In a turn reminiscent of Rochester’s “Imperfect Enjoyment,” he disengages from his own pleasure at the critical moment: “in Revenge, he now again lets fly, / And spewing, fell down in an Agony.” After Sylvia leaves, the speaker, his passion subsiding, picks up her dildo and “quits the Room”: as he stumbles off “to pass at Home [his] humble Captive’s Doom,” his battlefield bravado reinforces the pathos of his one-way

encounter with secret knowledge. What exactly does he plan to do with this souvenir of Sylvia's satisfaction?

"On Florinda, Seen while she was bathing" closely resembles "The Discovery" in its affective structure, though it enshrouds its libertinism in sentiment, replacing the girl's chamber with an outdoor grotto. Hiding in the bushes to watch the young Florinda bathing, the first-person speaker catalogues those parts of her body that he can see:

Her Hair bound backward in spiral Wreath
 Her upper Beauties to my Sight betray'd;
 The happy Stream concealing those beneath,
 Around her Waist with circling Waters play'd:
 Who, while the Fair One on his Bosom sported,
 Her dainty Limbs with liquid Kisses courted.⁹²

Unlike Sylvia with her book and toy, the object of desire in this later poem is sexually passive. Nevertheless, the voyeur's libidinal imagination creates a rival by anthropomorphizing the "happy Stream" that "circles" and "courts" Florinda "with liquid Kisses." As she frolics the speaker observes the effects on himself of witnessing this intimate moment. His own mental and physical experience is decidedly darker than he imagines hers to be:

...while the tempting Scene so near I view'd,
 A fierce Impatience throb'd in every Vein,
 Discretion fled, and Reason lay subdu'd;
 My Blood beat high, and with its trembling made
 A strange Commotion in the rustling Shade.

The gentle poetry of blood "trembling" in the "rustling Shade" does not mask the speaker's burning disquiet in witnessing an intimacy in which he participates only in the most obscure and indirect fashion. "O Venus! give me more, or let me drink / Of Lethe's Fountain, and forget to think," he concludes. The slim but unbridgeable gap between

himself and the object of his all-too-tangible fantasy proves as disorienting as it is arousing.

In the two above examples Sylvia and Florinda do not seem to sense that they are being watched; in “Miss in her Teens: A Tale” a voyeur poem by “Mr. H---l” in a 1792 *Cabinet of Love*, Molly willfully, actively, plays hide and seek with Dick. Peeping in his cousin’s closet has become an obsession for him, and Molly, a girl who lives up to her practical commonplace name, has learned to accept and accommodate his proclivity:

Whenever Molly was impounded,
 She left [a] hole for Dick to peep.

 She knew there was no keeping
 Her cousin, Dick, from peeping:
 For sure as ever you’re alive,
 Either with gimblet or skewer,
 Her cousin Richard would contrive
 To bore a hole, somewhere, to view her.⁹³

Significantly, neither Dick nor Molly nor the poem’s third-person narrator are represented as confused or conflicted by Dick’s frantic interest in his cousin’s private experience. The force of Dick’s drive “to view her” is presented in playful rhythmical language: “For sure as ever you’re alive... /.../ [He] would contrive / To bore a hole...” More like Molly herself than the first-person speakers discussed above, the poet-narrator of “Miss in her Teens” represents voyeurism as a routine facet of male sexual psychology.

In the early seventeenth-century poem by John Harington, a husband just happens to catch a glimpse of his wife in her closet. Over the course of the eighteenth century, this mild curiosity has become a full-fledged fixation with its own attendant rituals and thrills – not only the buzz of transgression and possible exposure but also, and perhaps

more interestingly, the play of perspectives it invites, as the voyeur projects himself not only into the mind and body of the girl he watches but also into the inanimate things with which she comes in contact.⁹⁴ Significantly, peeping toms are uninvited guests, with no specific patriarchal right to enter the private spaces they penetrate. Seeking neither procreation, nor mutual affection, nor solitary transport, they sponge off the closet's intimate charge. So near and yet so far from the objects of their desire, they cultivate parasitic passions, at once despising and fetishizing the gap between their second-hand experiences and the apparently authentic ones from which they have been excluded. In this way, erotic cabinets of love seem to incorporate what we might think of as the primal scene of the printed cabinet into their very themes and contents: in their portraits of voyeurs they illustrate the unwieldy and diffuse pleasures incumbent on the proliferation of closets in the period, real and virtual alike.

My argument that the voyeur encapsulates both the arousal and dissociation of all readers of printed cabinets and closets in the period (and to a certain extent, of all readers of print) finds its most convincing corroboration in a work called *Miss C---y's Cabinet of Curiosities; or, The Green-Room Broke Open*. Published in Dublin in 1765 at the height of popularity of Sterne's mock-autobiography, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.*, across Britain, *Miss C---y's Cabinet of Curiosities* claims "Tristram Shandy, Gent." as its author. Like his namesake, this Tristram Shandy stalls and spins rather than propels his plot, musing suggestively and digressing, often addressing readers directly. A 46-page novella, *Miss C---Y* seems above all an excuse for the editor-author to exhaust its central conceit: the cabinet. The action, insofar as there is any, involves the theft of a secret box of documents that belongs to a much lusted-after (and often

compliant) actress, the titular Miss C---Y. As the book's title foretells, this cabinet has been stolen from "the green-room," the actress's dressing-room at Smock Alley Theater, Dublin, where she is rehearsing the part of MacHeath, the male lead in John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*. Yet Shandy creates a confusion between her textual and bodily secrets by often using the term as a euphemism for the actress's private parts as well. "The Cabinet that had been stolen from the Green Room belonged to Miss C---Y. She had been in Possession of it [her cabinet] ever since her Birth—It was a might pretty one----fringed about with curling Ornaments," he begins Chapter X, for instance, launching at last into the crucial strand of the plot: "---A Cabinet that the greatest Monarchs would have been delighted to have laid their Hands on, and which had been enjoyed by Numbers of the greatest personages in both Kingdoms,---though they had always Honour and Generosity enough to leave it with its fair Possessor, after they had viewed, handled, and enjoyed it sufficiently."⁹⁵ Shandy apparently knows a good deal about the visual charms and impressive circle of admirers of Miss C---Y's (i.e. Miss Cunny's) bodily "cabinet"; however, he does not belong to the group of those who actually view, handle, and enjoy it – satiating themselves fully and then leaving it for others to enjoy – but among those who do not have a reciprocal relationship with her and it. Miss Cunny circulates within an elite sexual and political network, and significantly the author remains outside this circuit, in the second or third rung where gossip and fantasy take the place of physical contact with Miss C---Y.

But Shandy is in any case more invested in the outer circle he occupies than he is in the secret corners of Miss C---Y's body per se. In particular he is interested in the way in which textual cabinet knowledge can become a substitute for sexual cabinet

knowledge, and he has a keen appreciation for the way the cabinet draws together questions about the relative publicity, intimacy, secrecy, and value of all kinds of knowledge. Without explicitly confessing it, Shandy implies that he is in fact a cabinet thief, whose crime might put us in mind of the speaker in “The Discovery” who, as angry as he is aroused by Sylvia’s solitary pleasure, takes her dildo “captive” at the end of that poem or, for that matter, of the Parliamentary publisher of *The Kings Cabinet opened: Or, Certain Packets of Secret Letters & Papers; Written with the Kings own Hand, and taken in his Cabinet at Nasby-Field*. In lieu of sex with Miss C---Y, to which he knows he is not entitled, Shandy has stolen the papers hidden in her cabinet of love. After a characteristically long aside, he picks up in Chapter XIII where he left off in Chapter X:

The other Cabinet Miss C----Y had, and which coming in to my Hands I broke open, was very curious... I turned the various Papers in it over and over, and determined to publish such as were the most to my Liking... Oh, ho! cried I; I have found a Treasure.----This is a Mine that will supply me with Gold enough. --All the World are mad for Miss C----Y; and the Devil’s in’t, if they don’t buy her Memoirs.⁹⁶

Shandy pours over the contents of Miss Cunny’s cabinet with an eye to their print publication: the form they will take is that of a literary genre of which his own book is an example, a form styled and sold as a printed collection of secret documents, full of sex and scandal. However, for all his excitement about having discovered “a Mine that will supply me with Gold enough,” Shandy shows little enthusiasm or respect for the multitudes who will buy up his publication like hotcakes. Unlike Miss Cunny’s bodily cabinet, which Shandy tells us is treated with “Honor and Generosity” by “the greatest personages in both Kingdomes,” printing the contents of the box she kept in her dressing room will allow for their circulation far beyond the limited group capable of recognizing their worth. “[T]is not improbable, that out of the ten thousand People that will read this

Cabinet not above ten shall be able to form a proper Judgment of the Merit or Demerit of any literary Production at all;” Shandy complains, “though every Dunce will now-a-Days pretend to determine the precise Value of every Book he looks into.” Thus the narrator dismisses his own anonymous readers who, greedy for intimate details about Miss Cunny, are easily duped by booksellers (including his own) ready to exploit their inability to evaluate what they buy. By creating this slippage between different kinds of cabinets, Shandy produces a vigorous commentary on the eighteenth-century print market. When did the drive to learn others’ secrets become a compulsion? Is *anything* that has at any point been locked up and deemed secret worth knowing? worth publishing? How do the value and meaning of words and things change when divorced from their original private contexts? What are differences between looking and reading and more reciprocal and situated means of acquiring knowledge? Exploring and exploiting the intricate relationship between the material culture and the print culture of intimacy, Shandy’s novella cuts to the heart of the period’s erotic and intellectual imagination.

This chapter has sought to illuminate a moment when printed books were conceived of as cabinets and closets almost as often as they were collected in them. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editors and publishers looked to these spaces to bolster the uncertain authority of print, to bridge the gap between traditional, intimate centers of learning and a growing anonymous medium of circulation. A wide range of modern anthology forms – from encyclopedias to epistolary narratives, from cookbooks to erotica – emerged in the process. On the one hand then, printed closets and cabinets tell a classic enlightenment story of an increasingly expansive, inclusive, and specialized

republic of letters. On the other, they remind us of the unevenness of this process and the uneasiness and the ingenuity it occasioned. I have found that the metaphors of closet and cabinet give printed knowledge a singular affective charge and that cabinets of love in particular grapple with the virtuality of book learning through the figure of the peeping tom. The following chapters offer more focused studies of intimate space, exploring their role in other literary experiments and other extra-familial relationships of the period. As we look elsewhere, this archetypal modern reader does not disappear however so much as he lingers in the background, seeking ever closer views of others' intimate experiences.

¹ Tristram Shandy, *Miss C---y's Cabinet of Curiosities; or, the Green-Room Broke Open* (Utopia: printed for William Whirligig, at the Maiden's Head, 1765), 19. The British Library Catalogue entry for this novella notes the "imprint is fictitious; printed in London."

² Alan Stewart, "The Early Modern Closet Discovered," *Representations* 50 (Spring 1995), 76-100, 95. The same essay is republished with minor changes as the last chapter of Stewart's book, *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). As I discuss below, in the charged relationships between elite men and the officers who managed their secret documents and intelligences, Stewart finds roots for the closet's contemporary queer associations, arguing that the closet literally was (and is still metaphorically) a "transactive space" (77). The secretary, Stewart's central concern, plays only a minor role in this dissertation; however, Stewart's larger point – that closets were interpersonal spaces and spaces of exchange – is one I elaborate in contexts beyond the absolutist court in this and the third chapter.

³ The prevalence of the *closet* and the *cabinet* as a genre is quickly evinced by searching electronic databases of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British texts. A title keyword search for *closet** or *cabinet** on *Early English Books Online* returns over three hundred entries. Though terms like *miscellany* and *anthology* are now more firmly entrenched as descriptors of seventeenth-century print compilations, *closet* and *cabinet* produce fifty more entries than *miscellan** and two hundred and fifty more than for *antholog** on *EEBO*. A search for *closet** or *cabinet** on *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* returns more than two hundred and fifty entries, while *antholog** produces only fifty hits. The name for compilations that prevails in eighteenth-century print culture is *miscellany*, with over 1 800 returns.

⁴ For recent scholarship on political and administrative closets, see Alan Stewart, "Early Modern Closets"; on prayer closets, see Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); on cabinets of curiosities, see Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1984) and Barbara Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), considers these several varieties of closets as he demonstrates their relevance to redefinitions of privacy and public-ness in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British literature and culture. All of the above texts will be discussed in more detail throughout this chapter.

⁵ Curtis Perry, *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 18.

⁶ Perry, *Favoritism*, 18.

⁷ David Starkey, *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (New York: Longman, 1987), 4-5. (Cited in Perry, *Favoritism*, 18.)

⁸ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 110.

⁹ Perry, *Favoritism*, 5, speculates that the motif of favoritism points to a tension inherent in the political structure of early modern England:

it helps to think of the ongoing debate over favoritism not (or not only) as a precursor to more modern forms of political thought but as the manifestation of a fissure built into the edifice of English constitutional monarchy... the English king, ruling 'politically' – with parliament and by means of native common law – triumphs as a ruler by suppressing his own will, thereby minimizing its potential to lead him into tyranny.

¹⁰ Perry, *Favoritism*, 20.

¹¹ Girouard, *Country House*, 128.

¹² Girouard, *Country House*, 131.

¹³ Girouard, *Country House*, 128

¹⁴ Girouard, *Country House*, 145-6.

¹⁵ Girouard, *Country House*, 149.

¹⁶ McKeon, *Secret History*, 228-9, narrates the cabinet's emergence as a primary locus of political power in the eighteenth century in a discussion of secretaries:

The dynastic nature of English sovereignty is manifested in the critical importance of the royal household in English political life, and in the seventeenth century government and household were significantly intertwined: the chief officers in the household were also members of the privy council [a crucial arm of the government], while the two secretaries of state frequently dined at court... Under Louis XIV the *grand cabinet* evolved as a larger and more public version of the *cabinet*, and the king's came to serve as his *cabinet de conseil*, where Louis's privy council met to discuss state affairs.

Likewise, in England, King Charles's "closet (or cabinet)" – the most private of his rooms – "was the meeting place for his cabinet council... By the early eighteenth century the utmost privacy of the private realm... had passed on its name to the privacy of the public realm's most exclusive circle of power, the cabinet."

¹⁷ Margaret Hunt, "Afterword," *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 360.

¹⁸ Thomas King, *The Gendering of Men, 1600-1750* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 5, rationalizes the demise of pederasty over the course of the long eighteenth century, arguing that liberal ideas of autonomy and ownership antiquated this form of politicized sexuality: "An emergent public sphere of private men would resist this [absolutist/pederastic] economy of power... by figuring these networks of super- and subordination as an abuse of men's property in themselves."

¹⁹ Stewart, "Early Modern Closets."

²⁰ The quotations, from Robert Cecil, *The State and Dignities of a Secretorie of Estates Place, With the care and perill thereof* (London: 1642) and Angel Day, *The English Secretorie* (London: 1592) respectively, are cited in Stewart, "Early Modern Closets," 93 and 83.

²¹ Stewart, "Early Modern Closets," 94, adapts the idea of the monarch's representative double-ness when he proposes that the secretary "might be said to have two bodies: the body personal and the body archival": "While the death of the secretary destroys the personal relations, the body archival—the contents of the closet and the technologies of the closet—remains intact, a textual legacy that clearly gives rise to anxiety." Unlike the monarch who inherits his or her station, the secretary earns his position through evident aptitude and skill. Thus, Stewart points out, by whom an elderly secretary might be replaced and by what method his intimate knowledge of the closet and its contents might be passed along, can become tricky issues. The uncertain afterlife of this relationship only intensifies the intimacy between the secretary and his master.

²² Thomas Brooks, *The Privie Key of Heaven, or, Twenty Arguments for Closet-Prayer* (London: 1665), 1, explains: "The word... that is in the Text rendred Closet, hath only three most usual significations amongst Greek authors. First, it may be taken for a secret chamber, or close and locked Parlour. Secondly, for a Safe or Cupboard, to lay Victuals in. Thirdly, for a locked Chest or Cupboard, wherein Treasure usually is reserved."

²³ Brooks, *Privie Key*, 162.

²⁴ William Dawes, *Duties of the Closet: Being an Exhortation to Private Devotion* (1695) Seventh Edition, (London: 1732), table of contents.

²⁵ Edward Wettenhall, *Enter into thy Closet* (5th Edition) (London: 1684), 7. Cited in Rambuss, *Devotions*, 123.

²⁶ Dawes, *Duties*, iv.

²⁷ Benjamin Bennet, *The Christian Oratory: Or, The Devotion of the Closet Display'd* (London: 1725), 672.

²⁸ As Rambuss, *Devotions*, 107, puts it, "while these texts bespeak individualized interiorities, they do not advance self-awareness as a value in itself. Instead, the inwardness excavated and so rigorously probed here is done so devotionally: that is, only in deference to God and in the service of his divine will."

²⁹ Joseph Hall, *The Divine Art of Meditation* (1633) in Frank Livingstone Huntley, *Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation in Seventeenth-Century England* (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1981), 80. Cited in Rambuss, *Devotions*, 105.

³⁰ Brooks, *Privie Key*, 70.

³¹ Dawes, *Duties*, ii.

³² Oliver Heywood, *Closet-Prayer: A Christian Duty* (London: 1668), 3.13. Cited in Rambuss, *Devotions*, 105.

³³ Dawes, *Duties*, 58.

³⁴ Brooks, *Privie key*, 176-77.

³⁵ A major thread of Rambuss's argument in *Closet Devotions* is that the closet serves as a receptacle for the religious passion that had been more generally expressed throughout the early modern period. "Erotic devotion—religion speaking of and as sex—does not suddenly disappear sometime in the seventeenth or

the eighteenth century,” he surmises: “But it does appear to be increasingly rezoned, with its all-exciting, unsettling flexions of amplified affect, to the closet” (135).

³⁶ Rambuss, *Devotions*, 8, 106, also notes in passing the paradoxically secularizing force of the Protestant closet. Though the prayer closet is “a kind of vortex for the intensification of religious affect,” the subjectivity produced under God’s gaze is also susceptible to less devout inclinations.

³⁷ Girouard, *Country House*, 165, explains that in the sixteenth century probably fewer than a hundred nonclerical aristocrats owned more than a hundred books. “By the beginning of the eighteenth century,” however, he writes, “books and pictures were needing special accommodation in more and more houses. They were to become such an essential part of country-house life that one tends to forget how deep into the seventeenth century many houses had almost no books and only a handful of pictures” (164).

³⁸ Andrea Palladio, *Four Books of Architecture* (1570), trans. Isaac Ware (London: 1738), 38.

³⁹ Palladio, *Four Books*, 38.

⁴⁰ Isaac Ware, *Complete Body of Architecture* (London: 1756), 327-8.

⁴¹ On empiricism’s effects on looking at and describing objects of all kinds – the great, the strange, the beautiful, and the disagreeable alike – see “Seeing Things” in Cynthia Wall, *The Prose of Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 70-95.

⁴² The practice was initially restricted to the nobility, the only people with the leisure and resources needed for travel. However, as Patrick Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 111, explains, the practice was eventually adopted by “merchants whose collections were usually more specialized, and less wealthy intellectuals engrossed in some particular aspect of study.”

⁴³ Girouard, *Country House*, 174.

⁴⁴ John Tradescant, *Musaeum Tradescantianum: Or, A Collection of Rarities Preserved at South-Lambeth neer London* (1656). Cited in Wall, *Things*, 89. Tradescant’s collection of curiosities would join with Elias Ashmole’s to form the basis of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford in 1677.

⁴⁵ Girouard, *Country House*, 178.

⁴⁶ Stewart, *Longing*, 157.

⁴⁷ Collected “objects are naturalized into the landscape of the collection itself,” Stewart, *Longing*, writes, and “the narrative of history” is replaced “with the narrative of the individual subject—that is, the collector himself” (156).

⁴⁸ Mauriès, *Cabinets*, 156.

⁴⁹ Benedict, *Curiosity*, 23.

⁵⁰ John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 254-55.

⁵¹ John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Peter Nidditch, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 2.2.3, 120.

⁵² The image appears in a discussion of the possibility of there being more than five senses. The cognitive reach Locke advocates is roughly analogous to the reach required in order to picture a sixth sense: both are equally humbling. Alexander Pope would depict “reas’ning pride” as a similar sort of perceptual inversion

in Epistle I, "Of the Nature and State of Man with Respect to the Universe," in his *Essay on Man, Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope*, ed. Aubrey Williams (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 125:

In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
 All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
 Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
 Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
 Aspiring to be gods if angels fell,
 Aspiring to be angels men rebel:
 And who but wishes to invert the laws
 Of order, sins against th' eternal cause. (lines 123-130)

⁵³ King, *Gendering*, 5. (Cited in endnote 17.)

⁵⁴ Girouard, *Country House*, 173.

⁵⁵ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (Volume 5), eds. Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983), June 24, 1664, 188-9.

⁵⁶ Cited in Brewer, *Pleasures*, 257.

⁵⁷ Vastly expanded quantities and circuits of printed materials in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England made it possible, as Brewer, *Pleasures*, 191, pictures it, for "a rural shopkeeper" to "own, borrow or read much that was on the shelf of many a London gentleman." Scathing satires of Grub Street like Jonathan Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and Alexander Pope's *Dunciad* (cited below) predict that modern print culture will destroy the coherence of classical learning.

⁵⁸ Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 2-3.

⁵⁹ David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.

⁶⁰ Alexander Pope, "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem," *The Dunciad, Poetry and Prose*, 304.

⁶¹ In its extensive focus on print-cultural concerns, my argument about textual closets and cabinets differs from those that Alan Stewart and Barbara Benedict briefly proffer. Stewart writes off the designation as false advertising: the claims by *Closets Broken Open* and the like that "collections of information hitherto unavailable and secret [are] now 'discovered' and 'disclosed' to the reader" are empty promises since "what these collections emphatically do *not* contain are details of the knowledge-processing technologies of the male study-closet" (89). Benedict does not see any tension in the disjunction between these volumes' elite and exclusive referents and the all-too-accessible print culture in which they appeared. "Like their material counterparts," writes Benedict, "these collections of literary objects, designed for both use and admiration, demonstrate the intellectual ambition of their readers" (135). In its emphasis on the ambivalence surrounding the mass publication of knowledge, my chapter more closely parallels Adam Smyth's analysis of mid-seventeenth-century poetry and prose compilations in "*Profit and Delight*": *Printed Miscellanies in England, 1640-1682*. Smyth argues that "[p]rinted miscellanies invoke, draw upon, and supply manuscript collections, and suggest a complicated two-way dynamic between the two media": in "opening up the exclusive to anyone, [miscellanies] were treading a fine line between cultivating a sense of the socially eminent and debasing that eminence" (143).

⁶² Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1.

⁶³ Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (1740) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1.

⁶⁴ Claims to closet or cabinet origins also have close ties to another historicizing publication trope in the period: that of the discovered manuscript. We can think of the former as a more comprehensive version of the latter since it implies publishers hope to reimagine the entire text – its materiality along with its contents – as a version of an original “authentic” environment. The discovered manuscript trope stresses a narrative’s documentary authenticity without calling attention to the virtual space of the volume containing it.

⁶⁵ The full titlepage of this text speaks volumes about the genre’s entanglement of courtly intimacy, learning, and authority: *The Queens closet opened. Incomparable secrets in physick, chirurgery, preserving, candying, and cookery; as they were presented to the Queen by the most experienced persons of our times, many whereof they were honoured with her own practice, when she pleased to descend to these more private recreations. Never before published. / Transcribed from the true copies of her Majesties own receipt books, by W.M. one of her late servants* (London: 1655), A3, A4.

⁶⁶ *The Cabinet Open’d, Or the Secret History of the Amours of Madam de Maintenon, With the French King, translated from the French Copy* (London: 1690), iv-vi.

⁶⁷ *Physical Rarities, Containing the most choice Receipts of Physick and Chyrurgerie, for the Cure of all Diseases incident to Mans Body. Being a rich Jewell, kept in the Cabinet of a famous Doctor in this Nation; stored with admirable Secrets, and approved Medicines* (London: 1651).

⁶⁸ Hannah Wooley, *The Ladies Delight: Or, A Rich Closet of Choice Experiments & Curiosities, Containing the Art of Preserving & Candying...* (1672), A2-A3. Wooley’s recipe book, often reprinted throughout the Restoration, was better known as *The Queen-Like Closet* and was first published in London in 1670.

⁶⁹ Nicholas Haym, *The British Treasury; being cabinet the first of our Greek and Roman antiquities of all sorts. Never before printed: Volume 1* (London: 1719), 3.

⁷⁰ *The Golden Cabinet of true Treasure: Containing the summe of Morall Philosophie*, William Jewell, trans. (London: H.L. for John Crosley, 1612), A10-A11.

⁷¹ Auila, *Audi filia, or a rich cabinet full of spirituall ievvells*, Tobie Matthew, trans. (Saint-Omer: English College Press, 1620).

⁷² Brooks’s book was published in London; Bradbury’s in Berwick.

⁷³ John White, *Rich Cabinet with Variety of Inventions in several Arts and Siences* (London: printed for William Gilbertson, 1658), A1.

⁷⁴ *The Kings Cabinet opened: Or, Certain Packets of Secret Letters & Papers; Written with the Kings own Hand, and taken in his Cabinet at Nasby-Field* (London: 1645), A6.

⁷⁵ *The Kings Cabinet opened* unleashed an important subgroup of printed closets and cabinets devoted to political commentary. Claims to cabinet origins had especially high stakes in these texts, whether their publishers wanted to justify and clarify the nature of the transactions transpiring behind closed doors, or to thwart them by disclosing them. See for instance: *The Political Cabinet: Or, An Impartial Review of the most remarkable Occurrences of the World, Particularly of Europe Collected from the most Authentic Papers published by the several Courts*, a mid-eighteenth century monthly periodical; *The Cabinet Council; Or, Secret History of Lewis XIV. In Which the Grand Scheme was concerted for assassinating King William; the conquering of Holland; re-establishing King James upon the Throne of these Kingdoms...* (London: 1757); *The Junto. Or, the Interior Cabinet laid Open* (London: 1778); and *The Cabinet* (Norwich: 1795), a quasi-revolutionary periodical “miscellany” whose editors declare themselves “tremblingly alive to the horrors of a ministerial despotism” in Britain.

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- ⁷⁶ Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620), trans. & eds. Peter Urbach and John Gibson (Chicago: Open Court, 1994), 40.
- ⁷⁷ Thomas Sprat, *History of the Royal Society* (3rd Edition) (London: 1667), 74-75.
- ⁷⁸ Somewhat less prominent examples of museums with close ties to personal cabinets include those that John Soane and Ashton Lever built in their own houses. See Mauries, *Curiosity*, 198, 202.
- ⁷⁹ Robert Dodsley, *General Contents of the British Museum* (London: 1761), xi-xii (original italics).
- ⁸⁰ William Wadham, *England's Choice Cabinet of Rarities; Or, the Famous Mr. Wadhams Last Golden Legacy* (London: 1700), A2.
- ⁸¹ *Mother Bunch's closet newly broke open, containing rare secrets of art and nature, tried and experienced by learned philosophers, ... Second part* (London?: 1760?), 15-19.
- ⁸² *Wit's Cabinet: A Companion for Gentlemen and Ladies* (London: 1715?), 1-2.
- ⁸³ Robert Basset, *Curiosities: Or, The Cabinet of Nature. Contyning Phylosophicall Naturall and Morall Questions answered* (London: 1637), A5-A7.
- ⁸⁴ Anthony Hamilton, *Memoirs of Count de Grammont*, ed. Walter Scott (New York: Dutton and Company, 1905), 262-3.
- ⁸⁵ *Rare Verities. The Cabinet of Venus Unlocked, and Her Secrets laid open. Being a Translation of part of Sinibaldus, his Geneanthropeia, and a collection of some things out of other Latin Authors, never before in English* (London: 1658), A7, A1, A5
- ⁸⁶ Walter Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture* (New York: Viking, 1987), 244, points out that the language of sexual collection helped the create the impression that it was an erudite and antiquarian endeavor: "Like 'pornography,' 'erotica' is a modern coinage with a specious aura of antiquity. The *OED* dates its first English usage 1853 (just three years, that is, after the first published use of 'pornographers'), as a category heading in a bookseller's catalogue. Along with 'curiosa' and 'facetiae,' it continued to perform that esoteric function for at least a century, signaling to the initiated... books that might please their specialized tastes."
- ⁸⁷ Eve Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 73.
- ⁸⁸ Benedict, *Curiosity*, 9.
- ⁸⁹ Benedict, *Curiosity*, 143.
- ⁹⁰ I[ohn] H[arrington], "Of a Ladyes Cabinet" in "Epigrammes by Sir I.H. and others," *Alicia. Philparthens louing Folly etc.* (London: 1613), sig. M4r. Cited in Stewart, "Early Modern Closets," 98. For consistency's sake, the spelling of John Harington's name is modernized throughout this dissertation.
- ⁹¹ "The Discovery" appears on the first pages of the *Cabinet of Love*, a separate section of *The Works of the Earls of Rochester, Roscommon, Dorset, &c. In two volumes. Adorn'd with cuts* (London: 1714). Other editions were published in 1709, 1711, 1718, 1721, 1731, 1739, 1752, 1757, and 1777. Patrick Kearney, *A History of Erotic Literature* (London: MacMillan, 1982), 40-41, notes the importance of this text to the history of British pornography:
- Included in this [volume], and by far the longest piece, was *The Delights of Venus*, which is a section of Chorier's work done into verse. While of equal indecency with its frequently prosecuted prose original, and certainly not alone in its outrageousness with the accompanying poems which included *Dildoides*, an amusing and neglected burlesque usually attributed to

Samuel Butler (1612-80) the author of *Hudibras*, the volume contrived to escape legal entanglements.

⁹² *Lovers Cabinet: A Collection of Poems* (Dublin: 1755), 61-63.

⁹³ Mr H---l, "Miss in her Teens," *The Cabinet of Love, or a collection of the most affecting Anecdotes of people renowned for their virtues or their vices by persons eminent in the world of literature* (London: 1792), 61-3.

⁹⁴ Peeping Toms experiment with the peculiarly flexible, imaginative power associated with sight. In this sense they exemplify one of the crucial principles of Joseph Addison's theory of the "Pleasures of the Imagination," Number 411, *The Spectator* (Volume 2), ed. Donald Bond (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 535-6: "OUR Sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our Senses. It fills the Mind with the largest Variety of Ideas, converses with its Objects at the greatest Distance, and continues the longest in Action without being tired or satiated with its proper Enjoyments." As archetypes of print culture, however, voyeurs point to the differences between reading and other forms of visual pleasure.

⁹⁵ "Tristram Shandy," 16.

⁹⁶ "Tristram Shandy," 20.

Orientalism, Female Favoritism, and the Bathing Closet in *Memoirs of Count de Grammont*

a long improving moral lecture delivered to a naked woman, by a Lesbian: what a period
—in the margins of Northrop Frye's copy of *Memoirs of Count de Grammont*¹

In the system of writing about the Orient, the Orient is less a place than a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origins in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone else's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these.

—Edward Said²

Where, speaking quite literally, does love between women take place?

—Terry Castle³

In *Memoirs of Count de Grammont*, Anthony Hamilton, from a family of Irish-Catholic Jacobite exiles to France, recounts the youthful exploits of his aging brother-in-law, Philibert de Comte de Gramont, a chevalier, gambler, and rake, and takes particular delight in embellishing Gramont's memories of the English court, where soon after Charles II took the throne, he met and eventually fell in love with the author's sister, Elizabeth Hamilton. This central love plot echoes in the many escapades in which it is embedded, producing the effect of an extended comedy of manners in prose.⁴ Of the twelve closet intrigues that propel and complicate the conjugal thrust of the *Memoirs*, only one is set in a closet for bathing per se, and it is also the only one for which Hamilton creates an entirely fictional character. In a scene dripping with suggestion, a veteran maid-of-honor to the Duchess of York, Miss Hobart, sits with the naïve novice, Miss Temple, on a couch in a cosy bathroom antechamber and sternly counsels her neither to fall in love nor even consort with any male courtier, and particularly not the Earl of Rochester. The teasing narration and setting of this encounter – the images it conjures of lesbian instruction in a steamy private place – are the subject of this chapter.

I argue that Hamilton constructs Miss Hobart and her intimate space as the text's receptacles for the homoeroticism that has otherwise been expunged from his version of Whitehall, and that by separating homo from heteroeroticism in this way he defamiliarizes the traditional courtly view of sexuality as nothing more and nothing less than a political tool, while nevertheless leaving room for all kinds of tantalizing projections. The bathing closet – a newly orientalized space at Charles II's court – nudges our minds east, I will suggest, to the Ottoman seraglio and the Turkish *hammam* (the women's public bath) where erotic relations might still be imagined as inextricably linked to despotic power structures. In the place of a description of bathing or some other kind of physical passion between the women in his bathing closet, Hamilton gives us only Miss Hobart's fiery feminist polemic. In this he embeds another eastern allusion, this time to Roxolana, the power-hungry sultaness in William Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes*, an allusion which also doubles back on the scene. As I read it, then, the bathing closet is the setting of the *Memoir's* most telling subplot. Stirring the voyeuristic imagination, it raises questions that will not be answered, promises secret knowledge that will not be delivered, and ultimately evokes a fusion of eroticism and ambition that does not quite fit in Hamilton's retrospective and comic view of the English court.

Whitehall Inside Out

After circulating in manuscript for several years, Hamilton's *Memoirs* was printed in France in 1713, in an edition subtitled *contenant particulièrement l'histoire amoureuse de la Cour d'Angleterre, sous le regne de Charles II*. The following year, the London historian Abel Boyer translated it, repackaging it as a *roman à clef* with names blanked out in the racier parts. A second English edition in 1719 appended a key.⁵ The *Memoirs'*

first English publication coincided with Queen Anne's death, the end of the Stuart line, and the end of the court's dominance in British cultural life, as myriad new institutions, including aristocrats' own houses, theaters, concert halls, pleasure gardens, clubs, taverns, cafes, print publications, and indeed parliament redirected Britons' interests and attention. As court historian R.O. Bucholz puts it, "Just as the constitutional sovereignty of the monarch had been challenged and – in some areas – usurped, so had the sovereignty of her court in the worlds of art, fashion, business, and politics."⁶ Charles II's enormous and decadent household provided an appealing target for the nostalgia (and sometimes for the contempt) bred by the declining status of the monarchy. "Its memory was kept alive by an endless stream of popular anecdotes, anti-court propaganda, and Grub Street memoirs, culminating in those of Count Grammont..."⁷ Bucholz notes. Charles II invited close relatives including the Duke of York (later James II) as well as numerous favorites, mistresses, and their children to maintain their households at Whitehall, and Hamilton offers glimpses of many of them. Like roughly contemporaneous scandal narratives by Aphra Behn, Marie D'Aulnoy, and Delarivier Manley, Hamilton's *Memoirs* presents the court from the inside out, providing close-up views not of its ceremonies, policies, or acts of bravery on the battlefield but of the covert and transient alliances sealed or undone in its most private corners.⁸ In fact Hamilton's narrative may well be the premier text in the early eighteenth-century historico-imaginative invention of the Restoration as England's most sparkling and licentious age (and of Rochester in particular as its liveliest exemplar). In the nineteenth century, T.B. Macaulay called the *Memoirs* "the most highly finished and vividly coloured picture of the English Court in the days when the English Court was gayest."⁹

As we saw in the previous chapter, closets in seventeenth-century courts had shored up precarious networks of power and pleasure in the intense, sometimes sexual relations between monarchs or high courtiers and favorites, secretaries, and servants of either gender. The gaiety of the Restoration court as Hamilton represents it, however, is decidedly straight. Even the notoriously bisexual Rochester is fully heterosexual here. Significantly, Hamilton may still have been composing the *Memoirs* when Queen Anne's ladies of the bedchamber were becoming a running theme in censure of her reign, as Whig Sarah Churchill, the Duchess of Marlborough, was supplanted by the Tory Abigail Masham as her favorite. According to popular satires, the Queen's shifting affections for these prominent politicians' wives was the real reason for the change in her party allegiances. In *Political Passions*, feminist theorist Rachel Weil argues that the scandal surrounding Anne's bedchamber women was not only a gender issue but reflected the fading power of the monarchy as well:

The new political institutions, practices, ideologies and mechanisms of the early eighteenth century – frequent and contested elections between parties with distinct platforms, the increasing power of Parliament in relation to the executive, the diminishing relevance of the monarch's person, preferences, reproductive capacity and bedchamber servants in relation to the important affairs of government – were steps on the road to political modernity... Discourses on Anne were not simply about women, or reflections of attitudes to women; they were ways of negotiating the challenges posed by a political life in which the rules were shifting, and practices and ideals were starkly at odds. Anne's sex may have made such problems more visible, but it did not cause them.¹⁰

Weil's nuanced view of the popular turn against female favoritism in the early eighteenth century will inform my reading of the bathing-closet episode in the *Memoirs*. I will be suggesting that this intimate space becomes the text's critical receptacle for shifting relations among gender, power, and eroticism.

For the most part, in Hamilton's version of Whitehall, closets afford courtiers the privacy they need for confiding in, gossiping about, and otherwise pointedly including or excluding one another, particularly by exchanging intimate knowledge of other people's affairs. Same-gender closet intrigues trade on wit, especially in the sense of cognitive mastery, making room for powerplays that redirect homosocial energy towards heterosexual relationships – what Eve Sedgwick has named “homosocial desire.”¹¹ The Count de Gramont himself has a weakness for this dynamic and his friend, the philosopher Saint-Evremond, tells him off for it, “You seldom engage in intrigues, but to disturb the happiness of others: a mistress who has no lovers [has] no charms for you...”¹²

In Hamilton's most historically consequential closet intrigue, for instance, after Lord Falmouth learns of the clandestine marriage of the King's brother, James, the Duke of York, to Anne Hyde, he attempts to come between them. Falmouth wants to thwart an alliance between the future king and Anne Hyde's father, the Earl of Clarendon, “an insignificant lawyer, whom the favor of the sovereign had lately made a peer of the realm without any noble blood, and chancellor, without any capacity” (191). Since the Duke has married Anne in private and without the King's consent, he might yet disown the match, Lord Falmouth reasons, and he assembles five “men of honor” willing to support this cause by slandering Clarendon's daughter. Meeting with the Duke in the King's closet, the members of Lord Falmouth's cabinet council vie with one another to develop the most extravagant circumstantial details in their tales of their affairs with Anne Hyde, details obviously meant to convey both the truth of their accounts and the intimacy of their meetings. One slanderer claims, for example, that he met with Miss Hyde once at her father's closet when he was away and “not paying so much attention to what was upon the table as to what they were engaged in, they had spilled a bottle full of ink upon a

despatch of four pages, and that the King's monkey, which was blamed for the accident, had been a long time in disgrace" (192). Another affirms that "he had found the critical minute [with Miss Hyde] in a certain closet built over the water," avowing that "three or four swans had been witnesses to the happiness of many others, as the lady frequently repaired to that place" (193). Falmouth's plot ultimately fails (the very next day the Duke of York will publicly announce his marriage), but the closet conversation has served its purpose in reestablishing intimacy between the men, in their titillating narrative transactions as they collectively imagine cuckolding the Duke.

As the above episode begins to suggest, the court is an even more precarious place for women than men since they live under threat not only of ridicule but also of sexual redundancy. All courtiers keep their eyes open for a good match, but unlike the men, to stay in the game girls and women have to be known for their charm and, with the exception of kept women, for their chastity as well. Hamilton records the "salutary maxims" one maid of honor has collected on the subject of female self-preservation at Whitehall: "a lady ought to be young to enter the court with advantage, and not old to leave it with good grace." She "[can]not maintain herself there but by a glorious resistance, or by illustrious foibles" and "in so dangerous a situation, she ought to use her utmost endeavours not to dispose of her heart until she gave her hand" (268).

Notwithstanding the danger of overexposure in public places of assembly, female courtiers in the *Memoirs* do not use closets to retreat from the cutthroat sexism of the court but, on the contrary, to establish or protect their honor or to exercise their power to make – or, more often, break – other women's place in the pecking order. Which is to say that for women no less than men, female reputations are the most important currency in closet exchanges. For instance, the Duchess of Cleveland, formerly the leading royal

courtesan, takes the backstairs “not new to her,” to speak to the King in his cabinet late one night. She has a secret about Frances Stewart, a new maid of honor to the Queen. Though Charles has begun to pine for Miss Stewart, she refuses to be seduced by him, insisting that she is preserving her virginity for marriage. The jilted Duchess tips off the King to see for himself that this is untrue (381). In another closet intrigue, Miss Hamilton uses her private room to hatch a plot with her siblings to humiliate their female cousin, a laughably bad dancer, at the Queen’s masquerade ball. A few days later the author’s sister takes to her closet once again, this time to feign surprise as her cousin divulges that she will attend the ball in disguise, though her husband has expressly forbidden her from doing so (147-8). As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, when a box of trinkets and love letters addressed to one of her maids of honor comes into the Duchess of York’s hands, she opens it in front of several ladies “who happened then to be in her closet.” The Duchess wants to share the pleasure of discovering the secret details of her servant’s affair. Yet once the incriminating contents of the box have been exposed, she has no choice but to depose the girl since her own standing at court depends on the sexual viability – the “virtue” – of those who circulate as her representatives (263).

The conversation between women that Hamilton sets in a bathing closet seems in many respects, as we shall see, more of the same: an interaction streaked with competition, defamation, manipulation – the usual libertine high-jinks – oriented toward the barbed public of the court. Yet this closet encounter assumes a peculiar intensity in the narrative even before it begins. Its protagonist is Miss Hobart, who, in service to the Duchess of York, presides over her maids of honor. In a long prelude, extending over ten pages, Miss Hobart’s desires, motives, and the shape of her body – the whole of her constitution as an intimate being – become objects of the court’s, and the reader’s,

curiosity. In an initial sketch, Hamilton attributes the sense of Miss Hobart's exceptionality to a national, implicitly courtly, public: "Miss Hobart's character was at that time as uncommon in England, as her person was singular, in a country where, to be young and not in some degree handsome, is a reproach..." he writes, skeptical and bemused, adding, "she had a tender heart, whose sensibility some pretended was alone in favour of the fair sex" (263). The common view, Hamilton explains, is that Miss Hobart prefers the love and affection of girls and women. At the same time, he makes it clear that this is the view of a people for whom being unattractive is judged as a wilful affront to others – not the most reliable judges. Recording without corroborating this perspective, Hamilton goes on to further unsettle our sense of what Miss Hobart's "tender heart" desires as he lists her shifting attachments:

Miss Bagot was the first that gained her tenderness and affection, which she returned at first with equal warmth and sincerity; but perceiving that all her friendship was insufficient to repay that of Miss Hobart, she yielded the conquest to the governess's niece, who thought herself as much honoured by it as her aunt thought herself obliged by the care she took of the young girl. (263-4)

Miss Bagot, another of the Duchess of York's maids of honor, at first reciprocates Miss Hobart's "tenderness and affection" but before long finds that Miss Hobart's desire for intimacy exceeds the limits of "friendship" as she understands them. In "yield[ing] the conquest" to her governess's niece, Miss Bagot reads Miss Hobart's feelings as a form of gallant, romantic love, and rejects them. Accepting Miss Hobart's attentions, whatever they consist in, the governess's niece – a girl younger and socially lower than Miss Bagot – thinks herself "honoured" by the relationship, understanding it, perhaps, to fall within the bounds of traditional court favoritism. At the same time, the governess feels "obliged by the care" given her niece by a high-ranking female courtier, casting Miss Hobart as a guardian or patron, and perhaps even a kind of mother figure as well. Rather than

clarifying Miss Hobart's actions or intentions, Hamilton shows how susceptible they are to interpretation.

As the court's curiosity about Miss Hobart turns into outright satire, Hamilton sustains his cagey syntax: "the report, whether true or false, of her singularity, spread through the whole court," he remarks, "where people, being yet so uncivilized as never to have heard of that kind of refinement in love of ancient Greece, imagined that the illustrious Hobart who seemed so particularly attached to the fair sex, was in reality something more than she appeared to be..." (264). An old-fashioned, lowbrow biological explanation for Miss Hobart's attachments has begun to circulate: that she is a hermaphrodite – "something more than she appeared to be."¹³ Layering prevarications with equivocations, Hamilton at once presents and disowns this rumor without definitively replacing it with the less "uncivilized" notion that hers is a purer and more ancient species of desire: she may love her young, beautiful favorites platonically, that is, chastely, and in the service of a higher truth. He proffers this possibility not as a positive claim, however, but only as a retort to those who stoop to mechanical explanations of same-sex love. Thus Hamilton's irony makes it impossible for us to identify the nature of the "singularity" Miss Hobart represents, either to the court or to Hamilton. And in fact Hamilton does not properly confirm here that Miss Hobart does have a peculiar proclivity: she "*seemed*," he writes, "so particularly attached" to girls (my italics).

Hamilton reinforces the problematic status of Miss Hobart's desire as he recounts the reaction of the Duchess of York, whom she has served as maid of honor throughout the growing scandal. When she considers Miss Hobart's case, the Duchess – like Hamilton – juggles others' views rather than deciding on her own. She does not appear to want or need to identify Miss Hobart's difference or to judge it definitively; instead

she adopts an ethical perspective that transcends that of the court. She has, Hamilton says, “too much generosity not to treat as visionary what was imputed to Miss Hobart” and “too much justice to condemn her upon the faith of lampoons” (264). Generally very quick to dismiss from her service anyone who might disgrace her, the Duchess takes an unusual course of action with Miss Hobart. She “remov[es] her from [the society of the maids of honor] to be an attendant upon her own person” (264): Miss Hobart is to be the steward of her bathing closet. In the early modern court, the level of trust and favor given a courtier was “directly proportional to access to the closets,”¹⁴ and a lady of the bedchamber – to which this position was roughly equivalent – ranked above a maid of honor. Yet a study of household offices at Whitehall during the Restoration suggests that “Promotion within the household was rare... Most household departments and subdepartments were too small or too fragmented to have a clear ladder of promotion.”¹⁵ The Duchess clearly means to withdraw Miss Hobart from the relative publicity of the maids of honor, who mingle with other courtiers as the Duchess’s ambassadors, to the privacy in the bathing cabinet. But how to interpret this gesture? Given the context of Miss Hobart’s displacement – the mockery at court – the Duchess may be “closeting” her in something like the contemporary sense. The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the closet’s current idiomatic meaning to 1967, citing a passage from Wainwright Churchill’s *Homosexual Behavior among Males*: “The ‘closet queen’ or so-called latent homosexual becomes a menace... to the entire community.” Making room for Miss Hobart in the bathing closet, the Duchess may be trying to make a secret of oldest maid of honor, hiding her away. On the other hand, the appointment may mean preferment for Miss Hobart, a sign of the Duchess’s desire to give her a more personal and intimate place in

her household. Hamilton's use of the neutral verb "remove" to describe the action maintains the ambiguity.

The question of Miss Hobart's singularity comes to a head when the court's most formidable purveyor of intimate knowledge enters the affair. Hamilton tells us that after hearing the rumors about Miss Hobart, the governess, concerned for her niece's reputation, turns to Rochester and he "immediately advise[s] her to take her niece out of the hands of Miss Hobart; and contrive[s] matters so well that she [the niece] fell into his own" (264). Just as Miss Hobart begins to cultivate a third relationship, this time with the newest of the Duchess of York's maids of honor – the lovely and guileless Miss Temple – Rochester begins to court her too. The Duchess then charges Miss Hobart to try to warn Miss Temple "to take care, with all possible discretion, that her frequent and long conversations [with Rochester] might not be attended with any dangerous consequences" (271). The "dangerous consequences" the Duchess fears include not only what Rochester and her maid of honor will get up to together but more importantly the probability of more bad publicity for her when word gets out that Miss Temple is involved with him.

Miss Hobart gets her chance to warn her charge when Miss Temple pays her a visit one day, hot and tired after a day of riding, craving sweetmeats and asking permission "to undress herself, and change her linen" (272). Miss Hobart invites Miss Temple in and dismisses her chambermaid: "how much you oblige me by this free unceremonious conduct," she tells her young devotee as she helps her to undress,

but above all, I am enchanted with your particular attention to cleanliness: how greatly you differ in this from this, as in many other things, from that silly creature Jennings!... What stories have I heard of her sluttishness! No cat ever dreaded water so much as she does: fie upon her! Never to wash for her own

comfort, and only to attend to those parts which must necessarily be seen, such as the neck and hands. (272)

Apparently hoping to coax Miss Temple into the bath, Miss Hobart makes no direct overture. She simply asks Miss Temple to retire with her to the bathing closet and leads her to a couch where panels draped in silks screen the baths – “where,” she says, “we may enjoy a little conversation secure from any impertinent visit” (273).

After such an oblique introduction, these overlapping plot strands solicit our careful attentiveness to the ensuing conversation. We bring to the scene a web of unanswered questions: What does Miss Hobart *want* from Miss Temple? What sort of intervention does she have in mind? Is this intervention the same as the one that the Duchess had in mind? We know that Miss Hobart has a history of rivalry with Rochester: is she hoping to get back at him through Miss Temple? More generally, does Miss Hobart’s “fondness” for the fair sex represent an effort to find a place within the dominant *male* homosocial dynamic of the court? Or is Miss Hobart driven by duty to the Duchess in her new position as bathing-closet mistress? Or might Miss Hobart’s affection be – as the governess once believed – that of a moral guardian and protector? Will these aims lead to – allow for – physical intimacy with Miss Temple? If so, how so? And what form will this physical intimacy take? How, in other words, do Miss Hobart’s personal proclivities either combine with or override the broadly political or the broadly erotic thrust of the many motives the narrative requires us to entertain? Literary scholar David Michael Robinson has also noted Hamilton’s evasiveness in this part of the *Memoirs*. Calling Hamilton’s stance “Mock Unknowingness,” Robinson argues that “the narrator himself pretends not to endorse the conclusion he takes such pains to impress upon the reader – namely, that Miss Hobart is a lesbian...”¹⁶ On this view Hamilton has a

complete grasp of who Miss Hobart is on the inside and what she wants (and what being a lesbian finally “means” in this narrative) and uses prevarication simply as emotional leverage, to bond with early eighteenth-century readers against the less sophisticated Restoration court. I propose that Hamilton aims not, or not simply, to mock Miss Hobart, but also to create a real sense of indeterminacy about her desires as well. His evasiveness requires us to look and think again, to predict, surmise, and guess. And in this state of suspense, the fluid homoeroticism of the early modern courtly closet lingers in our imaginative purview even as it retreats into the past.

Orientalism, Intimacy, and the Bath

The setting of Miss Hobart and Miss Temple’s conversation is not decorative or incidental. As I explore at length below, bathroom architecture – indeed the very idea of bathing – brought with it a specific set of associations in this period. As Hamilton portrays it, the Duchess of York’s bathing closet – with its partitioned chamber, couch (*lit de repos*), and curtains – is in the height of fashion for its time. In the second half of the seventeenth century, water had come into vogue among the elite. Experiments in pumping and gravity conducted by the Royal Society, and the virtuosic engineering of Samuel Morland in particular – whom Girouard calls “the great maestro of water supply in the reign of Charles II”¹⁷ – propelled new feats of plumbing in palaces and manor houses. Indoor (and outdoor) baths were increasingly well equipped. Moreover, shortly after the Restoration, Charles had actively transformed the largest of his three bathrooms into a kind of spa lounge, a place for relaxing in select company. Incomplete Whitehall works’ accounts show that in 1663 myriad efforts were made to create in it a feeling of luxurious seclusion: “The room was panelled and embellished with carvings, curtains and

a screen were provided for the bath and a painting was set up over the chimney. A palisade was erected in the privy garden before the windows of the rooms to maintain the King's privacy," palace historian Simon Thurley explains.¹⁸ The same year, "soft furnishings" were brought in, including hangings and a feather bed. An account from September 1668 lists expenses for laying a 49-square foot floor in its sunken-pool bath. Five years later the plumbing was improved, and the room's walls and ceiling were covered in mirrors. While there is no certain record of the Duchess of York's first lodgings at Whitehall, Thurley records that the Duchess of Cleveland had panels installed in her Whitehall bathing closet during this same period.¹⁹

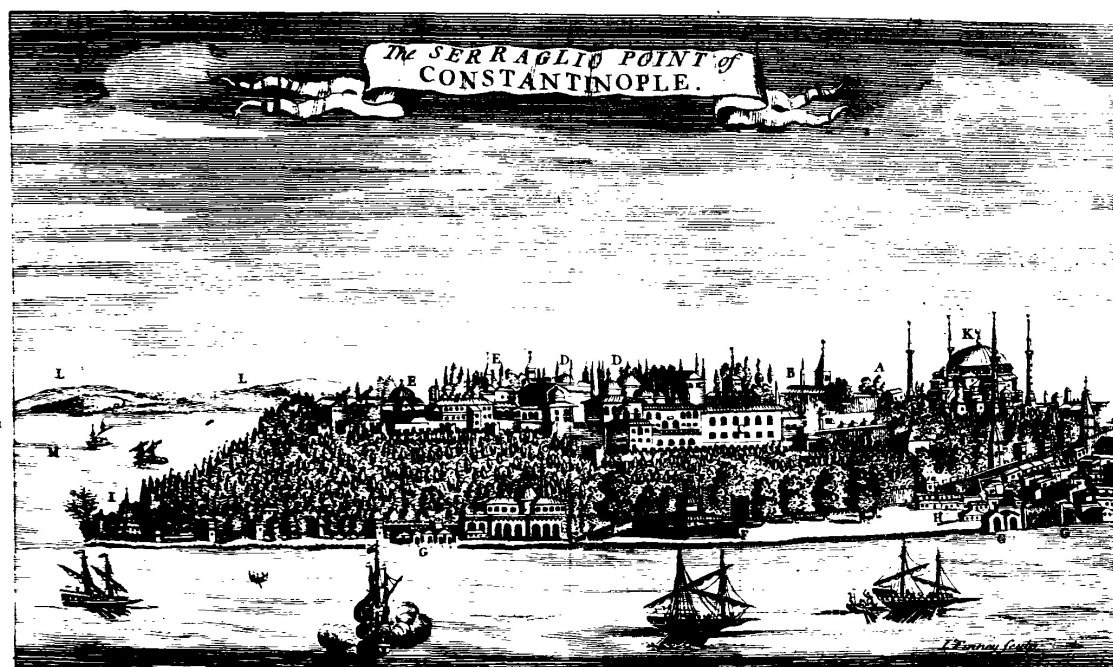
The Koran's injunction to wash in preparation for prayer and after sex or excretion gave the bath a social and political significance in the Muslim east that it did not have at Whitehall, where cleanliness was only a small aspect of civility, really just another form of ridicule prevention (155). The disgraceful notion of cleanliness that Miss Hobart attributes to Miss Temple's rival – "only to attend to those parts which must necessarily be seen, such as the neck and hands" – was in fact the standard one in European courts at this moment. In conduct manuals from throughout the early modern period, in keeping with the crucial focus on "whatever could be shown in public," cleanliness had "little to do with water" and was "largely unconcerned with the body, except for the hands and the face, the only parts that showed."²⁰ So while deluxe bathing closets were rare enough even at Whitehall that "bath superintendent" was not one of its conventional offices, it was well known that opulent rooms for bathing were essential in the imperial court at Constantinople. As British diplomat Paul Rycault records in *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1668), The *Hamaungee Bashee*, "chief over the Baths," was one of the twelve offices to which an educated male slave might be promoted

in the Ottoman seraglio, one of the few attending “immediately on the Person of the Grand Signior.”²¹ I want to suggest that the Duchess of York’s bathing closet opens out not only into the cramped public of the English court, but also into the still more claustrophobic, volatile, and sensual arenas of the Ottoman seraglio and the Turkish *hammam* as featured in the period’s orientalist imagination.

Nothing in British architecture rivaled the size of the Grand Seraglio and, arguably, there was no more striking representation of the east in western culture (fig. 5). The Grand Seraglio functioned more as a metonymy than a symbol, however, in the way it physicalized the relation between the Sultan’s court and household, and the potency of his arbitrary will. Ottaviano Bon’s description of Ottoman culture begins with a boat’s-eye view of the Grand Seraglio’s natural defense barrier: the palace, he writes, stands “upon a point of the Continent, which looketh towards the mouth of the Black Sea: and is in form triangular, two sides whereof are compassed with the Thracian Bosphorus, and the third joyneth to the rest of the City.” Bon then moves up and in, past thick walls, watch-towers, and tiers of armed guards, through terraces and public halls, before arriving at the living areas, where he sees the methodical despotism of the empire specified in its many and various “household” offices.²² The inhabitants’ basic state of enslavement stands in for all those ruled by the Sultan:

all they which are in the *Seraglio*, both men and women, are the Grand Signiors slaves (for so they stile themselves) and so are all they which are subject to his Empire. For, besides that he is their Sovereign, they do all acknowledge that whatsoever they do possess, or enjoy, proceedeth meerly from his good will, and favour: and not onely their estates but their lives also are at his dispose.²³

For his part, Rycault spends about a third of the ninety-odd pages of his “Maximes of the Turkish Politie” on the spatial and social organization of the Ottoman court. “Of the



- | | |
|--|---|
| A The Entrance into <i>ij</i> Serraglio from <i>ij</i> City. | G The Grand Signors Barge-houses. |
| B Lodgings for the Guards. | H Part of Constantinople called Balat. |
| C The great Hall for publick Audience. | I The Entrance into the Serraglio from Sea. |
| D The Grand Signors Lodgings. | K Sancta Sophia now <i>ij</i> Grand Signors Mosque. |
| E The Womens Lodgings. | L Part of the Asia Shear. |
| F Pleasure Houses. | M The Bosphorus w ^{ch} divides Europe from Asia. |

From B. Reinhold's.

Figure 5. *The Serraglio Point of Constantinople.*

Power, Court, and Officers of the State of the Grand Seignior; as also of his Women, and other Inhabitants of the Haram or Seraglio,” the title of a chapter on Turkish politics in a mid-eighteenth-century *Compleat universal history*, suggests that the organization of the Sultan’s “household” continued to seem crucial to the empire even as it was becoming less dominant globally.²⁴

The seraglio’s harem or women’s quarters, where the Sultan reputedly had stocks of virgin slaves trained and at the ready to indulge his every whim, was a particularly common focal point for contemplating the intersection of political, architectural, and intimate structures of power and subjection. In *Harems of the Mind*, Ruth Yeazel views the conceptual conflations in the English meanings of *harem* and *seraglio* as a primary record of a western obsession with women’s sexual imprisonment. “The word ‘harem’ derives from the Arabic for ‘forbidden’ or ‘sacred,’ and has come to refer both to the women themselves, who remain inviolable by adopting the veil when they venture outside, and to the part of the dwelling reserved for their use.” Though these quarters were not locked as a rule, Europeans tended to superimpose that idea. “In Turkish, *haremlik* literally means the place of the sanctuary,” she explains. The term *seraglio*, more completely a western construction, also points toward sexual slavery:

Europeans mistakenly associated the Turco-Persian word for palace, *saray*, with the Italian *serrare*, to lock up or enclose—by which false etymology the English ‘seraglio’ and the French *sérail* came to signify not only an entire building (as in ‘the Grand Seraglio’ at Constantinople), but the apartments in which the women were confined and even the women themselves...²⁵

Rycault assumes that his description of the harem will be the highlight of his tour of the Ottoman household, and pauses to tease a little: “since I have brought my Reader into the quarters of these Eunuchs... he may chance to take it unkindly, should I leave him at the

door, and not introduce him into those apartments, where the Grand Signiors Mistresses are lodged...”²⁶

In fact, men could not enter. The rigid gender segregation of slaves, necessary to secure the Sultan’s control over alliances and reproduction, enforced a homosocial substructure in the Grand Seraglio, fueling another set of orientalist fantasies: men and women lacking access to “natural” outlets for their lust. Bon, Rycault, and Le Sturgeon all understand homoeroticism among young slaves in the Seraglio as an inevitable making-do with what’s available: “wanting the society of” (Bon)²⁷ or “deprived of Conversation with” (Le Sturgeon)²⁸ the other sex, the “amorous disposition of youth” is, as Rycault puts it, “transported to a most passionate admiration of beauty wheresoever it finds it.”²⁹ Rycault remarks that couples sometimes substitute age for gender difference, “especially the old Women court the young, present them with rich Garments, Jewels, Mony, even to their own impoverishment and ruine... and these darts of *Cupid* are shot through all the Empire,” Rycault notes, “especially *Constantinople*, the *Seraglio* of the Grand Signior, and the apartments of the *Sultans*.”³⁰ Generally speaking, these accounts of eastern homosexuality give the sense that shared subjection produces among slaves an idea of their own homogeneity and exchangeability; that their lust finds objects at random, a form of arbitrariness antithetical to that of the Sultan because it is fundamentally powerless and passive; unwilling.

The Turkish habit of bathing communally rendered the associative knot of eastern despotism and arbitrary sensuality especially slippery when it came to women. As Billie Melman puts it, “the women’s public-baths were identified as the *loci sensuales* in the erotically charged landscape of the Orient.”³¹ In a first-hand account in her *Turkish Embassy Letters* (which would remain the definitive one throughout the eighteenth

century) Mary Wortley Montagu notices how the arrangement of bodies on furniture provides the only sign of social status in the women's bath: "The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being *in the state of nature*, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them."³² With her image of refinement and civility (she will go on to compare the bath to the coffee house), Montagu clearly fights against the usual terminal point of the conceptual slide from the eastern interiors to unranked homosociality to promiscuity such as that exemplified in passages like *Embassy into Turkey*, Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq's sixteenth-century memoir:

amongst the women of Levan[t], ther is very great amity proceeding... through the frequentation & resort to the bathes: yea & somtimes become so feruently in loue the one of the other as if it were men, in such sort that perceiuing some maiden or woman of excellent beauty they wil not ceaste [*sic*] vntil they haue found means to bath with them, & to handle & grope them euerywhere at their pleasures, so ful they are of luxuriousnes & feminine wantonnes...³³

A half century later, George Sandys had raged, more succinctly, in his orientalist travelogue, that "filthie lust" (note the ethical rather than hygienic significance of "filthie") was "committed daily in the remote closets of... darkesome [Turkish] Bannias: yea women with women" "a thing incredible, if former times had not given thereunto both detection and punishment."³⁴ Hamilton himself, an experimenter in the genre of the oriental tale, eroticizes contact between an eastern woman and her female servants in a bath in *Les quatre Facardins*, the subject of one of the few illustrations in an early-nineteenth-century edition (fig. 6).³⁵ In this instance the beautiful bather, caressed by a

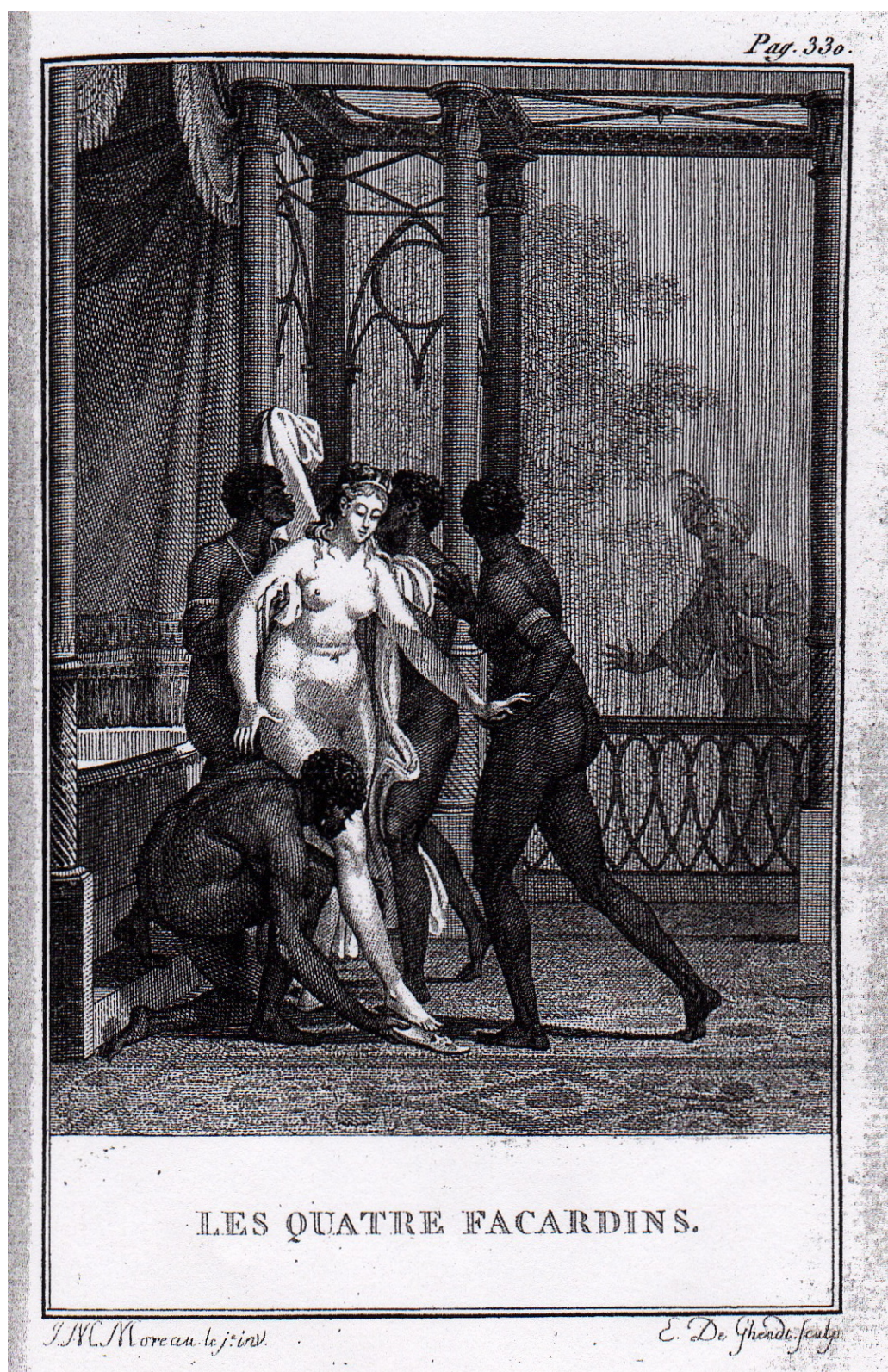


Figure 6. *Les quatre Facardins.*

circle of attendant slaves, has actually staged the scene in the hopes of entrancing a male onlooker.

For many centuries, eastern associations had been fundamental to the way England thought about bathing for pleasure and relaxation on its own soil as well. Forgotten since the Roman occupation, Crusaders had re-introduced public indoor pools for a relaxing immersion in heated water or steam, as “Turkish baths” in the fifteenth century. But they died out again within a century because, according to bath historian Lawrence Wright, the growth of towns was pushing their fuel source – the forests – further away and because the plague was spreading fear of infectious diseases. And there were strong religious objections: as the now primary connotations of words like *bagnio*, *bordello*, brothel, hothouse, and stews remind us, keepers of public baths also commonly ran sideline prostitution businesses, also, not coincidentally, commonly known as *seraglios*.³⁶ “‘Tis strange that the Use of Bathing is dropt;” writes Francis Bacon in the early seventeenth century, in an entry in *Sylva Sylvarum: Or, Memoirs for a General History of Nature and Art*, “with the Romans and the Grecians it was as usual as eating or sleeping; so ‘tis with the Turks at this day; whilst, with us, it remains but as a part of Medicine...” In keeping with what he sees as the persistence of the pragmatic medical view of the bath in England, he settles on a physiological explanation for the cultural difference:

*I guess, the Use of it among the Romans was found hurtful; as, making the Body soft, and easy to waste. For the Turks ‘tis more proper, because their drinking Water, and feeding upon Rice, and other Food of little Nourishment, makes their Bodies so solid and hard, that Bathing cannot well soften them too much. Besides, the Turks are great Sitters, and seldom walk; whence they sweat less, and need bathing more: yet, Bathing, and especially Anointing may be so used as greatly to promote Health, and long Life.*³⁷

Predisposed to reclining and solid-bodied, the Turkish can well bear the bath. Bacon's important caveats for already-spongy English bathers are, first, that warm or hot water or steam immersions must be avoided since wet heat, like "hard Labour, vehement Passions of the Mind, profuse Sweats, large Evacuations, and the immoderate or unseasonable use of Venerie," dangerously rarifies and dissolves the vital spirits and, second, that they should oil up beforehand (this is what he means by "Anointing") "that the coolness of the water might be received, yet the Water itself kept off."³⁸ When indoor bathhouses were revived in the late seventeenth century they were once again considered a new cultural import. The Bathmen's Company had used the sign of the Turk's Head; and at least one bathing establishment still went by this name in eighteenth-century London.³⁹

After Whitehall redesigned its bathing closets in the spirit of eastern sensuality, they began appearing in British writing as settings particularly well-suited to explorations of the erotics of political power. As the following two examples reveal, in literature too, baths tended to be elsewhere. In *Oroonoko: or the Royal Slave* (1688), Aphra Behn economically encapsulates the dangerous will of a polygamous African despot in a bath scene. When the King of Coramantien hears reports of Imoinda's incomparable beauty, he sends her the Royal Veil, a ceremony of invitation. He knows that Imoinda is in love with his grandson but reasons that "the Obedience the People pay their King, was not at all inferior to what they pay'd their Gods: And what Love wou'd not oblige *Imoinda* to do, Duty wou'd compel her." He orders "a very rich Bath to be prepar'd" and awaits her arrival: "he sate under a Canopy, in State, to receive this long'd for Virgin..." After disrobing her, his servants "led her to the Bath, and making fast the Doors, left her to descend. The King, without more Courtship, bad her throw off her Mantle, and come to

his Arms...”⁴⁰ The royal bath here serves as court, bagnio, and harem chamber in one. In *The New Atalantis*, Manley mines the Ottoman setting of part of her secret history to allegorize to the varieties of indulgent powerplays the English court has prompted (especially among Whigs). In one of her florid bathing-closet scenes, Thais ensures her exclusive control over the aging Cicero by recreating her palace as a harem, filling it with “She-Slaves... amorous Devotees, whom she caus’d to be fetched from *Greece*, when they were too Young to have a true Sense of Decency or Vertue.” She keeps strict control over the place, keeping it “sacred to *Cicero*, admitt[ing] none of his Sex but himself.” Her most elaborate and spectacular seductions take place in a bathing closet:

She used to lead her old Patrician into the costly Bath, where she caused him to be attended by bright, half naked, dazling Beauties; new and till then unseen, their shining Hair with a graceful Flow, showing their Prime of Years, and unassisted Charms... After the Bath he was carried to a citron Bed, shining as Gold could make it, strow’d with Sweets, where they with ready Love, panted to receive him. Some wanton Nymph, with her delicious Hand, chaffed his old Limbs with *Sabæan* Oils, to make them pliant to the Embrace, whilst *Thais* caused him to remark the Beauties with which Nature had enrich’d the Girl; she talk’d not of the Fire of the Eyes, the Carnation of the Lip; she directed him to the firm, swelling, snowy Breast, the Turn of the Limbs, the taper Waist, and those unseen Beauties which she as industriously disclosed as others conceal... The Patrician expiring with Pleasure, dissolv’d in Delights, confessed *Thais* the Mistress of the World for new and unthought Enjoyments; and rewarded her with ten times a larger Hand, for that Bliss she procur’d him by others, than for what ever she had bestow’d upon him from her own Charms.⁴¹

The indiscriminate eroticism of the *hammam* serves Thais’s tyrannical power in the seraglio under her command. Manley splits the gender hierarchy of typical orientalist scenarios here. Sexual and political power abide in different quarters: while Cicero holds the purse strings, compensating Thais as lavishly as her pornographic imagination pleases him, she is in all other respects empress of this pleasure palace, or as Cicero calls her: “Mistress of the World for new and unthought Enjoyments.”

Thus at least two paradigms of the politics of female-female intimacy emerge in the western discourse of the eastern bath. Representing an extreme of ambition, there is Thais, an elite woman who learns to channel patriarchal power through the sexual exploitation of girls (and baths). And there are the nameless women, often slaves (including those whom Thais trains), who, rendered pliant by steam and heat, fall into one another's arms effortlessly, in pursuit of meaningless, gratuitous pleasures. By associating Miss Hobart with the bathing closet in particular, Hamilton brings orientalist fantasies and fears like these home, as it were.

Miss Hobart, Miss Temple, and Roxane

As the epigraph from Northrop Frye (at the start of the chapter) points out, an irony of the bathing closet scene lies in the fact that once alone with Miss Temple Miss Hobart just wants to *talk*. Worse, she “lectures.” Illustrations from nineteenth-century editions of the *Memoirs* represent Miss Hobart as passion's slave as she reaches to touch her protégée lost in a fog of lust and anticipation (figs. 7 and 8). But Miss Hobart's bathing-closet discourse tells a different story, one that lines her up her motives, if not her actions, more closely with Manley's manipulatrix, in the sense that her intimacies with girls follow from her public ambition. Her doctrine suggests that she believes she has worked out how to make herself into a continuous channel of power at court. But Hamilton will ultimately unsettle this view of her as well.

Sitting beside her on the bathing-closet couch, Miss Hobart appeals to Miss Temple's reason, and sets out a theory of female autonomy. She launches in with a lesson in male duplicity. “In the first place, then,” Miss Hobart begins, “you ought to set it down as an undoubted fact that all courtiers are deficient either in honesty, good sense,



Figure 7. Miss Hobart and Miss Temple. Engraving by C. Delort.



Figure 8. Miss Hobart and Miss Temple.

judgment, wit, or sincerity.” Men may appear or claim to be compelled by love alone but, Miss Hobart warns, “interest or pleasure are the motives of all their actions” (273). Either they subscribe to the traditional logic of alliance, in which case they seek marriages in which they can amass wealth and power or – more likely and worse – they seek the pleasure of conquest. If a maid of honor does actually succeed in finding a husband while she is at court, she is forced to exchange the royal household for a far less glamorous mode of domesticity. Two recent Whitehall matches provide heartbreaking cases in point: the new Lady Yarborough now lives in the netherland of Cornwall with a “great country bumpkin,” and the new Lady Falmouth left London, says Hobart, “in a coach with four such lean horses that I cannot believe she is yet half way to her miserable little castle.” A girl can withstand the vortex of male desires only by refusing them wholesale: “However brilliant the phantom may appear, suffer not yourself to be caught by its splendour, and never be so weak as to transform your slave into your tyrant” (274-5), she instructs. The woman appears to reign during courtship (which for a maid of honor literally occurs under the cover of the court), but she loses her power forever if she loses her honor, becomes dependent on one man, or even, as a wife, is exiled from public life.

Hobart’s critique engages the patriarchalist discourse that Robert Filmer and John Locke had notably employed (the former, in his *Patriarcha*, in order to outline the underlying continuities between the monarchy and the family; the latter, in his *Two Treatises of Government*, to distinguish between them). In particular, Hobart’s characterization of heterosexual relations as a kind of tyranny echoes royalist feminists like Behn and Manley, and especially the pious Mary Astell. Playing off Locke’s

condemnation of absolute monarchy in *Two Treatises*, Astell had asked in her *Reflections Upon Marriage*:

if Absolute Sovereignty be not necessary in a State, how comes it to be so in a Family?... For if Arbitrary Power is evil in itself, and an improper Method of Governing Rational and Free Agents, it ought not to be Practis'd any where; Nor is it less, but more mischievous in Families than in Kingdoms, by how much 100000 Tyrants are worse than one.⁴²

Hobart projects these despotic terms back onto the courtship that precedes marriage: in love, as in marriage, a person either governs another or is governed by him, is a tyrant or a slave. Avoiding this sort of doomed relationship makes room for a libertine ideal of female agency, available only to single women: “as long as you preserve your own liberty, you will be mistress of that of others,” she explains (275). Miss Hobart’s ideal state of “mistress”-hood expands *feme sole*, the contemporary legal category that gave widows control over their property and their lives, to become the perfect female counterpart of master, a position of not of equivalence, submission, or dependence, but of dominance. In fact, this is Cicero’s title for Thais in *The New Atalantis*: “Mistress of the World.” It would seem Miss Hobart, observing the other maids of honor come and go, attributes her longevity at Whitehall to her open-eyed evasion of the male-dominated game of love. Positioned well within the royal household in close proximity to the Duchess of York, Miss Hobart allows this courtly alliance to define her completely. The young girls Miss Hobart courts, we have to assume, represent for her the vehicles through which she enacts and asserts her own independence from men, her mistresshood.

Hobart brings her theoretical account of the treachery of male courtiers to life for Miss Temple with a bit of court gossip about an actress and one of the highest-ranking men in England.⁴³ (Recalling the clandestine marriage of the Duchess to the Duke of York, the story reminds us that uncertainty over the significance of private acts in the

period far more often concerns marriage than same-sex relations.) Enchanted from afar, the Earl of Oxford had gone to great lengths to woo the “graceful” Roxolana, a player known by that name after performing the part “to perfection” in a popular play.⁴⁴ When the actress “proudly rejected the addresses and presents of the Earl,” his ardor was enflamed to such a degree he found himself unable to enjoy any of the amusements of the court – even gambling and smoking no longer held any allure. “In this extremity, love had recourse to Hymen...,” Hobart wryly remarks. The actress first refused her pursuer’s signed promise of marriage, but agreed to and consummated the union after “the earl himself came to her lodgings attended by a clergyman” and two witnesses. At last, and in convenient reach of her bed chamber, the Earl had got the better of her: the pretended priest had been one of his trumpeters and his witness, a kettle-drummer. When the young woman discovers that the Earl has no intention of elevating her to the rank of countess, she looks to the King for amends: “the poor creature claimed the protection of the laws of God and man, both which were violated and abused, as well as herself, by this infamous imposition.” But her petitions fail: “in vain did she throw herself at the king’s feet... she had only to rise up again without redress; and happy might she think herself to receive an annuity of one thousand crowns, and to resume the name of [Roxolana], instead of Countess of Oxford” (275-77). This arrangement brings some financial security but, in place of rank, a strangely formal identification with her character. She has become a mistress in the subjected sense, without the modicum of vicarious status normally afforded the *feme covert*.

Hobart’s illustration evokes the east again in a roundabout way. It introduces Roxane, the oriental queen who became a popular symbol of women’s agency in the late seventeenth century and who would continue to preoccupy writers throughout the

eighteenth century – most famously Daniel Defoe, who assigned her a new, naturalized British identity as *The Fortunate Mistress*.⁴⁵ There had been a number of sultaneses with similar names and dilemmas on the Restoration stage: William Davenant's two-part *Siege of Rhodes* (1661), Roger Boyle's *Mustapha* (1665), Nathaniel Lee's *The Rival Queens* (1672), Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim* (1676), and Samuel Pordage's *Siege of Babylon* (1677) all feature a Roxolana or Roxana. In "Rewriting Roxane," Katie Trumpener, comparing Defoe's protagonist to the furious, polemical Roxane in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (1721) cites as their source the seventeenth-century Persian sultanness whose bloodlust had been the subject of Jean Racine's *Bajazet* (1672). In their more recent studies of early eighteenth-century English Roxanes, Felicity Nussbaum and Ros Ballaster note that their prototype was the woman who rose from slavery to share the Ottoman sultan's throne in the mid-sixteenth century, the empire's most powerful period.⁴⁶ Brought to Constantinople from Russia ("Russelana") she became Solyman the Magnificent's favorite, and, fiercely manipulative according to Richard Knolles's seminal early-seventeenth century account, taunted him by feigning piety until he agreed to free her from bondage, then denied him sex until he agreed to marry her.⁴⁷ Living arrangements at the Grand Seraglio were altered accordingly: "women moved with Roxelana from the Old Palace, built by Mehmed the Conqueror, to the Seraglio harem (1541), and approached the seat of power."⁴⁸ The union had been unprecedented. In the words of Racine's Roxana, sultans had "made themselves a vaunted law / Not to restrain their loves with marriage vows."⁴⁹ Though sultans, like their bassas, could take up to four wives, before Solyman none of the Ottoman emperors had wanted any. As a rule, the sultan kept an unlimited number of female slaves in his seraglio, afforded some privileges to any who gave birth to boys, and passed on the right to rule to the first-born

or favorite son. With neither a hereditary nobility nor an official parliament under him, authority was concentrated in his hands. A wife, a free woman, benefited from and influenced him and channeled his imperial power in ways that no else could.⁵⁰

The Roxolana scandal Miss Hobart narrates in the *Memoirs* does not directly describe the sixteenth-century marriage. Rather the full significance of Roxane's story to Miss Temple's situation requires that we reconstitute the historical account of Roxolana by way of a kind of allegory-in-reverse, a backing away – geographically, temporally, and formally – from the here and now it makes explicit. The resulting comparison exposes Miss Temple's shortcomings in a satirical vein. When the actress, a faux-Roxolana, withdraws and withholds sex, she takes more or less the same gamble as the Ottoman concubine, leveraging her desirability to a powerful man. But whereas the real Roxolana wins the gamble, the latter wins only a booby prize. The actress has misjudged her context. A fellow Duke's Company player mocks, "the Sultana [Roxolana] might have supposed, in some part or other of a play, that she was really married" (276). Upward mobility of this sort might be possible in the Ottoman seraglio – or some fictional representation thereof – where men's desire runs to heroic heights, but for common players, catering to the sublunary loves of the English court, it is not.⁵¹ The actress's grandiosity will forever precede her.

Thus the actress's story stands as a clear warning to Miss Temple. Allowing Rochester to woo and flatter her, Miss Temple, like the faux-Roxolana, is developing a dangerously inflated sense of her power over him. Now Miss Hobart spells it out directly: "no woman who gives ear to him three times, but she irretrievably loses her reputation. No woman can escape him, for he has her in his writings, though his other attacks be ineffectual; and in the age we live in, the one is as bad as the other in the eye of

the public” (278). Miss Temple would do well to keep her credulity in check and open her eyes to the minefield that is male desire. She would do well, in other words, to give her “ear,” and her affection, to Miss Hobart alone.

In interpolating the story of the actress and the Earl into Hobart’s own discourse, Hamilton invites a further comparison. Not only does this evocative bit of gossip encourage mocking comparisons among Miss Temple, the actress, and the historical figure the actress interprets, it also points to the Restoration stage – and it is in relation to Roxane’s role in Restoration drama that Miss Hobart’s cautionary tale ultimately reflects back on the teller herself. William Davenant’s *Siege of Rhodes* (like *Mustapha* and *The Rival Queens* after it) does not dramatize the Sultanness’s rise in the Seraglio, but the threat of her fall. Its pivotal scenes find the Roxane figure – in this case named Roxolana – in very close and secret negotiation with another powerful woman. In Part One of the play, Solyman captures Ianthe as she sails to join her husband Alphonso, the Sicilian Duke, to help him defend Rhodes from the Ottoman invasion.⁵² Captivated in turn by her modesty and bravery, Solyman frees Ianthe, allowing her to continue on her way to his enemy, without so much as lifting her veil. In Part Two, Solyman concentrates his efforts as much on persuading Roxolana – his demanding, larger-than-life wife – to curb her passions as on the siege since his brief encounter with Ianthe has convinced him that the fate of his empire rests on his wife’s learning to love and live as virtuously as the Sicilian duchess does. This will allow him to save his time and energy for more important battles. As he says, “Monarchs, who onward still with Conquest move, / Can only for their short diversion love.”⁵³ Having captured Ianthe again – this time in the midst of a clash – Solyman has her sent to Roxolana’s private pavilion. Through Ianthe,

Solyman means to test Roxolona's restraint. Can the Sultanness control her jealousy when the life of the woman who has diverted her husband is in her hands?

Taking advantage of the very new presence of female players on the Restoration stage and the fascination with eastern interiors, Davenant makes a spectacle of the passionate female-female encounter that ensues (4.3). According to the seventeenth-century directions, the stage is "*wholy fill'd with ROXOLANA'S Rich Pavillion, wherein is discern'd at distance, IANTHE sleeping on a Couch; ROXOLANA at one End of it, a Turkish Embroidered Handkerchief in her left hand, and a naked Ponyard in her right.*"⁵⁴ Before a word has been spoken, the knife and the handkerchief (which the English believed to be the sign of the Sultan's choice of a bedmate in the harem) represent the stark dilemma Roxolana faces: to murder Ianthe or to allow her to displace her in Solyman's bed. But as the drapes around the couch are drawn and Ianthe appears, another possibility emerges – something that Roxolana had not foreseen. "I am Conquer'd who came here to kill" (2.4.3, 66), she says in an aside. She asks Ianthe to come closer: "I have a Present for you," she tells her, "though 'tis single now, it quickly can / Be multipli'd; you shall have many more. / It is this kiss – It comes from Solyman" (75-8, 83-6). When Ianthe is "amaz'd, and must go back" (91), Roxolana mocks her, "Are Christian Ladies so reserv'd and shy?" (93). As Roxolana's manner softens, Ianthe approaches her again:

Draw near, and give me your fair hand. –
 I have another Present for you now;
 And such a Present as I know
 You will much better than the first allow;
 Though Solyman will not esteem it so.
 'Tis from my self—of friendship such a Seal—
 As you to Solyman must ne'r reveal.— *Kisses her.*
 And that I may be more assur'd,
 By this agen you are conjur'd.—

Struck by her rival's beauty, Roxolana approaches her as Solyman's agent – channeling his polygamous desire. Yet from this initial connection a different form of intimacy soon emerges, one in which Roxolana sees Ianthe not as a competing vessel for the despot's power, but rather an ally, a partner in a secret treaty. She proposes that so long as Ianthe remains loyal to Roxolana, and refuses Solyman's attentions, she shall live. When the scene opens on the Sultanness's pavilion again near the end of the play (5.6), the Duke Alphonso, wounded in battle has been captured too, and his life is now in Roxolana's hands as well. Having heard of his capture, Ianthe enters "*in her Night Dress*," weeping, and Roxolana becomes the ultimate drama queen. First she taunts Ianthe with the suggestion that she will have the Duke murdered, then, recalling their earlier alliance, she takes her into her arms: "I did ever mean to keep my Vow: / Which I renew, and seal it faster now. –" (5.6, 89-90). According to the heroic code of this drama, it is Roxolana's recognition of her rival's greatness and her ability to capitalize on it that manifests her own greatness, allowing her to transcend the double-bind Solyman has trapped her in and avert tragedy for all. These intimate scenes are erotic. But the eroticism here is inseparable from ambition. The *Siege of Rhodes* presents a world in which the most consequential of passions take place between women in private.

In light of Davenant's grand vision, Miss Hobart, like Miss Temple and the actress in her story, appears to be a faux-Roxane as well. Her theory of lesbian libertinism may be more delusional than the other women's naive faith in men. Women's closet intimacies do not and cannot have the broad significance that the orientalist drama promises. Miss Hobart is not a queen in a pavilion, but a bath superintendent to a Duchess, and her precarious intimacies with girls make their most significant public

appearance in lampoons.⁵⁵ In fact, what is perhaps most striking about Miss Hobart for all the interest Hamilton briefly generates in her is that following this ultimately unsuccessful seduction (if that is what it is) Miss Hobart does stay on at court, and in the background of the *Memoirs*, as the Duchess of York's primary confidante.⁵⁶ Miss Hobart has inflated her sense of the stakes of her relationships to a ridiculous degree.

Hamilton literally sets Miss Hobart apart, creating in her closet an interpretive lure that sends our thoughts spiraling from his nostalgic moment of composition back to the Restoration court he depicts, eastward to its imperial counterpart and back, again and again – while effectively “straightening” the many remaining same-gender closet intimacies. After all, this is a narrative that needs to celebrate his sister's marriage to her rakish French husband. Without disrupting the basic verisimilitude of the *Memoirs*, the Duchess of York's bathing closet – a space at once English and Ottoman, here and there, courtly and theatrical, political and (at least potentially) extremely intimate – allegorizes the passing possibility of strategic eroticism between women, as the hierarchical political structures that had once legitimated female favoritism lose their practical and imaginative authority.

¹ This note appears by the bathing-closet scene discussed in this chapter in Northrop Frye's copy of Anthony Hamilton's *Memoirs of the court of Charles the Second*. Sir Walter Scott, ed. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1859), 230. The volume is in the collection of more than 2 000 volumes annotated by Northrop Frye at the E.J. Pratt Library, Victoria University, University of Toronto. (Annotated no. 121.)

² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 177. Katie Trumpener, “Rewriting Roxane: Orientalism and Intertextuality in Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* and Defoe's *The Fortunate Mistress*,” *Stanford French Review*.11 (1987): 177-91, 178, cites this passage from Said to frame an argument about allusive interplay (“equated to a spurious exoticism”) in “the best known treatments of the Roxane figure”: those of Defoe, Montesquieu, and Jean Racine's *Bajazet*. This chapter elucidates a network of “exotic” allusions in a slightly earlier moment.

³ Terry Castle poses this question in the introduction to her recent *Literatures of Lesbianism* (New York: Columbia, 2003). Castle, 35-6, then goes on to observe that this writing has “conventionally depended on

what might be called the ‘islanding’ or physical and social isolation of women: their segregation or seclusion in some location or institution relatively apart from the world of men...” Castle surmises: “literary homosexuality, whether male or female, blossoms most energetically in the absence of opposite-sex competition...” Anthony Hamilton’s *Memoirs* (included in *Literatures of Lesbianism*) imagines a bathing closet as a lesbian “island” of sorts. Yet the *Memoirs* complicates Castle’s assumption that such a place necessarily precludes “opposite-sex competition.” Competition with men is certainly one strand in Hamilton’s complex portrait of Miss Hobart’s desire.

⁴ Count de Grammont and Miss Hamilton woo like lovers in a Restoration comedy: the aptness of their match stems from their equality of wit and mischief.

⁵ Horace Walpole edited the *Mémoires augmentés de notes et d'éclaircissements* in 1772. An edition adorned with portraits engraved after originals appeared in London in 1793. An English edition by Walter Scott was published by G. Bohn (1846).

⁶ R.O. Bucholz, *The Augustan Court : Queen Anne and the Decline of Court Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 247-8.

⁷ Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, 12.

⁸ Simon Thurley, *The Whitehall Palace Plan of 1670* (London: London Topographical Society, 1998), 16, characterizes the Palace during the early period of Charles’s reign as “an overpopulated village, a vast decaying hotel or a large and chaotic boarding school.” During his first two years on the throne there were over a thousand servants at Whitehall Palace, many of them living in the palace as well. Though the staff was thereafter substantially diminished, the number of official and unofficial family members with households, servants, and lodgings at Whitehall grew enormously. This entourage included many mistresses and their children:

James Scott, the Duke of Monmouth and Buccleuch, born in the Hague by Lucy Walters, Charles’s mistress at the time of his exile; Barbara Palmer, Countess Castlemaine and subsequently Duchess of Cleveland, who bore him a child a year between 1661-1665; Nell Gwynne who bore him two sons; Louise Renée de Kérouaille, subsequently the Duchess of Portsmouth, whose son was made Duke of Richmond; and Catherine Pagge, the mistress of his Spanish exile, who bore him a son, popularly known as Don Carlos. (18-9)

⁹ Thomas Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second*. Volume 1 (New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1879, [Chapter XX].

¹⁰ Rachel Weil, *Political Passions: Gender, the Family, and Political Argument in England, 1680-1714* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 162-230, 164.

¹¹ Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

¹² Anthony Hamilton, *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, Sir Walter Scott, ed. (New York: Dutton and Company, 1905), 123. All references are to this edition unless otherwise noted.

¹³ For a detailed explication of early modern hermaphroditic models of lesbianism and their modification in the seventeenth century so that the “tribade” was seen as a real woman whose big, penis-like clitoris was an important factor in generating her queer desires, see Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 77-124. Reading Hamilton’s subtle narration of the rumors about Miss Hobart, Emma Donaghue, *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668-1801* (London: Scarlet Press, 1993), 54, notes, “It is a measure of the persistence of the lesbian-as-hermaphrodite motif that such an author, considering himself too sophisticated to believe the myth himself, still chooses to allude to it to colour his satire.” Donaghue’s later summary of the Miss Hobart episode, 187-90, flattens out the narrative texture my reading emphasizes: “After her first two

humiliations Hobart is desperate for love,” writes Donaghue, “and understandably resentful of male rivals...”

¹⁴ Stewart, “Early Modern Closets,” 85.

¹⁵ *Officials of the Royal Household 1660-1837. Part I: Dept of the Lord Chamberlain and associated offices*, eds. J.C. Sainty and R.O. Bucholz (London: University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1997), xlv.

¹⁶ David Michael Robinson, ““For How Can They Be Guilty?”: Lesbian and Bisexual Women in Manley’s *New Atalantis*” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 23 (2001), 187-220, 195-6. Donaghue’s reading of Hamilton’s evasiveness in *Passions between Women* (see endnote 13 above) is an important reference point for Robinson.

¹⁷ Girouard, *Country House*, 250.

¹⁸ “The King’s Labadory and Bath” in Thurley, *Whitehall*, 43.

¹⁹ Thurley, *Whitehall*, 34.

²⁰ Jacques Revel, Orest Ranum, Jean-Louis Flandrin, Jacques Gélis, Madelaine Foisil, and Jean Marie Goulernot, “Forms of Privatization: The Uses of Civility” in *A History of Private Life: III. The Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989), 184, 189. The more thorough sense of cleanliness that Miss Hobart attributes to Miss Temple affirms the values of a seventeenth-century court obsessed not with hygiene per se but with producing and displaying intimate knowledge and secrets. According to Miss Hobart, Miss Temple’s desire to change her undergarments shows her awareness that the whole of her body is fair game for court conversation—whether as a source of admiration or of ridicule. As Revel *et al* explain, “Linen touched the naked body and metonymically revealed its cleanliness to all. Its function was to cover the surface, yet it simultaneously revealed what it hid” (189).

²¹ Paul Rycault, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1668) (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), 29. Miss Hobart’s stock of sweetmeats also points to the east, the oldest source for English sugar, and to the seraglio in particular where a successful male slave might be given the post of the *Kiler Kiahaiasi*, “overseer of the provisions of *Sherbets*, Sugar, sweet-meats, &c.”

²² Ottaviano Bon, *A description of the Grand Signor’s seraglio*, trans. Robert Withers, ed. John Greaves (London: J. Martin and J. Ridley, 1650), 5. See especially 5-13 and 21-33.

²³ Bon, *Seraglio*, 21.

²⁴ B. Le Stourgeon, “Description of the Turkish Empire,” *A compleat universal history, of the several empires, kingdoms, states &c. throughout the known world* (London: Benjamin Baddam, 1732-38), 236-241.

²⁵ Ruth Bernard Yeazel, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 1-2.

²⁶ Rycault, *Present State*, 38.

²⁷ Bon, *Seraglio*, 32-3.

²⁸ Le Stourgeon, “Description,” 238.

²⁹ Rycault, *Present State*, 31.

³⁰ Rycault, *Present State*, 34.

³¹ Billie Melman, *Women's Orient: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918* (London: MacMillan, 1995), 89.

³² Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters* (written 1717 pub. 1763), ed. Malcolm Jack (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 58-9.

³³ Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *The Four Epistles of A.G. Busbecquius Concerning His Embassy into Turkey* (written 1550s and 60s, pub. Latin 1633, pub. English 1694). Cited in Harriette Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics, 1550-1714* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 4.

³⁴ George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey begun An: Dom: 1610... Containing a description of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote parts of Italy, and Iland adjoyning* (London: W. Barrett, 1615), 69. (Cited in Yeazel, *Harems*, 19).

³⁵ Anthony Hamilton, *Les quatre Facardins, Oeuvres* (Tome Second) (Paris: Antoine-Augustin Renouard, 1812), 329-30. The narrator recognizes that the scene is being stage-managed, but it affects him as intended nevertheless. In particular, the eroticism of the sight of the bather, "la merveilleuse Cristalline," turns on the contrast between her light beauty and the dark ugliness of the "quatre vieilles taupes" who attend her:

la merveilleuse Cristalline, sortat de bain, presque aussi nue qu'on peut l'être, sans l'être tout-à-fait. Elle fut quelque temps dans cet état au milieu de ces quatre vieilles taupes, avant qu'on put lui donner de quoi se courvrir. ...quoique je fusse persuadé de l'avantage que son éclat recevoit par l'opposition de ces figure affreuses, j'avoue que je fus frappé de la blancheur dont toute sa personne m'éblouit.

The beautiful Cristalline left the bath, almost perfectly naked. For a long moment she stood there like that, encircled by her four black servants, before one of them handed her something to wrap around herself... although I was sure those hags only made her seem that much more beautiful to me, I was nevertheless dumbstruck – dazzled – by the whiteness of her body. (my translation)

³⁶ Lawrence Wright, *Clean and Decent: The Fascinating History of the Bathroom and the Water Closet and of sundry Habits, Fashion and Accessories of the Toilet principally in Great Britain, France, and America* (New York: Viking, 1960), 56-91.

³⁷ Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum: Or, Memoirs for a General History of Nature and Art, The philosophical works of Francis Bacon... methodized, and made English... Volume 3*, trans. (London: 1733), 38-39.

³⁸ Francis Bacon, *The History of Life and Death, The philosophical works of Francis Bacon... methodized, and made English... Volume 3* (London: 1733), 390. The early eighteenth-century brought new English deliberations on water temperature, especially on the bracing effects of the cold bath. A chapter from an anonymous mid-eighteenth-century manual, *The best and easiest method of preserving uninterrupted health to extreme old age* (London: R. Baldwin, 1748), 149-59, notes that bathing was believed by ancient philosophers "to represent and produce an inward Purity in the Mind" (150). The author's own description, typical of England's increasingly vociferous cold-bath campaigners, connects mental to physical refreshment in mechanical terms. "Cold Baths occasion Chilness, which, added to the Terror and Surprise of the Person going to immerge, very much contracts the Membranes and Tubes in which the Animal Spirits are contain'd; and they being thus kept tense and compressed, will more easily communicate all external Impressions to the sensitive Soul." "Nor," he adds, "are the external Senses only made more lively hereby, but also all our animal Faculties and Reasoning become more vigorous by means of the outward Pressure of the cold" (152). Thus cold baths cured a variety of ills associated with slackened blood vessels,

including some like melancholy whose more problematic symptoms affected the mind, but could also be of benefit to “all Mankind” (159). For advocates of therapeutic bathing, the general rule was the same as Galen’s had been: “Hot Baths only prepare our Patients for the Cold Bath,” John Floyer sums up in his introduction to John King’s *Essay on Hot and Cold Bathing* (London: Bettenham, 1737), xiv. Heat was immoderate, and only to be applied in moderation.

³⁹ Wright, *Clean and Decent*, 58

⁴⁰ Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, or, The Royal Slave: A True History* (London: Will Canning, 1688), 24-5.

⁴¹ Delarivier Manley, *The New Atalantis* (Volume 4) (London: 1709-10), 102-4.

⁴² Mary Astell, *Reflections Upon Marriage* (1706), *The First English Feminist*, ed. Bridget Hill (Aldershot: Gower, 1986), 102. Michael McKeon notes that here Astell grants an interior power “not only (as Locke does) to male but even to female subjects—to the ‘rational and free’ agency of married women.” As McKeon explains, in the seventeenth century the theory of absolutism gradually and unevenly “devolved”: from the principle of government favored by England’s dynastic monarchy, it became a means of understanding patriarchal relations within the family, and subsequently of theorizing the integrity of the self. Those who were least esteemed by patriarchalism, women and commoners, were among the most vehement pretenders to absolute individuality, inwardly elevating themselves from a state of subjection to subjective wholeness. Miss Hobart’s lesbian libertine credo fully exploits the flexibility of the language of political power in this period.

⁴³ Rodney Baine, “Roxana’s Georgian Setting” in *SEL* 15.3 (1975): 459-71, 465, remarks that this story about the Roxolana actress’s sham marriage “was widely circulated in various versions.” Before Hamilton’s *Memoirs*, it appears in Marie D’Aulnoy, *Memoirs of the Court of England* (London: B. Bragg, 1707), 439-49. (Alongside this episode in his edition of Hamilton’s *Memoirs*, Frye writes: “source for Richardson?” “source for Defoe?”)

⁴⁴ While Hamilton gave “Roxelane” as the duped actress’s role, Abel Boyer changed it to “Roxana,” a variation retained in some but not all subsequent translations. In an article on the historical events leading to this scandal, John Harold Wilson, “Lord Oxford’s ‘Roxolana,’” *Theatre Notebook* 12, 14, names Hester Davenport as the leading performer who “left the stage to live with Lord Oxford.” I am substituting the English spelling of the name Hamilton used: *Roxolana*.

⁴⁵ Among others, David Blewett in the 1987 Penguin edition of *Roxana*, 349-50, briefly makes the case that Hamilton’s interpolated tale in the *Memoirs* was an important source for Defoe. While the structural similarities (the ambiguous private relationship with a royal or aristocrat, the public re-naming) have been noted, I am especially interested in the way in which Defoe’s Roxana’s anti-marriage rhetoric recalls Miss Hobart’s discourse of female sexual independence: “While a Woman was single, she was a Masculine in her politick Capacity... controul’d by none, because accountable to none, and... in Subjection to none...” Daniel Defoe, *Roxana* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 148.

⁴⁶ Felicity Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 34 and notes. Ros Ballaster, “Performing *Roxane*: The Oriental Woman as the Sign of Luxury in Eighteenth-Century Fictions” in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 165-77.

⁴⁷ Richard Knolles, *The generall historie of the Turkes from the first beginning of that nation to the rising of the Othoman familie...* (London: A. Islip, 1603), 719-767.

⁴⁸ Alev Lytle Croutier, *Harem: The World behind the Veil* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), 105, remarks that this new proximity of the harem and the sultan’s quarters in the Ottoman capital “marked the beginning of the Sultanate, or the Reign of Women, which lasted a century and a half.” Croutier also,

strikingly, claims that “meddling” harem women were “instrumental in the decline and fall of the [Ottoman] empire.”

⁴⁹ Jean Racine, *Bajazet*, trans. Alan Hollinghurst (London: Chatto and Windus, 1991), 1.3.

⁵⁰ As Rycault, *Present State*, 155, understands it, Sultans generally “take no feminine companion of their Empire in whom they may be more concerned than as in Slaves” because, they believe, were the custom of conjugal relations in use “the chief Revenue of the Empire would be expended in the Chambers of Women, and diverted from the true Channels in which the Treasure ought to run for nourishment of the Politick body of the Common-wealth.”

⁵¹ The epilogue to Nathaniel Lee, *The Rival Queens*, ed. P.F. Vernon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970) recalls the Roxolana episode as well, generalizing it to be the condition of all actresses to be “Charmed with the noise of sett’ling an estate.” See especially lines 28-33.

⁵² Named poet laureate after the Restoration, Davenant founded one of the two theater companies Charles II licensed in 1660, and it was with a two-part *Siege of Rhodes* presenting Roxolana that his Duke’s Company opened their Lincoln’s Inn Fields theater in 1661.

⁵³ William Davenant, *Siege of Rhodes*, ed. Ann-Mari Hedbäck (Stockholm: Uppsala, 1973), 2.4.3, 249-251.

⁵⁴ Davenant was a pioneer in integrating libretto, dancing, sound- and visual effects into English drama. (For a discussion of Davenant’s theatrical innovations, see Kevin Cope, “The Glory That was Rome—and Grenada, and Rhodes, and Tenochtitlan: Pleasurable Conquests, Supernatural Liaisons, and Apparitional Drama in Interregnum Entertainments,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 32.2 (Fall 1999), 1-18.) Davenant was also responsible for introducing the shutter stage to public theater. Opening and closing three or four sets of painted panels along a succession of grooves in view of the audience in effect deepened the performance space, recreating for viewers something like the experience of moving through rooms in *enfilade*. Elizabeth Howe, “Introduction: The Restoration Theatre,” *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3-4, explains, when a stage direction in a Restoration dramatic text reads ‘*the scene opens*’ it refers to the opening of a set of shutters onto something else; ‘*the scene shuts*’ means the shutters were then closed at the end of the ‘scene’. There were three and possibly even four sets of shutters to create different scenes. All were placed wide enough apart to allow players to act behind one set and in front of another...

⁵⁵ Following several incarnations on the Restoration stage (listed on page x), Roxane had a literary afterlife auguring the failure of intimacy between women. She does so in Delarivier Manley’s *New Atalantis*, for instance (see Ballaster’s summary of the relationship between x and Charlot in “Performing Roxane,” 170), and she does so in a poem by Mary Wortley Montagu called “Roxana: Or, the Drawing-Room” (written 1715). The passionate female-female relations associated with the Roxane/Roxolana figure also seem promising as a prehistory of Defoe’s Roxana’s complex intimacy with her servant, Amy. For a psychoanalytic reading of their erotic/rivalrous bond, see Terry Castle, “‘To Amy who knew my Disease,’” *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 44-55.

⁵⁶ Hamilton will demystify the Duchess’s attachment to Miss Hobart long after the relationship with Miss Temple has dissolved (and the Duchess has protected her from court scandal once again). Miss Hobart, he says,

had insinuated herself into her royal highness’s confidence by a fund of news with which she was provided the whole year round: the court and the city supplied her; nor was it very material to her whether her stories were true or false, her chief care being that they should prove agreeable to her mistress: she knew, likewise, how to gratify her palate, and constantly provided a variety of those dishes and liquors which she liked best...” (330-31).

Hamilton’s deferral of this explication of the Duchess’s dependence on Miss Hobart evinces his intention to pique our curiosity throughout the bathing-closet episode.

Jonathan Swift's Privy for Two

The bashful maid, to hide her blush,
 Shall creep no more behind a bush;
 Here unobserved, she boldly goes...
 —Jonathan Swift¹

On the whole, the history of plumbing, and of technology generally in English country houses, has been one of installing gadgets which fail to work. It is a two-steps-forward one-step-back story.
 —Mark Girouard²

Where there is dirt there is system...
 —Mary Douglas³

In the late 1720s, during an extended stay with his friends Lord and Lady Acheson at Market Hill, their country estate in County Armagh, northern Ireland, Jonathan Swift designed and built a pair of his-and-hers outhouses, then mused on their significance in “Panegyric on the Dean in the Person of a Lady of the North,” a country-house parody with an epic twist at its center.⁴ The “Panegyric” would soon be followed by “A Lady’s Dressing-Room,” “A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed,” “Strephon and Chloe,” and “Cassinus and Peter,” a group of mock-pastoral poems whose publication sealed Swift’s reputation as a writer obsessed with bodily filth and waste, especially their role in the intimate imagination.⁵ In this chapter, I will be suggesting that Swift’s scatology developed in part as a timely, even prescient, response to the period’s changing spaces and technologies for dealing with human waste. I briefly consider how scholarship on Swift’s “excremental vision” has typically hinged on views of excrement as a fixed, timeless symbol, then I trace a short material cultural history, showing how the water closet in particular fostered and reflected a new ideal of bodily privacy whose proponents were, for several centuries, few and far between. Turning to the “Panegyric”

in the chapter's third section, I focus especially on the long centerpiece (150 of the poem's 346 lines) in which Swift invents the mythic origins of excremental privacy as a prototypically and problematically selfish desire, and glance forward and back at two other writers who shared the Dean's concern over the ethics and affects of this embodied interior space. Swift's most important relationship at Market Hill was with Lady Acheson, a relationship that was intricately enmeshed with the country house where they spent their time together. The chapter finally looks at how Swift's pair of outhouses also serve as a figure for his odd attachment to the married Lady Acheson, also the putative speaker of the poem. The word *privy*, predating *closet* by at least a century, has as full and fertile a history as any in the lexicon of intimacy that this dissertation seeks to assemble. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, before it denoted a private place "of ease," the term was a synonym for a close companion – including a sexual intimate – as well as any person, thing, or action kept secret or hidden. The multiple senses of the word *privy* all come into play in Swift's poetic exploration of excretory privacy.

Doesn't shit have a history?

Readers of Swift's scatological writings have not taken much interest in the particular settings they treat.⁶ Instead, critics in every mood – the scandalized, the exhilarated, and the more dispassionately curious alike – have parsed Swift's excremental imagery in grand, broad strokes. Two interpretive poles were clearly articulated in Norman O. Brown's influential chapter in *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* which renewed the appeal of Swift's "excremental vision" by defending it in Freudian terms against those, such as John Middleton Murray, who had

diagnosed Swift's fascination as the product of a sick mind.⁷ Brown argues that excrement marks culture's raw limit in Swift's scatological writings, the terrifying point at which the meaning and value of social structures and conventions breaks down: "Swift's ultimate horror is at the thought that sublimation – that is to say, all civilized behavior – is a lie and cannot survive confrontation with the truth."⁸ On the other hand, Brown notes, Swift is capable of celebrating shit's symbol-making power, in the spirit of infantile anal eroticism.⁹ Since Brown, discussions of Swift's scatology (even those that don't explicitly invoke psychoanalysis) have tended to anchor themselves in these interpretive poles, taking excrement as a sign of human abjection or primal expressiveness, or some combination thereof. For instance, Donald Siebert dismisses the idea that the Dean revels in filth but allows that the scatological poems might plausibly work to affirm a kind of Protestant, tough-love ethics of de-sublimation: "To defend [them], one says that Swift is engaging in a form of Christian homiletics, exposing the inadequacy of material pursuits, the corruption of the body, and the woeful consequences of bowing to the flesh."¹⁰ By contrast Ashraf Rushdy finds Swift trying to heal the rift between soul and flesh, culture and nature: "the world will be...a healthier place not when shit is made invisible but when it is confronted as the other we produce, when false sublimations are denied and a true respect for the fallen body is affirmed."¹¹

The prominence of the outhouses notwithstanding, critics looking specifically at the earliest of the scatological poems also leap into a figurative register, even when they attune themselves to the "Panegyric"'s elaborate use of images of freedom and containment. In *Swift's Landscape* Carole Fabricant concludes that this poem is "part of Swift's idiosyncratic and extremely complicated version of 'Civilization and Its

Discontents'... Viewed in ideological terms, the verse dramatizes the ironic tensions between the 'Tory' and the 'anarchist' elements that are ever present in Swift; that is, between his theoretical belief in the societal need for sublimation and his temperamental antipathy to all forms of restraint."¹² Everett Zimmerman similarly dwells on the symbolic when he argues that locating an authorial center is even trickier in the "Panegyric" than in Swift's other scatological satires because the poem's apparent idealization of nature "collapses in the ubiquity of excrement."¹³ Zimmerman concludes that shit is the ultimate destabilizer of meanings: "a destroyer of boundaries, no respecter of persons, a force for the unstringing of society, and finally an emblem of both the personal and societal dissolution brought about by Eve's sin."¹⁴ In *The Difference Satire Makes*, Frederick Bogel theorizes that satire's formal *modus operandi* is to break and re-make boundaries and categorical distinctions of all kinds, and argues, in the same vein as Fabricant and Zimmerman, that Swift's excremental poetry, including the "Panegyric," merely thematizes this larger agenda: "Dramatic and insistent as the question of excrement sometimes is, in Swift, it is nevertheless part of a larger fascination with the problematics of boundaries and transgression, separation and contamination, inside and outside, and with the complexity and ambiguity that so often surround them."¹⁵ Whether Swift is thought to be asking us to fear or embrace the point where the body separates us from society or culture, or to aspire to transcend it, shit (and outhouses) remain essentially symbolic structures in these readings.

But when and where to go were not merely theoretical questions in the early eighteenth century. Swift really did build privies at Market Hill and his "Panegyric" presents them as contingent and concrete structures. In "Reading the Intertext in

Jonathan Swift's 'A Panegyrick on the Dean,'" Kelly Anspaugh hears in Swift's first scatological poem comic echoes of John Harington's *Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596).¹⁶ In this hyperactive hodge-podge of classical, biblical, literary, and contemporary courtly allusions, aphorisms, and anecdotes on the subject of excretion, John Harington (also author of "The Lady's Cabinet" discussed in Chapter 1) describes his visionary privy designs. (He built them as well.) Recognizing Harington's *Metamorphosis* as his antecedent should attune readers to Swift's buoyant, Rabelaisian mood in the "Panegyric," Anspaugh says, clearly positioning herself on the anal erotic side of the classic interpretive spectrum. Rather than shoring up the utopian or dystopian spirit of Swift's first scatological poem, my reading emphasizes the way in which it, like Harington's *Metamorphosis*, launches a detailed inquiry into the relationship between the ethos of bodily privacy and the changing shapes of excretory interiors.

The Rise of the Water Closet

The material culture of excretion in Swift's day is perhaps best illuminated by setting it against the longer history whose outcome is most familiar to us: that is, the popular emergence of a technology capable of instantly flushing away waste. When it was coined in England in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, the expression *water closet* spoke to both a long-standing interest in designing out-of-the-way interiors especially for excretion, and the modern plumbing systems that could minimize their stench – in theory, without any additional human labor. By the twentieth century, indoor toilets with plumbing had of course become normative aspects of domestic life

throughout much of the western world. In Britain, both the rooms and the apparatuses they contain are still called water closets.

Both the privacy and autonomy encapsulated in the idea of the water closet find important predecessors in monastic privies and feudal garde-robes. The former smelled better. As Lawrence Wright puts it, in the middle ages “the monasteries were the guardians of culture—and of sanitation.”¹⁷ (We should note that sanitation is really an anachronistic concept here, as it is in the context of bathing, until well into the nineteenth century when sewage transformed from an olfactory inconvenience to a major public health concern.)¹⁸ As a rule, monasteries were situated near rivers and streams to ensure they would have a running water supply. Monks washed before and after meals, took baths for penance, cleanliness, and health – and excreted in structures built solely for this purpose. Privies provided a double retreat. They were distanced from other buildings, sometimes linked to the monks’ sleeping quarters by way of long ventilating bridges. And they were subdivided inside to accommodate a collective and punctual regime of bodily discipline. An account of a monastery at Durham describes, for instance:

a large and decent place, adjoining to the West-side of the... Dorter [dormitory], towards the water, for the Monks and Novices to resort to, called the Privies, two great Pillars of Stone bearing up the whole floor thereof. Every Seat and Partition was of Wainscott, close on either side, so that they could not see one another when they were in that place. There were as many Seats on either side as there were little Windows in the Wall to give light to the said Seats; which afterwards were walled up to make the House more close. At the West-end of it there were three fair glass Windows; which great Windows gave light to the whole House.¹⁹

Whether seats were placed in rows as at the abbey at Durham or back-to-back as at the abbey at Furniss, partitions often interrupted the communal flow of the space. “In *The Life of St Gregory* this is the retreat recommended for uninterrupted reading,” Wright

notes.²⁰ The imperfect seclusion of the design could be cause for concern, however: an abbot at the Redburn Priory had a private latrine constructed because, according to a commentator, “formerly one building had served him and the brethren there, wherefore they were ashamed when they had to go to the Necessary in his presence.”²¹ Vertical shafts below each seat funneled waste into a walled-in sewer pipe through which water flowed, either directly or indirectly, from a natural source.

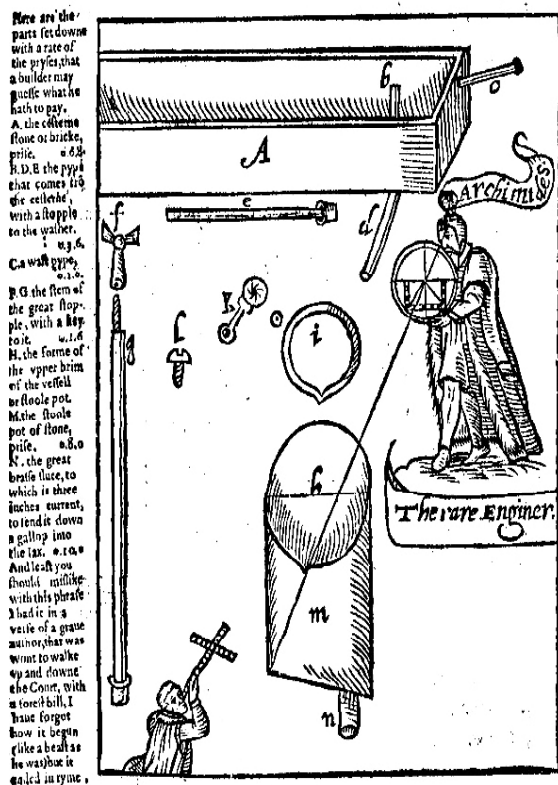
In palaces, castles, and manor-houses of the medieval period, the privy, sometimes referred to as the privy house, was often designed along the same lines as those in monastic privies: multiple stalls were grouped together and each seat opened over a shaft. While palaces, like monasteries, were usually built near running water (with the exception of those on hilltop sites), this was less often the case for castles and manor-houses. For estates without access to rivers and streams, moats and large earth pits served as sewage receptacles – more rank because more stagnant. After the dissolution of the convents and monasteries, secular inheritors tended to use their privies in exactly the same fashion as they had been used by monks in preceding centuries: no better sewage system existed. In the fifteenth century, around same time that closets were becoming more prominent part of life in elite households and courts in England, privies (also known by any number of other euphemisms including the garderober, withdraught, jakes, latrine, necessary, convenience, gong, closet of ease, or house of office) were more often distributed singly near the important chambers of the household, making seats side by side and/or stacking them one atop another on different floors of the building over sewer pits and drains. This change in the interior of a building sometimes produced striking exterior effects, as Girouard points out: “the series of projections built to contain

the privies and their shafts could be an impressive feature.”²² From the inside, however, these interiors were tucked away in the building’s thick walls. The value placed on these hidden cells may be measured by the low rank of the groom of the stool or stole who was in charge of the royal privy in the late medieval court. Later when Tudor monarchs moved the royal bed from great chamber into the privy chamber (next to the privy), the groom of the stole’s status improved significantly. It improved further still, Girouard explains, when,

in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as part of the constant series of retreats that make up the history of palace planning... [what had been the privy chamber] became a private dining and reception room, with a suite of private chambers beyond it, all collectively known as the privy lodgings. The groom of the stole remained in charge of the whole sequence; an official whose original job had been to clean out the royal latrines had become one of the most powerful and confidential of royal servants.²³

An innovative new kind of privy became imaginable at the end of the sixteenth century. As mentioned above, Sir John Harington, a godson of Elizabeth I, is credited with being the first to reconceive them.²⁴ Punning on “a jakes” and “a jack,” another common name for the privy (and ancestor to our john), Harington’s *Metamorphosis of Ajax* is an extensive treatise on excretory cultures past and present that also offers practical advice on how to “[free] this noysome place from all annoyance” by means of a flush and a valve.²⁵ An illustrated how-to guide (fig. 9) appears in the second of the book’s three parts: *An Anatomie of the Metamorphosed Ajax*.²⁶ To construct the flushing device, the guide instructs: “In the Privie that annoyes you, first cause a Cesterne... to be placed either behind the seat, in any place, either in the roome, or above it, from whence the water may, by a small pype of leade of an inch be convayed under the seate in the hinder part therof (but quite out of sight); to which pype you must have a Cocke or

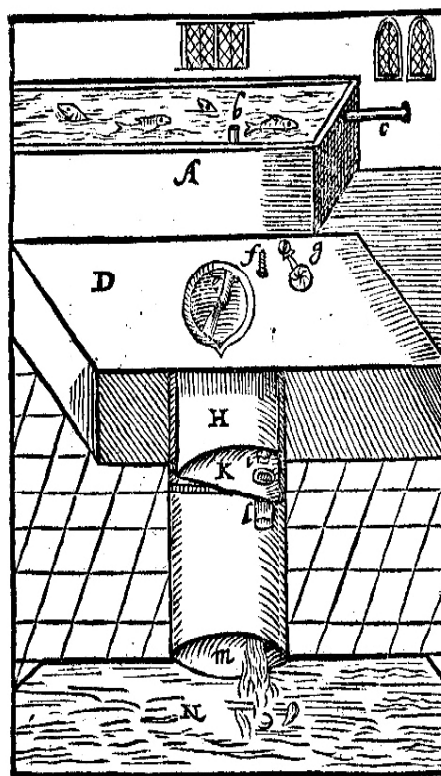
A plaine plot of
This is Don A I A X-house, of the new fashion, all in sunder,
 that a workeman may see what he hath to do.



Here are the
 parts set down
 with a rate of
 the pyles, that
 a builder may
 gauge what he
 hath to pay.
 A. the cellerne
 stone or bricke,
 pile. a 48
 B. D. E. the pyle
 that comes to
 the cellerne,
 with a floppie
 to the walther.
 u. g. 6.
 Ca. with pyle,
 u. 10.
 B. G. the stem of
 the great floppie,
 with a key
 to it. u. 10.
 H. the forme of
 the upper brim
 of the vessell
 or floole pot.
 M. the floole
 pot of stone,
 pile. a 10.
 N. the great
 brasse flue, to
 which is three
 inches current,
 to send it down
 the lat. u. 10.
 And leaſt you
 ſhould miſtake
 with this plate
 I had it in a
 velle of a graue
 author that was
 wont to walke
 up and downe
 the Court, with
 a toret bill, I
 haue forgot
 how it began
 like a bratt as
 he was how it
 ended in ryme.

Of that I wrote at Oxford, to ease some Barberies ekers.
 L. the seate with a peke draunt for elbow room, the whole charge 40. shillings eight pence, yet a mason
 of my maisters was offered thirtie pounds for the like.
 Memorandum the scale is about halfe an. inch to a foot.

A privie in perfection.
Here is the same all put together, that the worke-
 man may see if it be well.



A the Cellerne.
 B. the little wa-
 sher.
 C. the wash pipe.
 D. the seate
 board.
 E. the pipe that
 comes from the
 Cellerne.
 F. the Screw.
 G. the Scallop
 shell to cover it
 when it is shut
 downe.
 H. the floole
 pot.
 I. the floppie.
 K. the current.
 L. the flue.
 M. N. the velle
 into which it
 falls, always
 remember that
 C. for noone
 and at night,
 empty it, and
 leave it halfe a
 foote deepe in
 sayre water.
 And this being
 well done, and
 orderly kept,
 your worst pri-
 vie may be as
 sweet as your
 best chamber.
 But to conclude
 all this in a few
 wordes, it is but
 a standing close
 floole, easily
 emptied.
 And by the
 like reason (o-
 ther fortresses and
 proportions
 observed) all o-
 ther places of
 your house
 may be kept
 sweet.

Your worships to commaund
T. C. trauceller.

Figure 9. "A plaine plot of a privie in perfection."

washer, to yeeld water with some pretie strength when you would let it in...”²⁷ The guide provides even more detailed advice as to the construction of the privy vessel. It is to be a slanted oval bowl of brick, stone, or lead, dressed with pitch, rosin, and wax, to the bottom of which is fastened a lockable brass washer which shuts out the smell of the privy shaft below. “If water be plentie, the oftener it is used and opened, the sweeter; but if it be scant, once a day is inough, for a need, though twenty persons should use it...,” readers are reassured. “And this being well done, and orderly kept, your worst privy may be as sweet as your best chamber.”²⁸ Having constructed the machine on his estate at Kelston, Harington (and the illustrator contributing to the *Metamorphosis*) speak from experience. The garde-robes in palaces and great houses were sometimes manually cleaned with rain water collected for this purpose, but to little effect. Harington’s simple and elegant design was much more effective in preventing unpleasant sewage odors from permeating the room.

In addition to providing practical instructions for improving the privy, the *Metamorphosis* seeks to elevate excretion as a topic of discourse. Indeed, Harington’s foremost rhetorical project throughout the treatise is to preempt possible objections to his theme.²⁹ Harington had been banished from Elizabeth’s court after circulating his translation of a risqué episode from Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* among the Queen’s maids of honor in 1584 and had won back her favor only after dedicating his complete translation of this very long work – the first English translation – to her. He published his new book on privies under a pseudonym, Miscamos.³⁰ By then, in any case, Harington had already had his special privy installed for Her Highness at Richmond Palace.

Interestingly, the text projects that its detractors will be offended by Harington's topic not because of excrement's intricately disruptive qualities or associations but because of its indecorous triviality. The privy doesn't really merit the attentions of a nobleman. In a prefatory letter to Misacmos urging him to write the book, Misacmos's cousin, Philostilpnos, worries that the author might be reluctant to treat such lowly matter: "all my feare is that your pen having bene inured to so high discourse,

Of Dames, of Knights, of armes, of loves delight.
will now disdaine to take so base a subject,
Of vaults, of sinkes, privies & draughts to write."

"But," Philostilpnos pleads, "herein let a publik benefit expell a private bashfulness..."³¹

The prospect of many more people enjoying cleaner facilities should override any awkwardness Harington feels about his obsession with "*vaults, ...sinkes, privies & draughts*" and their "baseness" relative to epic's noble personages and affairs. The *Metamorphosis* reiterates this view still more forcefully in a later passage, "some will object, that [the privy] was never of that importaunce, but that it was left to each mans owne care to provide, for that which concerned his own peculiar necessitie."³² The projected objectors do not fear or despise waste and privy concerns; rather they understand it to be strictly a personal matter, "left to each mans owne care to provide."

As discussed in Chapter One, in his *Four Books of Architecture* (1570), Andrea Palladio had compared the elements of architectural space to the parts of the body in an analogy that aligned and privileged the qualities of beauty, visibility, and grandeur:

As our Blessed Creator has ordered these our members in such a manner, that the most beautiful are in places most exposed to view, and the less comely more hidden; so in building also, we ought to put the principal and considerable parts, in places most seen, and the less beautiful in places as much hidden from the eye as possible; that in them may be lodged all the foulness of the house, and all those

things that may give any obstruction, and in any measure render the more beautiful parts disagreeable.³³

When Harington worries that certain readers will think his sense of the “importance” of the privy is inflated, he acknowledges this early modern spatial cosmology that insists that the “less comely” members, of bodies and buildings alike, are naturally to be found in places “more hidden.”

Unlike the coach, whose appeal, as we shall see, was recognized almost immediately upon its advent at the sixteenth-century court, it would take nearly a hundred years for the technical innovations Harington described to catch on. Even then they were hardly commonplace, a fact which seems to confirm his assessment of the widespread indifference to the privy. We have seen that over the course of the seventeenth century, as the classical equation of size and splendor gave way to more specialized methods of apportioning space, closets of all kinds were increasingly of interest. And I have also pointed out that water too, flowing more efficiently than ever before, came into fashion. In addition to the improvements to the bath discussed in Chapter Two, fountains now cascaded in formal gardens, marble basins and buffets streamed in dining parlors. Privies also benefited from these advancements: pipes and elaborate drainage systems were sometimes installed in them. After a tour through Windsor Castle in the late seventeenth century, for instance, travel writer Celia Fiennes records that in Prince George of Denmark’s apartment she had observed “a little place wth a seate of Easement of Marble wth sluces of water to wash all down” and in Queen Anne’s apartment directly above it “Just such marble seates of Easem^t wth the sluces of water as that below.”³⁴

It would be nearly a hundred more years however before, in a flurry of technical innovation and legal activity, the water closet took on a full-blown public identity in

Britain. In 1775, Alexander Cummings took out the first patent for a “valve closet,” much like the one Harington had invented in the late sixteenth century. In 1777, Samuel Prosser patented a privy that used a ball float to control the flow of clean water into the basin. An advertisement for Prosser’s privies boasted that they “[f]ar excel any ever made, or invented for SWEETNESS, and Ease to be kept in repair....,” adding that “the different Noblemen... in the three kingdoms having used them with satisfaction, will be a means of promoting them.”³⁵ The unpleasant smell is the immediate problem the water closet designers want to rectify, expressing a growing concern for the degree of “satisfaction” users can take in the experience and in domestic comfort more generally. A year later watchmaker and jeweller Josiah Bramah found a different solution to the problem of backwash: he included two valves, one to bring water into the basin, the other to remove it.

As Roy Palmer narrates it in *The Water Closet*, Britain would have to wait yet another century for the next important legal development: the moment when “[a]t long last... sanitary facilities were made compulsory in all new housing.” In addition to a requirement to dig and cover an ashpit for each domicile, special places for excretion were mandated, though plumbing was still considered a luxury. Thirty years later an Act of Parliament singled out the most technologically sophisticated facilities as the essential ones. “Thus the water closet became an accepted part of the apparatus of the home, and a necessary part of hygienic living,” Palmer writes. “It is remarkable that it took so long for such a basic piece of equipment to evolve, and equally remarkable that it was adopted on such a large scale within a century, so that we now take it for granted.”³⁶

Though in retrospect the water closet assumes a leading role in a coming-of-age story like Palmer's about the triumph of domestic hygiene, its future was by no means certain when Swift was writing his scatological oeuvre. In fact, Girouard characterizes the middle of the eighteenth century as a plumbing slump: "By 1730... any country house could in theory have running water on all floors, and as many baths and water-closets as its owners wanted or could afford. But comparatively little use was made of this technology in the next fifty years... Water-closets became, if anything, less common."³⁷ Similarly, Wright observes that "even in the great houses" water closets were "rather rare and rude."³⁸ In his mid-eighteenth-century plans for the massive Kedleston Hall, Palladian architect James Paine included only one indoor privy. In 1734, William Kent designed "only a windowless 'two-holer' in an odd corner of the hall" at the Earl of Leicester's country house in Norfolk. If the elite who cared enough – and could afford them – did have privies designed with special care, these facilities elicited the same combination of wonder and suspicion as other novelties in this period. When in 1718 Royal Society member John Aubrey saw "a pretty machine to cleanse an House of Office" at an estate in Surrey, he described its operation in scientific detail: he noticed that the "pretty machine" jetted "a small stream of water no bigger than one's finger, which ran into an engine made like a bit of a fire-shovel, which hung upon its centre of gravity, so that when it was full a considerable quantity of water fell down with some force."³⁹ Author and collector Horace Walpole was struck by the number and sophistication of the built-in stools he glimpsed on a tour of Aelia Laelie Chudley's house, finding both the apparatuses and his immediate reaction to them worth reporting in a letter to a friend: "But of all curiosities, are the conveniences in every bedchamber:

great mahogany projections... with the holes, with brass handles, and cocks, &c.—I could not help saying, it was the *loosest* family I ever saw!”⁴⁰

A much more basic means of dealing with waste in the household still suited the minority of people who would have been in a position to contemplate the addition of water closets. Well into the eighteenth century, the more common path to the sewer was not via the privy shaft but via the chamber pot – also known as the commode or close stool. More mobile and versatile than their built-in counterparts, the construction and use of chamber pots and commodes varied dramatically across different social groups. With built-in indoor privies or water closets, the effort involved in transporting waste matter to the cesspit was absorbed by individual users: a person walked to the privy; and gravity, or water and gravity took care of the rest. But with chamber pots, waste disposal operated in concert with – and viscerally reinforced – a traditional social hierarchy. The poor emptied their simple clay pots themselves, sometimes straight out the window of their lodgings. The elite used more elaborately decorated commodes and close stools and downloaded the labor of disposal onto their servants, catching them in an endless, stinking exchange. As Fabricant puts it, “In eighteenth-century England and Ireland..., the relationship between the upper and lower classes, between master and servant, was defined, at least in part, excrementally.”⁴¹ Swift directs house-maids to redress this exploitative relation in his mock-conduct manual, *Directions to Servants* (1745):

I am very much offended with those Ladies, who are so proud and lazy, that they will not be at the Pains of stepping into the Garden to pluck a Rose, but keep an odious Implement sometimes in the Bed-chamber itself, or at least in a dark Closet adjoining, which they make Use of to ease their worst Necessities; and, you are the usual Carriers away of the Pan, which maketh not only the Chamber, but even their Cloaths offensive, to all who come near. Now, to cure them of this odious Practice, let me advise you on whom this Office lies, to convey away this Utensil, that you will do it

openly, down the great Stairs, and in the Presence of the Footmen; and, if any Body knocks, to open the Street-door, while you have the Vessel filled in your Hands. This, if any Thing can, will make your Lady take the Pains of evacuating in the proper Place...⁴²

The satirical principle of the whole work is well exemplified here: while the speaker appears to be correcting the house-maid's manners, the practices he recommends also serve to discipline the lady on whom she waits. This particular instruction turns on the contrast between the lady's "lazy and proud," furtive use of her commode and the potentially extreme visibility of its contents during their disposal. The lady fills her "odious Implement" in her private apartments, "sometimes in the Bed-chamber itself, or at least in a dark Closet adjoining." But the maid, on whom the obligation to empty it falls, has it within her (negligible) power to expose the pot and its contents not only to the footmen who pass her on the "great Stairs" but also to anyone who calls at the front door. The speaker, taking an aggressive pleasure in cutting down the lady's delusion that she excretes in secret, proposes that the garden is the "proper Place" to "ease the worst Necessities." Yet his critique of the lady's chamber pot crucially hinges on the fantasy underlying the development of the new high-tech privies: that is, the fantasy that domestic space might ultimately be freed from all evidence of excretion. A new ideal of excretory privacy that merged cleanliness and autonomy with the more purposeful and dignified solitude associated with the closet was just beginning to cohere in the British imagination in the early eighteenth century.

Problematizing the Privy

When Swift built the outdoor privies at Market Hill in 1730, he was participating in a brand new trend. As the construction of water closets briefly lapsed, “a fashion started for outdoor earth closets” among country-house owners, Girouard observes.⁴³ Generally without plumbing, these outdoor spaces – sometimes called earth houses or boghouses – were nevertheless designed with an eye to some of the same concerns that more sophisticated facilities were calculated to provide: ensuring a pleasant, “sweet and clean” experience for the user and freeing the house from the lingering odors of the privy shaft. A Norfolk gentleman’s careful specifications for the “little house” he was having built on the garden of his estate show that above all he wants the place to feel fresh: “...I would have it as light as possible. There must be a good broad place to set a candle on, and a place to keep paper... though the better the plainer, it should be neat.”⁴⁴

Swift obviously also gave thought a lot to his “little houses” as he was making them. To what extent is excretory privacy a natural and reasonable desire, Swift wonders in the “Panegyric,” and to what extent is it a desire indicated by and indicative of a new kind of anti-social orientation? In the title and subtitle of the poem, Swift claims a more intimate aim: to eulogize himself in the voice of his friend, Lady Acheson, “the Lady of the North.”⁴⁵ In this section of the chapter, I survey the whole of the poem, mapping the speaker’s shifting views and moods as she casts her mind from the interior of the Market Hill estate to its exterior, then back inside again. Focusing especially on Swift’s privies and the long philosophical digression they inspire, and taking several intertextual detours of my own, I show how the “Panegyric” grapples with the growing interest in the

material culture of excretion by imagining it as the basis of a comprehensive social and ethical system.

Centered in the household, the first half of the “Panegyric” clearly fulfills the promise of the title. According to the poem’s semi-fictional premise, the Dean’s generosity and gallantry as a house guest have occasioned Lady Acheson’s composition: “Resolved my gratitude to show.../ now in all our sex’s name, / My artless muse shall sing your fame” (1, 5-6), she begins. “In each capacity I mean / To sing your praise” (43-44). The list of Swift’s contributions to life at Market Hill grows fast. Addressing him directly, she lauds the dimensions of Swift’s character that improve relations with the surrounding community. She notes his respect for the neighborhood ladies – “By your example and assistance, / The fellows learn to know their distance” (55-6); his erudition as a preacher – “How your superior learning shines / Above our neighbouring dull divines” (63-4); his delightful conversation – “Your style is clear, and so concise, / We never ask to hear you twice” (73-4); and his gentility – “...such address, and grateful port, / As clearly shows you bred at court” (82-84). Next the speaker turns to what she jokingly calls “a nobler scene”: the Dean’s labors alongside the servants. He performs the roles of butler’s mate (selecting wines), usher and chambermaid (leading hikes then darning the socks ruined en route), jester (making jokes to please everyone, whether “A duchess or a kitchen girl”), and tutor (improving Lady Acheson’s reading and speech).

When she looks to the farm and lands immediately surrounding Market Hill, where Swift works as “thatcher, ditcher, gardener, bailie” (157) and “dairy handmaid” (167), the speaker’s unqualified appreciation ends, however, and a more strained view of her subject’s accomplishments takes its place. (The outhouses, not yet in view, are

already in the air.) Ostensibly Lady Acheson continues to commend Swift's tireless industry and inventiveness: "to a genius so extensive, / No work is grievous or offensive" (157-58). One set of projects includes building pig sties, rat-proofing a vault, and cleaning the chicken coop (159-166). Another project is separating butter from whey in a painstaking process involving a bottle (167-186). Whereas in traditional georgic poetry, nature assists agrarian workers, generously rewarding their efforts and transforming labor into a form of productive pleasure, the "Panegyric" characterizes Swift's work as both physically and mentally draining, and its yields as disproportionately small. The Dean "ponder[s] long" his minor building improvements "with anxious thought" (161). The butter-making invention is a flashy but inefficient novelty item:

Three morning hours you toss and shake
The bottle, till your fingers ache:
Hard is the toil, nor small the art,
The butter from the whey to part:
Behold; a frothy substance rise;
Be cautious, or your bottle flies.
The butter comes; our fears are ceased;
And, out you squeeze an ounce at least. (179-186)

The pains Swift takes to "squeeze out" a tiny pat of butter reminds Lady Acheson of the hours he passes "bent upon some smart lampoon" (189):

You toss and turn your brain till noon;
Which, in its jumbings round the skull,
Dilates, and makes the vessel full:
While nothing comes but froth at first,
You think your giddy head will burst:
But squeezing out four lines in rhyme,
Are largely paid for all your time. (187-196)

Two disparate spheres of "production" are aligned here: Swift's brain is like the butterbottle; the indiscriminate mass of ideas he quickly generates is the froth; and the

two couplets worth keeping after spending the morning at the writing desk, the meager ounce of butter.

This developing sense of Swift's order-making as an onerous and ultimately anticlimactic process prepares us for Lady Acheson's still more skeptical outlook on the outhouses. "Palladio was not half so skilled in / The grandeur or the art of building," she announces, examining them:

Two temples of magnific size,
Attract the curious traveller's eyes,
That might be envied by the Greeks;
Raised up by you in twenty weeks... (199-203)

Just as she mocks the pitiful ratio of stuff (butter or poetry) produced to work performed, overstatement and arithmetic work to undercut her compliments to the outhouses. While the symmetry of building a pair of "temples" arguably bespeaks a certain Palladian influence, their size, not at all "magnific," does not. When Lady Acheson pictures the buildings in use, she continues to exaggerate:

Here, gentle goddess Cloacine
Receives all offerings at her shrine.
In separate cells the he's and she's
Here pay their vows with bended knees;
(For, 'tis prophane when sexes mingle;
And every nymph must enter single;
And when she feels an *inward motion*,
Comes filled with *reverence* and *devotion*.) (205-212)

Far from common-garden structures, these outhouses are private houses of worship honoring Cloacine, the Roman goddess of the sewers. Rather than shit and piss, their reverent and devout users bequeath "offerings." Instead of sitting or squatting, they genuflect, having been called to the outhouse, one-by-one, not by rumblings in their guts but because they are "filled" with piety.

In describing men and women paying solitary “vows,” Lady Acheson also calls to mind Protestant tradition: Swift’s “separate cells” accommodate the inwardness usually reserved for the prayer closet in this period. In the *Metamorphosis of Ajax* Harington had already viewed the privacy of the privy in this light in a poem about a conflict between a cleric and the devil:

A goodly Father sitting on a draught,
To doe as neede, and nature hath us taught;
Mumbled (as was his maner) certen prayr’s,
And unto him, the Devil straight repayr’s,
And boldly to revile him he begins,
Alledging that such prayr’s are deadly sins;
And that it shewd, he was devoyd of grace,
To speake to God, from so unmeete a place.
The reverend man, though at the first dismaid;
Yet strong in faith, to Satan thus he said.
Thou damned spirit, wicked, false and lying,
Dispairing thine own good, & ours envying:
Ech take his due, and me thou canst not hurt,
To God my pray’r I meant, to thee the durt.

Harking back to the English privy’s ecclesiastic origins, Harington’s little verse-parable maps the Christian split of good and evil, spirit and matter, heaven and hell, purity and profanity onto the vertically-oriented closet and shaft, insisting, finally, that, “Pure prayr ascends to him that high doth sit, / Down fals the filth, for fiends of hel more fit” (fig.

10).⁴⁶ Harington was writing not long before the publication of the King James Bible, whose new version of Matthew 6.6 enjoined devout Protestants to pray specifically in “closets.” As we saw in Chapter One, a plethora of manuals throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would reinforce Matthew’s message with detailed advice. In “mumbl[ing]... certaine prayers,” the reverend perhaps exhibits the kind of unthinking piety that authors of closet-prayer guides sought to prevent.⁴⁷ Certainly when the devil distracts the “goodly Father” as he prays alone, the poem enacts one of the paradoxical



*A godly father sitting on a draught,
To do as needs, and nature hath vs taught;
Mumbled (as was his manner) certen prayrs,
And vnto him the Diuell straightr repai's:*

Figure 10. "A godly father sitting on a draught."

rationales of this practice. As Thomas Brooks puts it his *Privie key of heaven, or, Twenty arguments for closet-prayer* (1665) (whose title alone might give us pause): “If Closet Prayer be not an indispensible duty that Christ hath laid upon all his people, why doth Satan so much oppose it, why doth he so industriously and so unweariedly labour to discourage Christians in it, & to take off Christians from it?”⁴⁸ Harington justifies his improvements with a pun on the privy’s more abstract signification that would not be out of place in a work like Brooks’: “if we wold amend our privie faults first, we should afterward much the better reforme the open offences.”⁴⁹ And he plays up the correspondence between the spirit and the private depths of the house in a mnemonic couplet:

*To keepe your houses sweete, cleanse privie vaults,
To keepe your soules as sweete, mend privie faults. (186)*⁵⁰

The corner of the diagrams in the *Metamorphosis*’s shows a priest blessing the water closet (fig. 11). By actively aligning spatial and spiritual purity, Harington elevates his invention as a conduit to two forms of decency at once and thumbs his nose at the classical cosmology that trivializes private spaces.⁵¹

Lady Acheson’s representation of the outhouses in the “Panegyric” initially seems to echo Harington’s upbeat discourse of interiority, but she soon changes her tune. As the “lofty domes” of the privies (225) expand her view from the immediate environs of the house further afield to the meadows and streams surrounding it, nostalgia sets in. She “sigh[s] to think of ancient days” (226): “Thee bounteous goddess Cloacine, / To temples why do we confine?,” she muses, “Forbid in open air to breathe; / Why are thine altars fixed beneath?” (229-232). First she conjures a mythic golden age of excremental libertinism under the sun and stars, a time before time (and before the enclosure of the



Figure 11. “A plaine plot of a privie in perfection” (detail).

commons) when, no sooner than the impulse struck them, nymphs and swains “placed / Their sacrifice [to Cloacina] with zeal and haste” (239-40), whether at the “margin of a purling stream” (241), in the “shelter of a shady grove” (246), or “in some flowery vale.” Cloacina reigned not over an artificial system of sewers but over the “earthly globe” and her pagan “votaries” were repaid for their spontaneous offerings with lovely blossoms, including “many a flower abstersive,” flowers, that is, whose purgative properties boost an ongoing cycle of fertilization and growth.

But then a cloud appears on the horizon of Lady Acheson’s mythic imaginings. The fall: Jove’s violent triumph over Saturn, the god of agriculture, brings the beginning of the end of a harmonious, pagan state of nature. Free-spirited Cloacina is “confined to a cell” by the usurper’s collaborator, Gluttony, “a bloated harpy sprung from hell” (269). Just as her initial portait of privy privacy layers classical and contemporary traditions, the portrait of the dawning of the distopian iron age superimposes images of ancient political imperialism with images of contemporary cultural imperialism. The hell from which Gluttony emanates is evidently France. Wedging herself into “a spacious elbow-chair,” a large recliner designed for Louis XV’s lounge-happy court, and gorging on a “treble share” of food, Gluttony plots to convert the “harmless” British natives to her ways – to supersize them, as it were.⁵² To this end, she “sends her priests.../ From haughty Gaul...,”

...to make ragouts
Instead of wholesome bread and cheese,
To dress their soups and fricassees;
And, for [their] home-bred British cheer,
Botargo, catsup, and caveer.⁵³ (263-68)

Harington, ever the confident privy advocate, had taken a lighthearted view of the effects of intemperance: “He that makes his belly his God, I wold have him make a Jakes his chappell,” he laughed.⁵⁴ The more use given his new machine, the merrier. Lady Acheson’s vision is decidedly darker. “Infecting [their] hearts by stealth” (280), Gluttony’s sauce-mad chefs – with their fancy stews and fish relishes – upset the “home-bred” balance of consumption and waste. With a sigh of anguish, Lady Acheson accuses her compatriots of superseding the natural rhythms that once governed their own bodies: “Ah! who in our degenerate days / As nature prompts, his offering pays?” (287-88)⁵⁵; and of instigating luxurious and exploitative practices that mask the basic human equality in matters excretory: “nature,” she insists, “never difference made / Between the sceptre and the spade.” The new excretory customs now suddenly seem self-indulgent – indulgent, that is, of the worst impulses of the self – since they wilfully privilege comfort and vanity over health, modesty, and self-control:

Why will you place in lazy Pride
Your Altars near your Couches Side?
When from the homeliest Earthen Ware
Are sent up Off’rings more sincere
Than where the haughty Dutchess Locks,
Her Silver Vase in Cedar-Box. (293-98)

In Swift’s most famous scatological poem (also written in 1730), “The Lady’s Dressing Room,” Strephon opens a box belonging to his beloved “haughty Celia”⁵⁶ that closely resembles the one that the “haughty Dutchess” (297) employs. Celia’s commode is covered “With rings and fringes counterfeit / To make it seem in this disguise, / A cabinet to vulgar eyes.”⁵⁷ The discovery that “Celia shits”⁵⁸ will traumatize Strephon. Lady Acheson, like the stern author of “Directions to a House-maid,” is less worried about ordure per se than about the vulgar and proud disjunction between it and the fussy “Silver

Vase in Cedar-Box” in which she locks it up. A simple ceramic chamberpot is far “more sincere,” she imagines – more open and literally more earthy – and thus better suited to its humble purpose.⁵⁹ And unlike Strephon, Lady Acheson is not at all annoyed when, after she has wandered some miles from Market Hill, she has her own close encounter, stumbling upon evidence that some northern “swains” have graced the land with tokens of their presence. Their “offerings... in golden ranks / Adorn our crystal river’s banks,” and their “spiral tops” and “coppie-crowns,” “grace the flowery downs” (299-304), she observes, unflinching. Pleased, in fact, it seems, the speaker finds a unexpected beauty in this residue; and in its shapes, hieroglyphs from a forgotten golden age.

At first glance Lady Acheson had celebrated the pair of outhouses the Dean labored over for twenty weeks (albeit not without a certain irony) as hallowed ground where each and every cloacal “*inward motion*” (212, 209 original italics) might be revered. In contradistinction to her pastoral imaginings, the privies now seem base and profane, unnaturally restrictive and shamefully secretive:

None seek thee now in open Air;
To thee no verdant Altars rear,
But, in their Cells and Vaults obscene
Present a sacrifice unclean (281-4)

In fact, viewed through her pastoralism, all variety of excretory interiors seem to need to be subsumed under the general rubric of “Cells and Vaults obscene”: not only Swift’s privies but also water closets with drains, flushes, and valves, unplumbed indoor closets of ease, as well as the myriad personal chambers where lords and ladies avail themselves of their close stools in private.

When Lady Acheson returns to Market Hill at the end of the “Panegyric,” she comes home to the present moment and a more pragmatic mindset. Swift’s own voice is

heard in the second to last stanza. He instructs Lady Acheson to practice self-control and focuses especially on her diet:

At nicely carving show thy wit;
But ne'er presume to eat a bit...
Let never at your board be known
An empty plate except your own. (335-37; 338-40)

Keeping up the custom of the communal feast, a vestige of a happier, more social and harmonious time, but resisting Gluttony's insidious influence, Lady Acheson is to distribute the meats on her table "nicely," filling rather than heaping her guests' plates, while, for her own part, "ne'er presum[ing] to eat a bit." The "Panegyric" does not offer an equivalent prescription for coping with bodily waste (though the goal of fasting seems to speak to a hope to avoid the necessity altogether). But we are left with the sense that the new outhouses do, finally, represent the least of several evils. They can potentially challenge the most exploitative and indolent of modern practices – like those indulged by the "haughty Duchess," for instance, who keeps a close stool in a cedar box beside her as she, emulating Gluttony, lolls and loafs in her closet.

Everett Zimmerman has emphasized the difficulties in determining Swift's intentions in this poem. How are we supposed to react to this stomach-turning celebration of excremental libertinism?⁶⁰ Reading in the context of the material cultural changes of the period, I would argue that Swift offers Lady Acheson's myth of the privy's postlapsarian origins at least in part as a genuine investigation of the material cultural history of excretory privacy. In this regard, it is helpful to compare the "Panegyric" to a roughly contemporaneous treatise by archdeacon Samuel Rolleston. Published in London in 1751, *A Philosophical Dialogue Concerning Decency* combines a *Symposium*-style debate with a catalogue of the many and various "Vessels and Utensils"

and “Places of Retirement for necessary Occasions” mentioned in biblical and classical writings.⁶¹ (The catalogue, which Rolleston believes is the first of its kind,⁶² features the earliest printed use of the term *water closet*.⁶³) Steeped in earnest antiquarianism, Rolleston’s tone could not be more different from Swift’s. But his concerns are quite similar, evincing a broader interest in excremental privacy as a complex moral issue in its own right.

Two gentlemen, Philoprepon and Eutrapelus, visit their friend, the narrator, a doctor of divinity who lives in the country, presumably Rolleston himself. On their way home from a long hike together, the doctor is “violently seiz’d upon” by indigestion, “attended with a necessity of going to stool.” About two miles from home and on an open field with a public road alongside it, the Doctor is at a loss as to where to go. Like Swift in the “Panegyric,” he has recently built a new outdoor privy, and he thinks particularly fondly of it now. “I wish I was now at home; that I might ease myself in the neat apartment I have lately made in my garden,” he complains to his friends, “for I hate to do such things in publick.” Despite the bellyache, he initiates a conversation about his inhibitions. “I have heard you say,” he says to Philoprepon, “that you cannot even make water if you think any one looks upon you—” “Very modest indeed!” Eutrapelus interrupts, “surely, Gentlemen, the necessities of nature must be attended to; and nature requires us to empty, as well as it does to fill” (3). Thus begins a debate about the origins of excretory shame.

As these initial comments suggest, Philoprepon and Eutrapelus represent divergent views on the issue. As the doctor runs ahead to relieve himself, they continue their discussion. Philoprepon is an essentialist, believing that excretion is intrinsically

shameful, while Eutrapelus takes a relativist approach. Inspired by Diogenes's famous contention that anything that is in itself lawful can be done lawfully in public, Eutrapelus understands the embarrassment his friends feel at the mere thought of being caught in that act as nothing more or less than the fear of flouting custom. To support this argument against the naturalness of excretory shame, he points to the diversity of excretory manners, attitudes, and practices at home and around the world. The desire for privacy varies by nation: "I believe the Mossinians... both men and women made no scruple of easing nature both ways in the publick streets" (10). It varies by status: in Venice: "they esteem it a part of noble liberty to discharge where and before whom they please" (11). And it varies by gender: "Our Ladies in England are asham'd of being seen even in going to, or returning from the most necessary parts of our houses... Now if this shame or modesty be founded in nature, why should not a man be asham'd of such a thing as well as a woman" (10). The notion that there exists a universal excretory code simply defies the empirical evidence to the contrary.

Inclined to propriety, Philoprepon objects that the fact that certain groups or types favor more open practices does not confirm their naturalness. Philoprepon subscribes to a classical notion of nature as an ideal. That which is natural to do is necessarily right and good to do, but, he insists, it does not follow that everyone's inclinations therefore point them in that direction. Rather naturalness is a quality that human actions all too often fail to achieve. After working to dismantle Eutrapelus's assumptions, Philoprepon takes his own extravagant argumentative flight. What lies at the heart of the naturalness of excremental modesty is a taboo on public sex, he contends:

Men by seeing women, and women by seeing men in those circumstances and in such a situation would have their passions rais'd and might sometimes be

suddenly hurry'd by the violence of their lust, thus set on fire, to break the laws of nature, and to do what in cooler thoughts they would judge iniquitous and wicked. In short, without the decency I am speaking of there would be an end of all continence and chastity; rapes, fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness would appear at noon day, and be common in our publick streets.⁶⁴

The roots of excretory privacy, Philoprepon reasons, rest in a powerful wish/fear of erotic propriety. On the one hand, we all possess a primal urge that exceeds our conscious control: in merely “seeing” a person of the other gender “in such a situation” — excreting in public — men and women “would have their passions raised” to a dangerous degree and might be “suddenly hurry'd by the violence of their lust.” On the other hand, Philoprepon classifies our desires to protect our bodies and our streets from erotic assault as “laws of nature.” We are drawn to excremental privacy even as we are repelled at the thought of living in a society where “rapes, fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness” happen as a matter of course. Back in the conversation again, the Doctor sides with Philoprepon in principle but refrains from reasoning out his position as they approach his house, preferring to making his case concretely, following the *Philosophical Dialogue*, in a detailed lecture, written for his antiquarian society, on the history of objects and spaces of excretion.

Where Swift's “Panegyric” creates temporal, or more accurately, epochal, divisions in its myth of privy origins, Rolleston situates divergent positions on privy privacy in different characters. Lady Acheson's pastoral fantasy of a moment when the whole world was our sewer (roughly) correlates to Eutrapelus's progressive view that excremental restraint has been culturally conditioned. Lady Acheson's view of a fall, an imperial coup that leads to a modern psychological fixation with privy privacy (roughly) correlates to Philoprepon and the Doctor's insistence on the naturalness of excretory

shame. In elaborating the postlapsarian moment, however, Swift's Lady Acheson subverts the very concept of retirement on which Rolleston's *Dialogue* depends: so far from properly protecting us, the interiors where we worship Cloacina leave us susceptible to a whole slew of dangerous new feelings, including laziness, overweening pride, an alienated, shameful relation to our bodies, and introversion. Nevertheless, for our purposes it is perhaps most important to recognize that, writing in the first half of the eighteenth century, Swift and Rolleston share a fundamental belief that privies, outhouses, and chamber pots and the like have a significance far in excess of their size and appearance: for both writers, the limits of sympathy and sociability, the nature of privacy and public-ness, and indeed of nature itself, are urgently implicated in this everyday experience.

Intimacy at the edge of the country house

"Panegyric on the Dean" belongs to a group of poems Swift wrote over the course of three long visits to the Achesons. Drawing on the conventions that developed in the country house poetry of Ben Jonson, Aemelia Lanyer, John Denham, Andrew Marvell, and others throughout the 1600s, and that were re-worked by several of Swift's contemporaries, the Market Hill series takes as its subjects his friends' estate, including their household and social scene, and a neighboring property Swift very nearly bought called Drapier's Hill. Over many centuries, feudal lords had developed ceremonies to show appreciation and gratitude across the heterogeneous spectrum of their community: the peasants who worked the land on their behalf, the knights who defended it and the

peers who absorbed and reflected their greatness. Girouard sums up the cultural principle enacted by these feudal rituals: “To have crowds of people continuously coming to the house, to have drink flowing in abundance, to serve up far more food than could possibly be eaten, and to feed the poor waiting at the gate with the leftovers was all evidence of power, wealth and glory. It was a way of life which later generations looked back on nostalgically as ‘the Ancient English Hospitality’.”⁶⁵ The buildings in and around which all these festivities took place provided the essential sign of the lord’s magnanimity and munificence.⁶⁶ When early modern poets wrote about country houses they mined this sign, lauding (or criticizing) their patrons by way of the intertwined architectural, social, and natural systems that dignified (or degraded) their dependence on them. In this final section I consider how the figure of the privy in the “Panegyric” interrogates Swift’s relationship with Lady Acheson in part by appropriating the symbolism and ideology of the country house.

To a certain extent, Swift’s connection to Lady Anne had nothing at all to do with Market Hill. Nora Crowe Jaffe has observed that their relationship fit the model Swift established with his two former loves, Esther Johnson (Stella) and Esther Vanhomrigh (Vanessa). “Lady Anne was the last in Swift’s ‘triumfeminate,’ as [he] would call it... When he met her, in 1728, Vanessa was dead and Stella had just died...,” Jaffe writes, “we might still say he created Lady Acheson in their image...” With each subsequent girlfriend the age gap increased – from 14, to 20, to about 25 years older – and with all three women, this age gap largely defined the relationship.⁶⁷ Over and over again Swift cast himself as the affectionate but critical tutor, and the woman in question as a rough diamond in need of his guidance and polish. The pattern is often in evidence in the

“Panegyric.” As we saw above, near the end of the poem, Lady Acheson records Swift’s advice on her performance at the dinner table. Elsewhere she discusses the verbal skills she works to improve under Swift’s tutelage, instead of gambling with the neighborhood ladies in the evening (141-44). And the whole poem pays homage to the long health-enhancing walks he insisted that she take with him. Several earlier Market Hill poems, such as “My Lady’s Lamentation and Complaint against the Dean,” “Lady Acheson Weary of the Dean,” “Journal of a Modern Lady,” and “Death and Daphne,” confirm that the pedagogical bent of the relationship with Lady Anne Acheson was as strong as it had been with Stella or Vanessa.

The nature of the attachment between Swift and Lady Acheson was also determined by the conjugal and domestic context in which it was cultivated. Initially, Swift had been equally close to Arthur Acheson, a baronet and Anglican churchman who had recently entered the Irish House of Commons. But over the course of Swift’s lengthy visits to Market Hill, the affective balance between the couple and their visitor shifted. Usually somewhat bored by country life, Lady Acheson was happy for the distractions Swift provided – Swift claimed in a letter to Pope that “she teased him to write about her and kept all the copies of the poems”⁶⁸ – and her rather reticent and solitary husband was happy for them too. In the “Panegyric,” Swift has Lady Acheson describe his attentions to her as salutary to their marriage:

Sir Arthur, since you set the pattern,
No longer calls me Snipe and Slatern;
Nor dare he, though he were a duke,
Offend me with the least rebuke. (57-60)

The ambiguity in the first of these lines (“you” is Swift of course) allows that while Lady Acheson’s conduct has been reconditioned such that her husband’s insults no longer

apply, Swift's gallant treatment of Lady Acheson has also played a part in reforming Sir Arthur's usual gruffness. The theme of triangulation recurs in the later Market Hill verses, notably "The Grand Question Debated." Despite Swift's connection to the wife, his ties to Lord Acheson remained the basic condition of possibility of their flirtation. The intimacy between the Dean and the lady, whatever else it consisted in, was fundamentally based in country-house hospitality – and Market Hill belonged to Lord Acheson. Tellingly, after the Achesons began living apart in 1730s, Swift did not return to Armagh and saw Lady Acheson infrequently in Dublin, instead "divid[ing] his need for female company among a number of women," as the biographer Irwin Ehrenpreis puts it.⁶⁹

In *Swift's Landscape*, Fabricant finds that Swift's perspective on the environments he moved through, inhabited, and built (or tried to build) is at once bleaker, more acute, and more intensely politicized than his English contemporaries' – qualities Fabricant especially attributes to the desperate living conditions in his native Ireland. In a chapter called "The Subversion of the Country House Ideal," Fabricant points out that in the early eighteenth century the principles of unstinting hospitality and "sustained intimacy between host and guest" long associated with aristocratic life in the country seemed to be on the brink of extinction: there was "an increased appetite for privacy among members of the gentry" and socially and architecturally, the politer world of the gentry was drifting apart from "the impolite world of servants, farmers and smallholders."⁷⁰ In the Market Hill series in particular, as Fabricant reads it, Sir Arthur's estate stands for "the passing away both of a private Augustan community (Swift and the Achesons, who grew increasingly distant after Swift's last visit in 1730) and of the public

world necessary to sustain such a community.”⁷¹ The privies occupy the center of the “Panegyric” – the core – precisely the point where, in another country house poem, such as Jonson’s “To Penshurst” for instance, we might find a huge communal feast portrayed. Though she does not spend much time on the privies, Fabricant’s general thesis invites us to recognize that Swift presents these spaces as modern, self-involved, self-indulgent miniatures or inversions of the once-welcoming country manor. The two stand-alone cells enclose their greedy, waste-producing, inward-looking subjects body and soul. They serve as parodic monuments to the great hall, the gate, and especially the feasting board – all those grand, ceremonial places where hosts and guests formerly honored one other.⁷²

If the outhouses in the “Panegyric” undoubtedly reinforce this type of deflationary, despairing vision, that is not all they do. Like other sorts of closets, the privy had a history as a place where a range of extrafamilial intimacies might be forged or sealed quickly and surreptitiously. Formally possessing neither the political, intellectual, nor the religious authority of other closets, these small spaces could accommodate especially marginal connections, the dirtiest of secrets. In the cabinet council against the Duke of York’s marriage to Anne Hyde Hamilton recreates in *Memoirs of Count de Grammont*, one of the courtiers smirks that not only did he experience “the critical minute” with Miss Hyde in “a certain closet built over the water” but that “three or four swans had been witnesses to the happiness of many others, as the lady frequently repaired to that place.”⁷³ Harington points out that while latrines were casually sociable places in ancient Rome (“in Martials time, [people] shunned not one the others companie, at Monsieur A JAX”⁷⁴), at the Elizabethan court they assist in

clandestine assignations. This is the subject of an intriguingly reflexive scandalous verse in his treatise, “Against *Cayus* that scorn’d his Metamorphosis”:

Last day thy Mistris, Cayus, being present,
One hapt to name, to purpose not unpleasant,
The Title of my mis-conceived Booke:
At which you spit, as though you could not brooke
So grosse a Word: but shall I tell the matter
Why? If one names a Jax, your lips doe water.
There was the place of your first love and meeting,
There first you gave your Mistris such a greeting,
As bred her scorne, your shame, and others lafter,
And made her feele it twenty fortnights after;
Then thanke their wit, that makes the place so sweet,
That for your Hymen you thought place so meet...⁷⁵

The courtier’s public display of censure actually masks a relation of pleasure from which he wants to distance himself. At the sound of the word “jakes,” goes the poem, Cayus’s mouth waters in a lustful not, as he claims, disgusted, Pavlovian response: though he and his mistress would be dishonored “twenty fortnights after” by the birth of their bastard child, the name of the place of their “first love and meeting” calls to mind vivid erotic memories. Harington unmasks Cayus’s pretense only because he wants to defend and promote his improvements to the privy which have “[made] the place so sweet” that it appeals to adulterers.⁷⁶ Elsewhere it is not merely the privacy of the privy but this peculiar mode of embodiment that fosters fleeting intimacies. Harington remarks that excretion can register courtly preferment: “I have heard it seriously told, that a great Magnifico of Venice being Ambassador in France, and hearing a Noble person was come to speake with him, made him stay til he had untyed his points; and when he was new set on his stoole, sent for the Noble man to come to him at that time; as a verie speciall favor.”⁷⁷ By exposing himself to the French gentleman in this fashion, the “Magnifico”

means to elevate and honor him, as if granting him the office of groom of the stole for the duration of their meeting.⁷⁸

Country house poems typically express gratitude from below: a grateful beneficiary thanks a country lord for his generosity; the poet thanks the patron. Swift complicates that relation by casting Lady Acheson, the “patron” of sorts, in the role of poet, and exploring her indebtedness to the Dean, her guest, who also informally serves in the household in many capacities. The “Panegyric”’s voice is also much less formal than is typical for country house poetry: except for the occasional apostrophe to Cloacina and the second-to-last stanza in Swift’s voice, Lady Acheson speaks directly to Swift as she takes her tour in and around her husband’s estate. Peter Schakel notes that almost all of the Market Hill poems were composed with an immediate, personal audience in mind. What Swift wrote during the day would be read aloud in the evening – often by the poem’s putative speaker – for the amusement of the Achesons and members of their household: the “social context required his poems to be conversational rather than literary and allude to immediate family events—like Lady Acheson having stepped in dung while on a country walk...”⁷⁹

In the “Panegyric,” Swift pushes the limits of propriety by attributing to his lady-speaker a passionate interest in matters whose suitability for polite conversation was in question, experimenting with the strange reciprocity between humiliation and affection that the double voice enhanced: the edgier his representation of Lady Acheson’s thoughts and feelings, the more powerful the charge of their attachment in the poem. If what connects Swift and Lady Acheson bears only a dim resemblance to ancient country-house hospitality, the “Panegyric” suggests that it is not for that reason any less compelling.

Concretizing the poem's brilliantly redoubled voice, the his-and-hers outhouses at Market Hill pay tribute to this complex attachment, I suggest. In a place between the house and the fields, he and Lady Acheson might sit in earshot of one another, at the borders of gratitude and obligation, pastoral licentiousness and domestic propriety, romance and companionship, intimacy and shame. And when, shortly after its composition, Swift published the "Panegyric," his privy for two, like other closets and cabinets "broken open" and "unlocked" throughout the period, acquired a broader, reflexive function. Stirring hearts, engaging minds, and perhaps turning stomachs, Swift's poem tests the distance and disembodiment of his unknown readers.

¹ Jonathan Swift, "Panegyric on the Dean in the Person of a Lady of the North," *Complete Poems*, ed. Pat Rogers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 436-44, lines 213-15.

² Mark Girouard, "Plumbing; or, the Lack of It," *A Country House Companion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 167.

³ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966) (Boston: Routledge, 1979), 35. Douglas elaborates the principle behind the above quotation and her cultural anthropological study as a whole:

Defilement is never an isolated event. It cannot occur except in view of a systematic ordering of ideas. Hence any piecemeal interpretation of the pollution rules of another culture is bound to fail. For the only way in which pollution ideas make sense is in reference to a total structure of thought whose key-stone, boundaries, margins and internal lines are held in relation by rituals of separation. (41)

Significantly, Frederick Bogel cites this passage from *Purity and Danger* to support his characterization of satire as the literary genre most profoundly invested in how we divide ideas, things, people, and experiences into categories, *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Jonson to Byron* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 43.

⁴ Swift visited Market Hill three times: from 1728-29, 1729, and 1730. Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age, Volume Three: Dean Swift*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983, 669, casts some doubt on the common assumption that the poem was written and the privies built in 1730: "In [line] 204 we are told that Swift built the privies in twenty weeks – the sort of fact he was not likely to invent. But he did not stay so long at Market Hill in 1730." Market Hill was destroyed by fire in around 1805. The estate, rebuilt in a neoNorman style as Gosford Castle in the nineteenth century, still boasts "the Dean's Well" and "the Dean's Chair" as tourists attractions, but the outhouses are gone. Information from Public Record Office of Northern Ireland website: www.proni.gov.uk/records/private/gosford.htm.

⁵ The scatological poetry, as this group has come to be known, was preceded by a few striking prose treatments of this theme, including in *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Of all Swift's works, the "Panegyric" treats the excretory setting most extensively.

⁶ One exception may be Tita Chico, *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), 142. Throughout her book, Chico shows how dressing rooms helped eighteenth-century women to develop a new sense of agency. In her reading of Swift's dressing room poem, she suggests that the location of Celia's full chamberpot serves a misogynist aim: "to restrict the potential for privacy, privilege, and autonomy that [this room] represented."

⁷ John Middleton Murray is credited with coining the phrase, "excremental vision," as a chapter heading in *Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), 432-48.

⁸ Norman O. Brown, "The Excremental Vision," *Life against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959) (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 179-201, 188.

⁹ Brown summarizes Freud's theory, 191: during the child's anal phase, the "anal product" "acquires the significance of being his own child or creation, which he may use either to obtain narcissistic pleasure in play, or to obtain love from another (feces as gift), or to assert independence from another (feces as property), or to commit aggression against another (feces as weapon)."

¹⁰ Donald Siebert, "Swift's Fiat Odor: The Excremental Re-Vision," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19.1 (Fall 1985), 21-38, 21.

¹¹ Ashraf Rushdy, "A New Emetics of Interpretation: Swift, His Critics and the Alimentary Canal," *Mosaic* 24.3-4 (1991), 1-32, 29. Also cited in Kelly Anspaugh, "Reading the Intertext in Jonathan Swift's 'A Panegyric on the Dean,'" *Essays in Literature* 22.1 (Spring 1995), 17-30, 18.

¹² Carole Fabricant, *Swift's Landscape* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 36. Fabricant argues that, of all the so-called Augustans, Swift was the most viscerally distanced from neoclassical platitudes:

To maintain that Swift kept his gaze unwaveringly fixed upon the Great Chain of Being or upon the symmetrical beauties of Divine Providence as he daily plowed through the muck and ruins of his Dublin neighbourhood, past the now-empty weavers' shops, the filthy, overcrowded tenements, and the teeming mass of lice-infested beggars who came pouring into the Liberties from all regions of Ireland, is in effect to argue that Swift was a far less observant and sensitive human being than his writings continually reveal him to be... (32-3)

While Fabricant's reading of the "Panegyric" in *Swift's Landscape* does not consider the poem's engagement with changing notions of excremental privacy, the book as a whole offers (and inspires) historically- and especially geographically-attuned criticism, which Fabricant sees as particularly a propos for studies of Swift's scatology: "Excrement... was very much a fact of life for Swift; his landscape was literally as well as linguistically full of it..." (30).

¹³ Everett Zimmerman, "Swift's Scatological Poetry: A Praise of Folly," *Modern Language Quarterly* 48.2 (June 1987), 124-144, 137.

¹⁴ Zimmerman, "Scatological," 144.

¹⁵ Bogel, *Difference*, 115, notes *excrement*'s etymological association with the concept of separation: "'Excrement'... is itself a profoundly divided word," he points out, "earning two entries in the *OED*. 'Excrement¹' derives from Latin *ex* + *cernere* (to sift or separate out), 'excrement²' from *ex* + *creocere* (to grow out). And 'excretion' derives from *excretus*, which is the past participle of *both* verbs."

¹⁶ Anspaugh, "Reading the Intertext," especially 27 and 28.

¹⁷ Lawrence Wright, *Clean and Decent: The Fascinating History of the Bathroom and the Water Closet and of sundry Habits, Fashion and Accessories of the Toilet principally in Great Britain, France, and America* (New York: Viking, 1960), 24.

¹⁸ Alan Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination*, trans. Miriam Kochan, Roy Porter, and Christopher Prendergast (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), is a fascinating prehistory of sanitation, showing how scientists' surveys of city smells in the eighteenth century led to "the great dream of disinfection" in the nineteenth (231).

¹⁹ John Davies, *The Ancient Rites, and Monuments of the Monastical, & Cathedral Church of Durham, Collected out of Ancient Manuscripts* (London: W. Hensman, 1672), 134-5. Cited in Wright, *Clean and Decent*, 30.

²⁰ Wright, *Clean and Decent*, 49.

²¹ Cited in Wright, *Clean and Decent*, 31-2.

²² Girouard, *Country House*, 247.

²³ Girouard, *Country House*, 57-8.

²⁴ Wright, *Clean and Decent*, 71, Roy Palmer, *The Water Closet: A New History* (Newton Abbot, UK: David and Charles, 1973), 26, and Elizabeth Story Donno, editor of John Harington's *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 18, concur on this point.

²⁵ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 30.

²⁶ In her "Introduction" to *Metamorphosis*, 11-12, Donno argues that Thomas Combe, a translator in Harington's service, was responsible for the *Anatomie*, which consists in a preface, two pages of illustrations, and a short apology.

²⁷ Combe in Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 192.

²⁸ Combe in Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 194, 196.

²⁹ Donno, "Introduction," reminds us that the "encomium on a trivial or unworthy subject" "had had a long vogue, dating back to the Greek rhetoricians, and it received a new infusion of vitality during the Renaissance through the efforts of the humanists" (18).

³⁰ Donno, "Introduction," represents this masquerade as more game-playing than anything else since "numerous biographical and personal allusions in the work and the rebus on his name [included in the text] proclaim his authorship" (11).

³¹ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 57.

³² Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 113.

³³ Andrea Palladio, *Four Books of Architecture* (1570), trans. Isaac Ware (London: 1738), 38.

³⁴ Celia Fiennes, *Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary* (written 1702) (http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/text/chap_page.jsp?t_id=Fiennes&c_id=41.) Fiennes's detailed description of the "seates of Easem^b" at Windsor Castle must have been the sort of thing Swift had in mind when, in his *Mechanical Operations of the Spirit* (1711), he scoffed at the tendency of travel writers to depict important sites on the basis of seeing one or two of their inconsequential parts: "As if a Traveller should go about to describe a Palace, when he had seen nothing but the Privy." Significantly, Swift uses the privy as his prime example of an inconsequential detail, a part that patently does not stand in for the whole.

³⁵ Cited in Palmer, *Water Closet*, 38.

³⁶ Palmer, *Water Closet*, 25, cites the 1907 Act of Parliament in which *water closet* was first legally defined:

The expression ‘closet accommodation’ includes a receptacle for human excreta, together with a structure comprising such receptacle and the fittings and apparatus connected therewith... The expression ‘water closet’ means closet accommodation used or adapted or intended to be used in connection with the water carriage system, and comprising provision for the flushing of the receptacle by means of a fresh water supply, and having proper communication with a sewer.

³⁷ Girouard, *Country House*, 255-56.

³⁸ Wright, *Clean and Decent*, 103. Other evidence throughout this discussion of reactions to the “novelty” of indoor closets of ease comes from Wright, 103-4.

³⁹ John Aubrey, *Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* (London: 1718-19), 160.

⁴⁰ Horace Walpole, Letter 18 To George Montagu, Esq. (1760), *Letters of Horace Walpole: Volume 3* (<http://gutenberg.telelobe.net/etext03/ithw310.txt>)

⁴¹ Fabricant, *Landscape*, 41.

⁴² Swift, “Chapter X: *Directions to the House-Maid*,” *The Basic Writings of Jonathan Swift* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 764-5.

⁴³ Girouard, *Country House*, 256. Designating the gender of privies was also a new trend. “Perhaps the first mention in history of ‘Ladies’ and ‘Gentlemen’ in this connection is in the report of a great Ball in Paris in 1739,” Wright remarks, *Clean and Decent*, 103, “which tells, as of a remarkable innovation, that they had even taken the precaution of allotting cabinets with inscriptions over the doors, *Garderobes pour les femmes* and *Garderobes pour les hommes*, with chambermaids in the former and valets in the latter.”

⁴⁴ Cited in Girouard, *Country House*, 256.

⁴⁵ Throughout this section of the chapter, Lady Acheson in fact refers to “Lady Acheson,” the speaker of Swift’s poem.

⁴⁶ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 94. Harington plays with the notion of the spirituality of privy space on at least one other occasion. He recalls inquiring after the friend of a friend, wondering if he made a habit of praying. The friend informs him “that to his remembrance he never heard him ask any thing of God, nor thanke God for any thing; except it were once at a Jakes, he heard him say, he thanked God, he had had a good stoole” (92). Harington is hoping for a laugh at the idea of confusing a mechanical expression of gratitude with genuine devotion – mouthing words, with deeply feeling them – but the real payoff is the tale’s moralizing conclusion: “Thus you see, a good stoole might move as great devotion in some [men], as a bad sermon.” The clergy’s most public efforts may be no more spiritually transporting than privy experiences. (Swift plays with the different senses of *movement* as well.)

⁴⁷ For instance, in his *Duties of the Closet* (London: J. Wilford, 1732), 17, William Dawes surmises, “If we keep our Minds within our Closets, we shall find it an easy matter to fix them upon such Objects as are proper for those Places; and if we let them go out of them, and ramble about the World, it is not for want of Power and Opportunity, but want of Will and Endeavour, to Restrain them.” Understanding consciousness to be entirely within the thinker’s control, Dawes counsels his readers to direct their minds with special care in their closets: “Resolve... with thy Self to set a watch upon thy Thoughts, and to make Advantage of thy Retirement, by sending up thy Mind, which may now easily disengage it self from Earth, to Heaven.”

⁴⁸ Thomas Brooks, *Privie Key of Heaven, or, Twenty Arguments for Closet-Prayer*, (London: John Hancock, 1665), 8.

⁴⁹ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 184.

⁵⁰ We might compare Harington's axioms to Brooks' basic rationale for praying in private, *Privie Key*, 6: "secret Prayer prepares and fits the soul for Family-Prayer, and for Publick-Prayer. Secret-Prayer sweetly enclines, & strongly disposes a Christian to all other religious duties and services."

⁵¹ In *Closet Devotions*, Rambuss cites Richard Stock's lengthy eulogy on Harington's closet prayer practices in *The Church's Lamentation for the Loss of the Godly* (1614). That Harington's use of his closet for spiritual self-discipline seemed exemplary to his contemporary lends weight to the religious facet of privy decorum in the *Metamorphosis*.

⁵² The iron age depicted in the "Panegyric" recalls Book 2 of Alexander Pope's *The Dunciad*, *Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope*, ed. Aubrey Williams (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 321-338, lines 83-94. Jove, sprawled on a privy seat, wipes himself with pages torn from Grub Street books and hands them to Cloacina who serves him there:

A place there is, betwixt earth, air, and seas,

Where, from Ambrosia, Jove retires for ease.
There in his seat two spacious vents appear,
On this he sits, to that he leans his ear,
And hears the various vows of fond mankind;
Some beg an eastern, some a western wind:
All vain petitions, mounting to the sky,
With reams abundant this abode supply;
Amused he reads, and then returns the bills
Sign'd with that ichor which from gods distils.

In office here fair Cloacina stands,
And ministers to Jove with purest hands.

⁵³ *Botargo*, like *caveer* (caviar), is fish roe. *Catsup* was in the early eighteenth century a kind of fish sauce originating in China. (*OED*)

⁵⁴ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 92.

⁵⁵ Lady Acheson blames the privy for the discord between ours minds and bodies "in our degenerate days." When "nature prompts" we do not always do its bidding because we worry about finding a suitably secluded place to go. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), eds. Ruth Grant and Nathan Tarcov (New York: Hackett, 1996), 1.1.27, 24, by contrast, John Locke presents the privy as a place where nature can in fact be disciplined. Take your young charge to the privy at the same time everyday after breakfast, Locke advises:

Let him be set upon the stool, as if disburthening were as much in his power as filling his belly; and let not him or his maid know any thing to the contrary, but that it is so; and if he be forc'd to endeavour, by being hinder'd from his play or eating again 'till he has been effectually at *stool*, or at least done his utmost, I doubt not but in a little while it will become natural to him.

⁵⁶ Swift, "The Lady's Dressing-Room," *Complete Poems*, 448-52, 448, line 2.

⁵⁷ Swift, "Dressing-Room," 450, lines 76-8.

⁵⁸ Swift, "Dressing-Room," 451, line 118.

⁵⁹ In his *Philosophical Dialogue Concerning Decency* (London: J. Fletcher and J. and J. Rivington, 1751) (discussed below), 43, Samuel Rolleston links the decline of ancient civilizations to the use of ostentatious vessels like the Duchess's: "It would have been well both for the Greeks and Romans if they had but remain'd contented with these earthen *Jurdens*--- We may date the commencement of the ruin of both from the introduction of gold and silver chamber-pots, and closestool pans."

⁶⁰ According to Zimmerman, "Scatological," the poem's instability, like that of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, stems from the paradox on which it is founded: the content (shit) continually undermines the form (encomium).

⁶¹ The full title page of Rolleston's treatise reads: *A Philosophical Dialogue Concerning Decency. To which is added, A Critical and Historical Dissertation on Places of Retirement for necessary Occasions, Together With an Account of the Vessels and Utensils in use amongst the Ancients, being a Lecture read before a Society of learned Antiquaries.*

⁶² In sharp contrast to Harington, Rolleston presumes that "places of Retirement for necessary Occasions" is an important topic, and cannot fathom its age-old neglect. "I have not in the whole course of my studies met with any dissertation written upon this subject, which is as worthy of our consideration as any point of antiquity whatsoever," he remarks; moreover, he "very much wonder[s] at" the fact that his own learned society has never yet tackled the subject. (25)

⁶³ Rolleston uses the term *water closet* in a summary of Judges 3.24, where he has discovered what he believes to be the Bible's first reference to a room set aside specifically for excretion. (Rolleston does not think that a *water closet* has to have plumbing.) Ehud discovers his enemy, the king of the Moabites, sitting alone, and murders him. The king's guards eventually begin to wonder why the king has been gone so long and try to go to him, "upon which some imagin'd, as the door was lock'd, that he might be easing himself" (28). Traditional translations call the room where the guards seek the king a "summer chamber," but Rolleston disagrees: "*summer chamber* signifies properly an inner, or retired apartment" so the room "was in all probability what we call a water closet." The expression must have already been quite common in spoken English. The first citation for *water closet* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* comes, four years after Rolleston's, in *Connoisseur* magazine's Number 100: "It was always my office to attend him in the water-closet when he took a cathartic." Both of these early written usages highlight the close relationship of the *water closet* to the courtly closet.

⁶⁴ Philoprepon may still be musing on the Mossynians – a people "from somewhere in Asia," as Eutrapelus recalls – who in addition to defecating and urinating "were us'd to copulate in the publick streets without any manner of ceremony" (5).

⁶⁵ Girouard, *Country House*, 23. For an extensive analysis of the place of country house ideology within the pastoral tradition and Britain's changing social geography, see Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), especially chapters 3 through 10.

⁶⁶ Girouard, *Country House*, 28.

⁶⁷ Nora Crow Jaffe, "Swift and the Agreeable Young Lady, but Extremely Lean," *Papers on Literature and Language* 14 (1978), 129-37: "Assuming that Lady Acheson was between the ages of 20 and 25 when she married the 27-year-old Sir Arthur in 1715, she was about 25 years younger than Swift." Ehrenpreis's brief psychological assessment of Swift's relationship to Lady Acheson, *Swift: The Man*, 685, concurs with Jaffe's: "Stella died about the time when he met the Achesons. The first, longest visit to Market Hill, which only ended a year after he lost Stella, allowed him to transfer many feelings to Lady Acheson. Unconsciously, he could work out some of these feelings in the poems his new friend inspired." More recently, Judith C. Mueller has taken another look at the sexual and affective themes in Swift's writing about their relationship in "Imperfect Enjoyment at Market Hill: Impotence, Desire, and Reform in Swift's Poems to Lady Acheson," *ELH* 66.1 (1999), 51-70.

⁶⁸ Ehrenpreis, *Swift: The Man*, 604.

⁶⁹ Ehrenpreis, *Swift: The Man*, 685.

⁷⁰ Fabricant, *Landscape*, 132, 98.

⁷¹ Fabricant, *Landscape*, 161.

⁷² In an earlier poem, “Vanbrug’s House, *Built from the Ruins of White-Hall that was Burnt*,” *Complete Poems*, 96-99, line 104, Swift had contrasted the grandiosity of the architect’s vision to the tininess of the resultant building – “A Thing resembling a Goose Py.” Fabricant, *Landscape*, 119, proposes that “in broader terms” this early poem of Swift’s “depicts a world in which neither traditional country houses nor the poems that traditionally commemorate them can any longer be created except in burlesque form.”

⁷³ Anthony Hamilton, *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, ed. Sir Walter Scott (New York: Dutton and Company, 1905), 193.

⁷⁴ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 98.

⁷⁵ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 90.

⁷⁶ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, concludes, 92:

And for other good fellowships I doubt not, but from the beginning it hath often happened, that some of the Nymphes of this gentle goddess [Cloacina], have met so luckily with some of her devout chaplens, in her chappels of ease, and payd their privie tithes so dully, and done their service together with such devotion; that for reward she hath preferred them with fortie weeks after to *Juno Lucina*...

⁷⁷ Harington, *Metamorphosis*, 91.

⁷⁸ As mentioned above, in Rolleston’s treatise, 5, Eutrapelus suggests that conduct like that of Harington’s French ambassador is typical for Venetians: “they esteem it a part of noble liberty to discharge where and before whom they please.” In Eutrapelus’s characterization, the act seems more an aggressive expression of power and indifference than of temporary social leveling.

⁷⁹ Peter Schakel, “Swift’s Voices: Innovation and Complication in the Poems Written at Market Hill,” *Reading Swift: Papers from the Fourth Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, ed. Hermann J. Real and Helgard Stüver-Leidig (Munich: Fink, 2003), 311-25, 313, observes that “Until the Market Hill poems, Swift’s poetry was largely monophonic. With a few exceptions... he spoke either in his own voice or in a voice appropriate for an historical genre like the celebratory ode; or he imitated a classical author to whom his own voice was at least in part subordinate.” Schakel argues that the social mode of composition Swift developed at Market Hill led to his most original formal innovations. These later poems (including the “Panegyric”) demand readers take several concomitant imaginative leaps, remaining continually “aware that they are reading a text intended for a specific person incorporated within the poem.” In the case of the “Panegyric,” we watch Swift expressing Lady Acheson’s feelings and wonder about the distances between her actual feelings during the events represented (insofar as they really occurred) and Swift’s representation of her feelings and between both of these and her subsequent reaction(s) to hearing her intimate thoughts represented or misrepresented in this way (316).

Carriages, Conversation, and *A Sentimental Journey*

At Whitehall inquiring for a coach, there was a Frenchman with one eye that was going my way, so he and I hired the coach between us... Strange how the fellow, without asking, did tell me all what he was...

—Samuel Pepys¹

This day, set up my Carriage,—new Subject of heartache, That Eliza is not here to share it with me—

—Laurence Sterne²

What if we saw [intimacy] emerge from much more mobile processes of attachment?

—Lauren Berlant³

First appearing at court in the sixteenth century, coaches became Britain's dominant mode of transportation over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As they proliferated across the ranks, coaches began to reorient relationships between strangers along more personal (though not always more comfortable) horizontal axes. An early treatise calls the horse-drawn coach a "moving closet," alluding to the unusual combination of privacy and motion the vehicle affords. This chapter offers an extensive gloss on the image of the closet on wheels as it explores the affective and interpersonal constitution of this increasingly accessible space. Well before philosophers like Adam Smith and David Hume had conceived the emotional mechanisms connecting all individuals in society, close encounters on the road occasioned more concrete forms of protosociological and protopsychological musing in British narrative writing. Unlike in closets, where proximate interactions and associations were always in some measure governed by the relation of host/owner and guest, the arbitrary mingling of travelers in hired vehicles had the potential to disrupt all traditional social codes. In previous chapters we have seen how closets and cabinets, bathing closets, and privies give shape to tensions among shame and openness, secrecy and accessibility, desire and distance,

intimacy and virtuality in the period. Here I suggest that coaches, setting the stage for a related conflict between stateliness and sociability, play an even more radical role in the modern social imagination than do static private spaces.

The first half of the chapter narrates the coach's changing social image as the vehicle rose to prominence. Moving through several key coach scenes of the period, I sketch the decline of the vehicle's inherent symbolic authority; the emergence of the walker as a distinct urban type; and the ongoing awkwardness of stagecoach sociability through the mid-eighteenth century. Then, focusing in on *A Sentimental Journey*, the second half of the chapter finds that Laurence Sterne's mock-travelogue marks a turning point in this history.⁴ Sterne reimagines carriages as closets' genuinely reciprocal and sociable counterparts. I propose that coach conversation achieves an unprecedented coherence and power in Sterne's hands, shoring up the novel's projection of its own international public: an entirely approachable sphere in which an English parson like Yorick, the novel's protagonist, might chat as breezily with a French duke as with a chamber maid.

Part One: Before Sterne

Spectacular Coaches: Looking up and looking down

From the time of the advent of coaches at court until the later eighteenth century when driving came into fashion, the place of the passenger, not the driver, was the honored one. Coaches were distinct from carts because their suspension systems (the use of straps, braces, and later springs between the axle and carriage body) and their built-in

covers made travel more comfortable than ever before. On arrival in England coaches were merged into an existing culture of pageantry as they had been on the continent. Elaborate gilded exteriors framed noble occupants as living tableaux or portraits of themselves for subjects to look up at in awe, ritualizing the monarch's power over her subjects.

But while royal carriage processions persisted throughout the long eighteenth century and beyond, the exclusivity of these vehicles was shortlived. The gentry and wealthy merchants could soon afford to buy equipages of their own. And as opportunities to hire coaches for short trips in hackney or stage coaches increased for many others besides, a continual parade of vehicles raised questions about their status and the necessity of attentive deference by other occupants of the road. By the early eighteenth century pedestrians would claim a right to the public space of the street and to refuse to regard coaches in the same old way. Anti-coach writings in the early seventeenth century assume that other forms of transportation have the best grounds to criticize. Framing themselves as contests between vehicles whose relative entitlement to the road can no longer be established at a glance, *The World Runnes on Wheelles; or, Odds between Carts and Coaches* (1623) and *Coach and Sedan Pleasantly Disputing for Place and Precedence* (1636) both recall the courtly origins of English equipages. But they don't wax nostalgic so much as puzzle and rage over the effects of their new accessibility. In the first of these, self-styled Water Poet John Taylor celebrates the openness of the cart and restrains his antipathy towards the pretensions of the coach for just long enough to exempt the aristocracy: "Princes, Nobilities, and Gentlemen of worth, Offices & Quality, have herein their priviledge... [and] may ride as their occasions or pleasures shall indite

them, as most meete they should, but,” he goes on, unable to sustain so measured a cadence through the end of the sentence, “when every Gill Turntripe, Mrs. Fumkins, Madame Polecat, and my Lady Trash, Froth the Tapster, Bill the Taylor, Lavender the Broker, Whiff the Tobacco Seller, with their companion [Thugs], must be Coach’d... I say upon my hallidome, it is a burning shame.”⁵ Public visibility befits the elite but when humble people raise themselves above the crowd it dangerously – shamefully – inflates them. The impostors Taylor describes at length include “two Leash of Oyster-wives” and the author himself. The oyster wives hired a coach to take them to a fair and, *en route*, were “so be-Madam’d, be-Mistris, and Lady-fide [by Beggars on the street], that [they] began to swell with a proud supposition or Imaginary greatnesse, and gave all their money to the mendicanting Canters.”⁶ Taylor once traveled “from Whitehall to the Tower in my Maister Sire William Waades Coach”: “Before I had beene drawne twentie yard,” he recalls, “such a Timpany of pride puft me up, that I was ready to burst with the winde Chollick of vaine glory. In what state I would leane over the Boote, and looke, and pry if I saw any of my acquaintance, and then I would stand up, vaying my Bonnet, kissing my right clawe, extending my armes as I had been swimming, with God save your Lordship, Worship, or how doest thou honest neighbour...?” Taylor mocks his own awkward gesturing but ultimately blames the coach since “it made me think my selfe better [than] my betters that went on foote, and that I was but little inferiour to Tamberlaine.”⁷ Illicit publicness affects him like a kind of intoxication or vertigo. The state’s stage, the experience of the coach bedazzles an otherwise clear-eyed sense of his station. Its motion, height, and luxurious frame defamiliarize the street; and Taylor and the oyster-wives in turn act out the visceral effects of their elevation. Under ordinary

circumstances, they know they are fit only to be onlookers but in the coach it seems they cannot help but feel superior. (And spectators like the beggars who ingratiate themselves to the oysterwives exploit their altered state.)

Published in 1636, courtier Henry Peachum's tract gentrifies the form and content of Taylor's rant, refining both the coach's vehicular opponent and the comic tone of the disagreement. Part morality play, part philosophical dialogue, *Coach and Sedan Pleasantly Disputing for Place and Precedence* appeared with the first set of Parliamentary laws forbidding the use of hackney coaches within three miles of the city.⁸ As a debate about traffic decorum between a sedan chair and a coach erupts on a street on the outskirts of London, various passersby, including Waterman, Carman, Beer-Cart, a clergyman, and the scholarly and civic-minded narrator stop to voice their own concerns over the omnipresence of coaches. Among the many aspects of social change on the streets the dialogue tackles is the declining value of the heraldry adorning coaches. Sedan tells the narrator, the first to intervene in the argument: "the occasion of our difference was this; Whether an emptie Coach, that had a Lords dead painted Coate and Crest... upon it without, might take the wall of a Sedan that had a Knight alive within it."⁹ The dispute, it seems, makes a riddle of right of way. The newer, less costly, and less dignified means of transportation bears a knight in the flesh. Coach, on the other hand, bears only an emblem of rank; moreover, its emptiness probably indicates that the latter vehicle is actually available for hire. As carriage historian Ralph Straus explains, early hackney coaches were "old and disused carriages [once] belonging to the quality. Many of them still bore noble arms, and, indeed, it would seem that when the hackneys were no longer disused noblemen's carriages, the proprietors found it advisable to pretend that

they were.”¹⁰ So which should take precedence, Peachum’s tract asks, flesh or heraldry? Like the perceived need for a legal bill to restrict the use of coaches by nonelite travelers, Peachum’s riddle demonstrates the degree to which the courtliness of the vehicle has already eroded.

Even when the narrator affirms that riding in coaches is still the prerogative of the elite, a logic of expediency threatens to override that of privilege and spectacle. “I condemne not... the lawfull use of Coaches, in persons of ranke and qualities,” he writes:

yea and in cases of necessitie..., they defend from all injurie of the skie, Snow, Raine, Haile, Wind, &c. by them is made a publique difference, between Nobilitie, and the Multitude, whereby their Armories without speaking for them, they are known and have that respect done to them; as is due to them: they are seates of Honour for the sound, beds of ease for the lame, sick and impotent, the moving closets of brave Ladies, and beautifull virgins, who in common sence are unfit to walke the streets, to be justled to the kennell, by a sturdie Porter, or breathed upon by every base Bisogno: they are the cradles of young children, to be convei’d with their Nurses, too, or from their parents into the Citie or Countrie...¹¹

The first justification of the coach’s dominance seems traditional enough: “the Armories without” speak for their noble passengers to “the Multitude,” demanding their respect. But the narrator’s addendum to the case – “yea and in cases of necessitie” – and his description of the coach as a shelter from the elements and from the various dangers of the streets, leave us uncertain whether he understands “necessitie” as a second and separate case or as a caveat to the first. That is, it may be that the narrator approves the use of a coach by anyone in dire need of a safe haven – a bed chamber or, as he puts it, a “moving closet” – on the road. Or it may be that he considers necessity itself to be a privilege of the nobility alone. The illustrations do not clarify things. On the one hand, the first two examples of appropriate carriage use, as “seats of Honour for the sound” and “beds of ease for the lame, sick and impotent,” seem to represent “nobilitie” and

“necessitie” as discrete, even contrasting, situations. The latter two examples, by contrast, satisfy both conditions at once: “brave Ladies” and “beautifull virgins” use coaches to avoid harassment and children use them to travel between city and country houses. Either way, bringing utility into the discussion of coach legitimacy weakens the claim that heraldry in and of itself makes a “publique difference.”

The growing number of coaches in the Restoration continued to unsettle visual relations on the street. Pepys’s *Diary* is full of accounts of the prickly pleasures of coach display. He sets the coach above all other worldly possessions as the prime indicator of a successful career but then experiences almost as much shame as pride in being seen in it when he finally acquires one. Does he really merit it? How much visibility is enough for a rising man? For Rochester, by contrast, equipages indicate (and occasion) an unsightly extravagance of effort at visibility and circulation. In his poem “Tunbridge Wells,” a hungover speaker, “mounting steed,”¹² makes an early-morning visit to the suburban spa to “undertake the dose that was prescribed” (7). He goes to this “rendezvous of fools, buffoons, and praters, / Cuckolds, whores, citizens, their wives and daughters” (4-5) purposely to purge, but “spew[s]” (10) prematurely at the “sudden cursèd view” (8) of a fat fop alighting from his coach:

From coach and six a thing unwieldy rolled,
Whose lumber, cart more decently would hold.
As wise as calf it looked, as big as bully,
But handled, proves a mere Sir Nicholas Cully...
...
Though he alone were dismal sight enough,
His train contributed to set him off,
All of his shape, all of the selfsame stuff. (11-14, 19-21)

A “thing unwieldy,” the first passenger the speaker spies assumes the dumb materiality both of the conveyence itself – he “roll[s]” and is “lumber” – and of a “calf” or bull:

animals bred to be eaten or breed, and “more decently” carried in carts. The play on bully/bull goes further still when the speaker notes that all of Sir Nicholas Cully’s “train” of spawn replicate his stupid look. Midwives have it that “these wells will make a barren / Woman as fruitful as a cony warren” (125-6). What’s nauseating about the coach and six then is not simply the incongruity between its former dignity and its oversized freight, but also the way it evinces the rumored fertility of the Tunbridge waters themselves. Never a great fan of breeding, Rochester conflates it, through the figure of the coach, with the try-hard public-ness and upward mobility of the family-oriented town. A half century before John Taylor had pictured coaches themselves as a grotesque proliferation, joking that the vehicles must be “male and female, and use the act of generation or begetting, or else their procreation could never [have] so over-spread our Nation.”¹³

Pedestrians: Looking in to look down

Seventeenth-century anxiety over the explosion and popular appropriation of coaches became a cohesive counterpublic perspective in the early eighteenth century – that of the pedestrian. For the narrator of Richard Steele’s *Tatler* essay 144 (1709) and the speaker of John Gay’s poem *Trivia; Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716), coach display is never warranted. Though aristocratic prerogative is not contradicted, it is never positively invoked in these texts either. The merit lost to coaches accrues to the humble folk who go on foot instead. The narrator of Steele’s essay appoints himself as a censor and immediately explains that reforming “the general expense and affectation in equipage” is his most urgent concern.¹⁴ The demise of sumptuary laws is to blame for these excesses, he says, since now “every man may be

dressed, attended, and carried, in what manner he pleases” so long as he can pay for it.

The censor proposes a coach tax and, as he justifies it, engages in a good deal of what we might think of as pedestrian consciousness-raising. First, he stirs up a sense of injustice over the dearth of space left for ordinary street-goers:

we, the greater number of the queen’s loyal subjects, for no reason in the world but because we want money, do not share alike in the division of her majesty’s high road. The horses and slaves of the rich take up the whole street; while we peripatetics are very glad to watch an opportunity to whisk cross a passage, very thankful that we are not run over for interrupting the machine that carries in it a person neither more handsome, wise, or valiant, than the meanest of us... It is to me most miraculous, so unreasonable a usurpation as this I am speaking of, should so long have been tolerated. We hang a fellow for taking any trifle from us on the road, and bear with the rich for robbing us of the road itself.

From the erasure of differences between the rich who ride and the majority of “loyal subjects” who walk, it follows that there is no good reason for “peripatetics” to be so marginalized on “her majesty’s high road.” At the end of the passage, the pedestrian claims his own rights to a share of this public space with reference to property law.

The ongoing chaos and crush of vehicles is another form of highway robbery.

The censor notes that carriages encroach on pedestrians perceptually as well. “I cannot but admire,” he writes, expressing not reverence but incredulity, “how persons, conscious to themselves of no manner of superiority above others, can, out of mere pride or laziness, expose themselves at this rate to public view, and put us all upon pronouncing those three terrible syllables, ‘Who is that?’” It is clearly unimaginable to him that passersby might simply ignore coaches. The numbers of coaches increases and their political power decreases, but the ritual of looking up at them continues as though how the direction of gaze lies beyond the will in this situation. Yet the censor has a strategy for regaining control over the compulsion.

Looking can serve judgment as well as deference, he explains: “When it comes to that question [‘Who is it?'], our method is, to consider the mien and air of the passenger, and comfort ourselves for being dirty to the ankles, by laughing at his figure and appearance who overlooks us.” Rochester’s aristocratic speaker instantly registers the monstrosity of a suburban coach and six in “Tunbridge Wells.” This skill is becoming a transferable one in the *Tatler* essay: any pedestrian can learn to view things satirically by following the censor’s example: considering “the mien and air of the passenger” should lead inevitably to “laughing at his figure and appearance.” Directing the satirical gaze at pretentious strangers can be quite entertaining as well: “I must confess, were it not for the solid injustice of the thing, there is nothing could afford a discerning eye greater occasion for mirth, than this licentious huddle of qualities and characters in the equipages about this town.” English coach display originated in the age of the court masque, dramatizing the centrality of the monarch for a much wider audience; Steele brings coach display into a new age, inviting spectators to re-appropriate their gaze and invent their own satires and comedies as they walk down the street .

Gay’s *Trivia* echoes the *Tatler* essay, further developing the ethics, politics, and poetics of walking. *Trivia*’s Walker-speaker does as the *Tatler* suggests, affirming his moral highground after recounting a different saga of greed and exploitation for each of six passing carriages:

See yon bright chariot on its braces swing,
With Flanders mares, and on an arched spring;
That wretch, to gain an equipage and place,
Betray’d his sister to a lewd embrace.
This coach, that with the blazon’d ‘scutcheon glows,
Vain of his unknown race, the coxcomb shows.

Here the brib'd lawyer, sunk in velvet, sleeps;
 There flames a fool, begirst with tinsell'd slaves,
 Who wastes the watch of a whole race of knaves.
 That other, with a clustring train behind,
 Owes his new honours to a sordid mind.
 This next in court-fidelity excells,
 The publick rifles, and his country sells.
 May the proud chariot never be my fate,
 If purchas'd at so mean, so dear a rate.
 O rather give me sweet content on foot,
 Wrapt in my virtue, and a good Surtout!¹⁵

As we have seen, even as Taylor and Peachum try to reinstate the coach's symbolic authority, their emphasis on the vehicle's illegitimate and practical uses implicitly undermines it. Gay undermines the coach's symbolic authority in a different way: he reverses the relationship between their spectacular grandeur (including their heraldry) and their social and political greatness. Elements of coach display, including "an arched spring" (the newly invented C-spring), footmen's "tinsell'd" uniforms, and significantly a "blazon'd 'scutcheon,'" cue the Walker to recite each traveler's ignoble history.¹⁶ Gay's poem pointedly contrasts these glittering and excessive things with the Walker's useful and portable arms against the elements: here, a "good Surtout"; in other parts of the poem, platform shoes called pattens and an umbrella.

In Peachum's tract, one of the passersby who joins the debate faults coaches for the dearth of familiar faces on the street: "whereas heretofore, I could walke in some one streete, and meete with a dozen of my acquaintance, I can now walk in a dozen streets and not meete one."¹⁷ Gay's Walker-speaker, on the other hand, celebrates strangership as a medium of feeling for pedestrians. To walk among the multitude invites a limitless range of pleasing visual, social, and ultimately imaginary relationships, he suggests. Free to take less traveled routes, the Walker experiences a

detached physiognomic curiosity when he “silent wander[s] in the close abodes / Where wheels ne’er shake the ground”: “Here,” he notes appreciatively, “I remark each walker’s different face, / And in their look their various bus’ness trace” (2.272-73; 276-77). When the Walker chances upon people in need he responds accordingly: “Charity still moves the walker’s mind, / His lib’ral purse relieves the lame and blind” (2.451-4).¹⁸ And he responds creatively to the social streetscape. Watching a shoe-shine boy launches an epic flight of imagination. The Walker-speaker first projects the boy’s semi-divine origins. (Cloacina, the goddess of the sewers, having seduced a scavenger in his cart, abandons her son “beneath a bulk” (2.107-140).) Then he projects a teary-eyed soliloquy for the orphan and a *deus-ex-machina* finale: Cloacina comes back up from the depths to equip him for his destined trade (2.149-216). The shoe-shine boy is not a bastard, goes the fantasy, rather he is the legitimate child of the street.

If walking naturally stirs compassion in Gay’s poem, coach travel blocks it: “Proud coaches pass, regardless of the moan / Of infant orphans, and the widow’s groan” (2.251-3). That the Walker conflates travelers with coaches and sight with hearing in this couplet suggests that the vehicles themselves confuse and disrupt the humane use of the senses. That the coaches “pass” adds another physical dimension to passengers’ apathy: presumably their superior speed, height, and comfort curtail the capacity to feel sympathy. The oyster wives in Taylor’s tract indiscriminately give away their money through the windows of their hired coach. In Gay’s vision, as in Steele’s, the assumed magnanimity of the coach has been entirely supplanted by upstart arrogance: “In sawcy state the griping broker sits, / And laughs at honesty, and trudging wits” (1.113-4). The

Walker recognizes the potential perceptual advantages of the coach, especially the expanded visual field when elevated, but renders them as one great perceptual disadvantage: Coach passengers may be able to see without being seen and to see further than pedestrians but sitting in “sawcy state” – a selfish parody of noble dignity – diminishes their affective range.

When he imagines poetic justice for a beau and his equipage the Walker particularly targets this self-interested gaze. The smug traveler gawks at rain-soaked pedestrians: “I’ve seen a beau... / When o’er the stones choak’d kennels swell the show’r / In gilded chariot loll, he with disdain / Views spatter’d passengers all drench’d in rain...” (2.523-6). The bad weather has increased the physical and perceptual discrepancies between the coach and the street. But when the coach crashes, the Walker-speaker enjoys a rare superiority and directly addresses the vehicle:

[The dustman’s] pond’rous spokes thy painted wheel engage,
Crush’d is thy pride, down fall the shrieking beau,
The slabby pavement crystal fragments strow
Black floods of mire th’embroider’d coat disgrace,
And mud enwraps the honours of his face. (2.530-534)

Having caught on the posts protruding from a cart full of waste the “gilded chariot” falls. Glass windows had been in use in English coaches for about fifty years when Gay wrote the poem.¹⁹ The “crystal fragments” strewn on the pavement highlight the fragility of the beau’s technological cocoon and its failure, finally, to detach him from the multitudes – and “floods of mire” – on the street or to elude the Walker’s critical gaze.

Reluctant Familiarities: Looking across

The second half of the seventeenth century had brought not just “glass coaches” but more substantial structural changes to the coach interior as well. Originally, most coaches had flaunted their elite passengers by orienting them towards the street. The coach “makes people imitate Sea Crabs, in being drawne side-ways,” John Taylor had complained (fig. 12).²⁰ But in the mid-seventeenth century, the barge-like structure was superseded by a more compact one in which travelers faced one another.²¹ The reorientation retained the crucial exterior visual axes: with the curtains raised passengers could still see landscapes and the street, and see and be seen by passersby if they wanted or needed to be (though without giving the former full frontal view). However, the interior focus now allowed for mutual observation and conversation among passengers. Not only friends and kin had occasion for a new kind of proximate interaction, so too did strangers.

Cultural historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch remarks on the historical coincidence of the new coach shape and the emergence of a modern sphere of civility apart from the court: “The creation of this curious arrangement during the same period that saw the rise of other bourgeois institutions of communication, such as coffee-houses, clubs, newspapers, and theaters, indicates that the coach must be seen as part of that larger configuration.”²² Schivelbusch supports his point about carriage sociability by citing early sociologist Georg Simmel who had contended that “Before the development of buses, trains and streetcars in the nineteenth century, people were quite unable to look at each other for minutes or hours at a time, or to be forced to do so, without talking to each



Figure 12. A mid-seventeenth-century traveling coach. The encoached couple faces the street, an orientation that would soon be made obsolete.

other.”²³ While a brief survey of scenes of coach conversation by Delarivier Manley, Richard Steele, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Johnson corroborate these points in a general way, it also reveals that the new shape of the coach did not produce civil talk as its inevitable or anodyne effect. Rather representations of coach travel evince an interest in the conditions of possibility of sociability as such: they point to the incipient nature of coach politeness implied in Schivelbusch’s remark and the resistance to communication implied in Simmel’s double negative (“unable to look...without talking”). Unlike coffee-houses, clubs, theaters, taverns, pleasure gardens, parks, or masquerades, hired vehicles did not provide much in the way of convention or conventional social lubricants for temporary and incidental relationships. At the same time, close encounters in coaches particularly endowed physiognomy, manners, and diction as signs of difference. Whether or not sundry travelers crossing the city or the country in pursuit of private goals would establish a basis for conversation was a dilemma to be worked out anew in every case. How would anonymous passengers decide where to look and whom to acknowledge? What role should rank play within this transitory intimacy? And how could you even be certain others were who they looked or claimed to be? As William Hogarth’s *The Stage Coach, Or the Country Inn Yard* illustrates (fig.13), the strangeness of strangers lay not only in the random and unverifiable things they said and did, but in their physical presence as well.

In her *Stage-Coach Journey to Exeter* (1696), the writer – Manley herself according to the dedicatory epistle – flees London under duress. Depressed, she doesn’t look at anyone until several hours into the journey, though later she apologizes to her correspondent for her delay.²⁴ Manley keeps her thoughts to and on herself at the



Figure 13. William Hogarth, *The Stage Coach, Or the Country Inn Yard* (1747).

beginning of the trip by fixing her gaze on the landscape outside the coach: “The green inviting Grass (upon which I promised to pass many pleasing solitary Hours) seems not at all entertaining: The Trees, with all their blooming, spreading Beauties, appear the worst sort of canopy; because where I am going, they can offer their Shade to none but solitary me” (4). Manley is aware that melancholy colors her view of the landscape as she leaves her social life in the city behind: “I am got... sixteen Miles from you and London; but I can’t help fancying ‘tis so many Degrees. Tho’ Midsummer to all besides, in my Breast there’s nothing but frozen Imaginations” (1). Yet she appears not in the least conscious of the influence of her state of mind on her observations of fellow-travelers whom she instantly typecasts. She writes off the lowest women aboard with a bit of indirect discourse: they “were never so promoted before, and hugely delighted, with what they are pleas’d to call Riding in State” (28). She calls a merchant’s wife “Mrs Mayoress of Tatness” (11).

A baronet’s son whom she nicknames “Beaux [sic]” (25), the only passenger of quality (minimal though it is), preoccupies her most. Manley can see that Beaux expects that the coat and vest under his traveling suit will impress her so she easily deflates him: “The Way I took to mortifie his Foppery,” she laughs to her friend, “was, not to speak a Word of the Change; which made him extream uneasie” (9). True to type, Beaux soon grows impatient of a reaction and calls attention to the things he had hoped she would inquire unprompted: “he desired my Opinion, If his Taylor had used him well? What the Brocade was worth a Yard? How many Ounces of Silver-Fringe? And recommended to my Curiosity the exquisite Workmanship of the Loops; and then gave me the Sum Total of his Cost” (9). The satire targets the low characters’ transparent aspirations and in

particular their naïve pleasure in what they perceive as traveling in style. We might well infer that her ability to ignore the others has everything to do with her innate sense of superiority. When it does occur in *The Stage-coach Journey to Exeter*, group conversation consists in the sharing of (highly conventional) stories of heartache, many of which Manley interpollates in her letters. But the lowest types are explicitly excluded. “She entertain’d us all the Morning with a sorry Love-business about her second Husband; Stuff so impertinent, I remember nothing of it” (27), Manley writes of the merchant’s wife, re-erecting – in her refusal to take in or transpose the story as well as in her diction – the status boundaries the “Mayoress of Tatness” has transgressed.

Whereas Manley’s *Letters* imply a greater commonality between fellow passengers than the author herself cares to recognize, three later scenes direct their sharpest satire at behaviors that impede the development of a social balance on the stage coach. In *Spectator* Number 132 (1711), Mr Spectator gives an account of the start of a journey to London in which he is accompanied by a recruiting officer, a nubile heiress, her widowed mother, and their Quaker guardian: “We... sat with that Dislike which People not too good-natured usually conceive of each other at first Sight. The Coach jumbled us insensibly into some sort of Familiarity: and we had not moved above two Miles, when the Widow asked the Captain what Success he had in his Recruiting?”²⁵ Mr Spectator explains his thoughts about the other passengers with an eye to detail that Manley reserves for thoughts about herself. On the evidence of facial expressions (we have to assume), Mr Spectator conjectures that he and his fellow-travelers have conceived a “Dislike” of one another and further that they have done so because they are “not too good-natured.” His immediate use of the first-person plural suggests that,

despite and/or because of his awareness of their collective reticence, he identifies with the group. Though the widow speaks first, addressing the officer across from her, the motion of the coach is given credit for precipitating conversation by “jumbling” all of them “insensibly into some sort of Familiarity.” Manley associates garrulous openness towards others with business, grumbling that the merchant’s wife on her trip to Exeter “has all the low, disagreeable Familiarity of People of her Rank” (27). The syntax of the eighteenth-century example suggests that the coach’s physical disruptions destabilize passengers’ habitual autonomy of thought. Significantly, their looking at one another has made them all feel less sociable. Despite themselves, the passengers only begin to act out “some sort of Familiarity” when the coach moves.

Yet they are not very well equipped to handle it. Responding to the widow’s question, the officer deploys the terms and rhetorical strategies of his occupation to make a crude proposition to both the heiress and her mother at once: “I have suffered much by Desertion, therefore should be glad to end my Warfare in the Service of you or your fair Daughter...” And he continues in this vein until Ephraim, the women’s Quaker guardian, interrupts—

Friend, Friend, we have hired this Coach in Parnership with thee, to carry us to the great City; we cannot go any other Way... [I]f thou wert a Man of Understanding, thou wouldst not take Advantage of thy courageous Countenance to abash us Children of Peace. Thou art, thou sayest, a Soldier; give Quarter to us, who cannot resist thee... To speak indiscreetly what we are obliged to hear, by being hasped up with thee in this publick Vehicle, is in some Degree assaulting on the high Road.

The officer should not “take Advantage of [his] courageous Countenance” and should “give Quarter to” the other coach passengers, the Quaker reasons. On the one hand, these military metaphors reinforce the involuntary nature of the travelers’ association and the

degree to which the officer's banter abuses not only his female targets but all those in the "publick Vehicle" who are forced to listen. And they show that the Quaker knows how to engage the officer – to speak his language, as it were. On the other hand, this army language highlights Ephraim's own legal position as the women's protector and defender as well as his own anti-militarist faith. "When two such as thee and I meet..." he finally instructs the officer, "thou should'st rejoice to see my peaceable Demeanour and I should be glad to see thy Strength and Ability to protect me in it" (198). Addison neatly contrasts these two conversationalists – as the officer recruits, so the Quaker preaches. And while the officer's aggression clearly must be disciplined, a milder twinge of irony undercuts the Quaker's do-good vision of moral and physical interdependence. Both men's limitations run counter to the subtler and more flexible sociability suggested by Mr Spectator's silent but passionately curious retrospective narration.

A problematic dearth of sympathy between strangers is also the focus of one of the century's best known coach scenes in *Joseph Andrews* (1743). Like Addison, Fielding populates his coach with diverse flat types then mocks their (necessarily) ineffectual attempts to bridge their differences. After the postillion in a passing stage coach discovers Joseph naked and bleeding in a ditch, the victim of a highway assault, the coachman and each of the travelers react according to type. The coachman worries about the delay that picking him up will cause; the lady is afraid for her reputation; the gentleman suspects robbery. Fortunately for Joseph, the lawyer fears "some Mischief happening to himself if the Wretch was left behind in that Condition." The postillion, who has nothing to lose and therefore no recourse to self-interest, finally offers Joseph a great coat to cover himself.²⁶ It's only after the highwaymen catch up with the coach

and rob it that any of the passengers regard any of the others with any warmth: when the gentleman and the lawyer's pockets are momentarily as empty as Joseph's they reassert their social dominance by making sexual innuendoes at his (and the lady's) expense.

The relationship between status consciousness and the tense and tenuous familiarities between passengers is the explicit didactic content of Johnson's *Adventurer* 84 (1753), the final text I will look at in this section. Stagecoach pretension is not an amusing or incidental concern in the letter from "Viator" to the Adventurer. Rather it provides the extreme example of a universal problem. Coach passengers don't know one another, and generally don't expect ever to meet again after the journey, Viator points out: "one should therefore imagine, that it was of little importance to any of them, what conjectures the rest should form concerning him. Yet so it is, that as all think themselves secure from detection, all assume that character of which they are most desirous, and on no occasion is the general ambition of superiority more apparently indulged."²⁷ The stage coach affords an opportunity to examine what sociability consists in when the usual contexts are stripped away. Passengers view the people they meet *en route* as separate from the rest of their lives – implicated only in the moments they share with them. Yet even when they have no further ends in mind, strangers give in to their desire to see themselves differently – as better than they are – in others' eyes.

The moment of encounter resembles that on Mr Spectator's coach both in terms of the immediacy of the collective grumpiness and of the narrator's identification with it. But it assumes a far more complex cognitive aspect since passengers do not merely stare at one another "with... Dislike," but actively seek reflections of themselves. Ironically it is a shared desire for recognition that coheres the group from the start: "It was easy to

observe the affected elevation of mien with which every one entered...,” Viator recalls. “[W]e sat silent for a long time, all employed in collecting importance into our faces, and endeavouring to strike reverence and submission into our companions” (410). More so than in earlier interior examples, the opening tableau in Johnson’s stagecoach essay privileges the face as a surface of signification. Performing superiority involves “collecting importance into our faces” (a provocatively abstract and interiorized image) and adopting an “affected elevation of mien” (which includes facial as well as bodily deportment). However, since the first aim of such performances is “to strike reverence and submission into our companions,” other passengers’ facial and body language are also the measures of their success. The penetrative gaze Steele’s and Gay’s pedestrians use to deflate coach travelers now takes on a measure of reciprocation. Eyes serve double duty in this circuit, since they have not only to take part in the performance of superiority but also to seek evidence of the effects of the performance – looking to others for signs of the nature of “conjectures” passengers are making about them. Johnson’s Viator assigns his own gaze a third task: detection, which amounts to an internal peeling back of the layers of pretense in others’ comportment. Confidence in this skill in “detection” finally allows Viator to present an ideal of stagecoach sociability: “Of one of the women only I could make no disadvantageous detection, because she had assumed no character, but accommodated herself to the scene before her, without any struggle for distinction or superiority” (410). Most of the stagecoach passengers, fixated on their own wish to appear superior, scrutinize others to determine how they themselves feel – that is, to determine the degree to which their wish for a sense of superiority is being fulfilled. In Viator’s eyes, the woman has eluded the performative mindset. Her apparent lack of

“character” and refusal to struggle do not indicate indifference to the group but a different ordering of self and other. She assumes an neutral expression that paradoxically leaves room for social openness according to Viator: she “[accommodates] herself to the scene before her.” Exposing and disciplining the staginess of stagecoach passengers, Johnson’s essay implies that sociability between strangers more properly begins on neutral ground, requiring a visible blanking out of self-interest, that leaves room for a reciprocal relation to emerge (though Viator doesn’t go so far as to say as much). As we shall see, Johnson’s view of the coach as a hall of mirrors – generally a hellish one but not, finally, necessarily so – will find echoes in Sterne’s characterization of this heterogeneous space.

Part Two: *A Sentimental Journey*

Sterne’s Post-Chaise

Intimate space of all kinds was on Laurence Sterne’s mind in the summer of 1767 when he began writing *A Sentimental Journey*.²⁸ He was making improvements to his Yorkshire cottage, and indulging fantasies of future domestic bliss with Eliza Draper, a young married woman he had met in London while soliciting subscriptions for his second novel. “I have this week finish’d a sweet little apartment which all the time it was doing, I flatter’d the most delicious of Ideas, in thinking I was making it for you—,” he wrote in his *Bramine’s Journal* addressed to her as she travelled back to her husband in Bombay.²⁹ “Tis a neat little simple elegant room, overlook’d only by the Sun—just big enough to hold a Sopha,—for us—” (June 7:197). In three weeks’ time the fantasy apartment had grown considerably: “I... am projecting a good Bed-chamber adjoining [the sitting room], with a pretty dressing room for You, which connects them together—

.the Sleeping room will be very large—The dressing room, thr' wch You pass into yr Temple, will be little—...but if ever it holds You & I, my Eliza—the Room will not be too little for us—but we shall be *too big* for the Room” (June 29:209 original emphasis).

Around the same time Sterne acquired a second-hand post-chaise, the first of his own. In a letter to a friend, he adores it unequivocally: “when I say my Lord’s prayer, I always think of it,” he jokes.³⁰ But in his *Journal* to Eliza, the coach, like the dressing room, gives shape to his longing: “—I have a thousand things to remark & say as I roll along—but I want You to say them to—I could sometimes be wise—& often Witty—” (June 9:198). Whereas he pictures togetherness in Eliza’s dressing room as an essentially static expansion of consciousness, the carriage brings in temporality and communication. Keeping time with the more public situation and the motion of the vehicle, his mind speeds up and he imagines a warm and varied conversation with his lover.³¹ The communicative pull of the coach that Sterne notes in the *Journal* seems to play a crucial role in his concurrent fictional travelogue. Throughout the first fifth of *A Sentimental Journey*, Yorick, the novel’s narrator (and Sterne’s alterego) shops for a chaise. Below I argue that the models named in these opening episodes, the *Desobligeant* and the *Vis a vis*, matter as much for the internal and interpersonal experiences they represent as the geographical distances that they can cover. At the heart of the novel’s articulation of a new sentimental ideal, Sterne’s carriages recast the uneasy sociability of strangers as a powerful form of affective connection.

The *Desobligeant*, the Preface, and the Closet

At the beginning of his journey, Yorick lacks not only a means of transportation but also a sense of purpose for his Grand Tour, the written record of which will be the novel itself. Throughout the eighteenth century, travel discourse drew heavily on an empirical logic of personal development: as James Buzard puts it, “If knowledge is rooted in experience and nowhere else, travel instantly gains in importance and desirability... Merely reading about conditions elsewhere was not enough. Those who could travel, *should*.”³² Sterne pokes at this rhetoric of moral and intellectual improvement by suggesting an overlap between the neophyte traveler’s internal and external (material) needs throughout the chaise-shopping episodes. Always inspired by the permeable intersections among words, things, and metaphors, Sterne makes vehicles the ground for Yorick’s budding notions of international travel and travel writing.

Soon after his arrival in Calais, Yorick refuses the petition of an old Franciscan monk, having “predetermined” at first sight “not to give him a single sous” (7). When he then walks out to the coach yard beside his hotel, in his grumpiness he finds himself drawn to a tiny ramshackle chaise: a *Desobligeant* (literally “antisocial”). Getting in, he follows in the footsteps of “many a peripatetic philosopher” (13), composing a Preface in which he expects to classify “the efficient as well as the final causes of travelling” (13). But his deductive logic immediately loops and strains. Categories bump against provisos in his mind. He starts by identifying three distinct motives for travel: “Infirmity of body,” “Imbecility of mind,” and “Inevitable necessity.” Then, ostensibly anxious “to observe the greatest precision and nicety,” he muddies things by distinguishing “Simple Travellers” from the rest, arbitrarily switching from motive to type as the term of

comparison (14). As if in an effort to reassert some control over the now unwieldy scheme, he next announces that “the whole circle of travellers may be reduced to the following *Heads*.” What follows actually increases the number of categories of travelers from four to eleven. If the flimsiness of his construction is not already apparent enough, it is worth noting the odd presentation on the page of the final of these eleven types, along with his confused, incongruously informal explanation:

And last of all (if you please) The

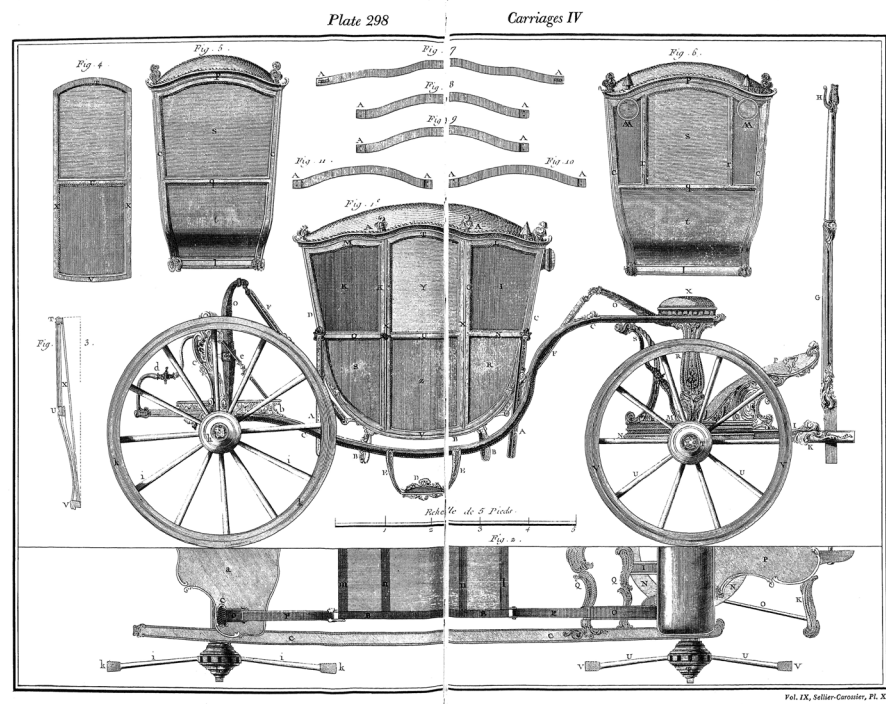
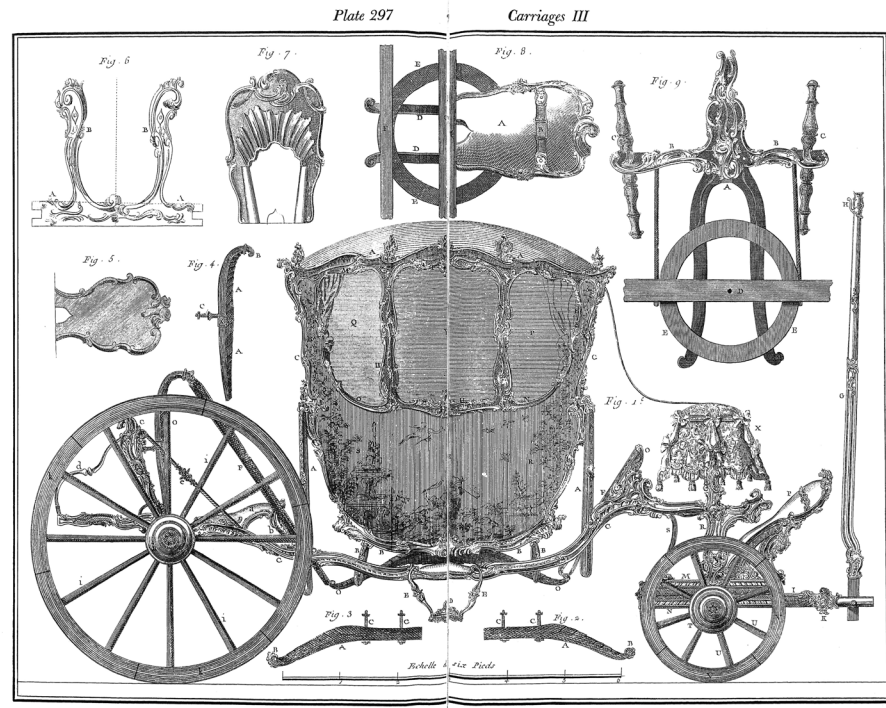
Sentimental Traveller (meaning thereby myself) who have travell’d, and of which I am now sitting down to give an account—as much out of *Necessity*, and the *besoin de Voyager*, as any one in the class. (15)

Yorick’s decision to fashion a new category for himself appears in this context as impetuous and absurd as his line break after “The” and the redundant translation of “out of *Necessity*.” He has not adequately distinguished the new class from “Travellers of *Necessity*.” Moreover, he misrepresents his present state of inexperience, adopting the stance of the future Yorick who will “have travell’d” only by the time his book makes its way into readers’ hands. From his servant’s wry question in the opening lines of the novel – “You have been in France?” (3) – we know that at this point the sum total of Yorick’s time on the other side of the Channel consists in the few minutes he has spent in Calais. He has hardly “travell’d.” Bracketing this attempt to systematize travellers’ motives are speculations on the many obstacles to cross-cultural communication they face. Yorick complains that “from the want of languages, connections, and dependencies, and from the difference in education, customs and habits, we lie under so many impediments in communicating our sensations out of our own sphere, as often amount to a total impossibility” (13). Later he reasons: “Knowledge and improvements

are to be got by sailing and posting for that purpose; but whether useful knowledge and real improvements, is all a lottery... I am of the opinion, That a man would act as wisely, if he could prevail upon himself, to live contented without [them]" (16). Defeatist dictums with which to launch a Grand Tour.

He alludes to the awkwardness of his Preface immediately upon finishing it. As he exits, he tells the Englishmen whose curiosity has been piqued by the vibrations of the stationary chaise, "It would have been better... in a *Vis a Vis*" (17).³³ The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives Sterne's as the first English usage of *Desobligeant* for a single-seater vehicle. (The British had called such a vehicle a *Solitaire*; later, a *Sulky*.) Though *vis-à-vis* was not yet in regular use as an adverb or preposition, the coupéd carriage in which two or sometimes three or four passengers sat opposite one another had been called by its French name for several decades (figs. 14 and 15). *Desobligeant* and *Vis a vis* do much more than designate particular coach models, however. These French names for the vehicles loudly invoke the question of stranger sociability satirists had begun investigating on national terrain.³⁴ Sharing roots with *vision* and *visage* (face), *Vis a Vis* provides a compact figure against which Yorick's unsatisfying Preface (Pre-face) and his solitude in the run-down carriage might be meaningfully associated with one another in retrospect: both the place and the moment of writing preclude considerable contact with other people, foreign or otherwise.

Yorick employs the *Desobligeant* as a gentleman might his closet, closing its taffeta curtains against distractions so that he can think and write alone. Linking Yorick's quirky – and futile – attempt at learned privacy with the derisive French name (the same



Figures 14 and 15. These plates from Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* show two *vis-à-vis* carriages. The ornamental model was for town use while the plainer one, of the type Monsieur Dessein sold, was for distances.

model was called a Solitaire in Britain), Sterne joins an eighteenth-century chorus of critique of mental isolation. Taking the closet as one of its primary metaphors, this discourse overlooks the potential for intimate knowledge exchange within the closet and disdains the tentative, stolen moments of access to exclusive exchanges encapsulated in printed closets and cabinets. A corollary to the constant “breaking open” and “unlocking” of private spaces of learning throughout the period – by national institutions like the Royal Society and the British Museum and in myriad print publications, as we have seen throughout this dissertation – this discourse makes the closet a symbol of inaccessibility and of an obsession with secrecy that shortcircuits a modern, inclusive social imagination. The first on his list of too-insular settings, Mr Spectator declares, “I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of Closets...,” before suggesting communal places, such as the club, coffee house, and tea table, for reading and discussing his essays.³⁵ In David Hume’s “Of the Study of History” (1748), the closet exemplifies the passionlessness of the philosopher that the historian, concerned with real lives, circumvents: “When a philosopher contemplates characters and manners in his closet, the general abstract view of the objects leaves the mind so cold and unmoved, that the sentiments of nature have no room to play, and he scarce feels the difference between vice and virtue.”³⁶ And Johnson correlates learned privacy with narrow-mindedness when he warns in his *Preface to Shakespeare* (1759), “He that will understand Shakespeare, must not be content to study him in the closet...”³⁷ Literally alone, closeted thinkers are also psychologically alone; reason-obsessed, they are too emotionally detached to apprehend the messy human element in the ethical and aesthetic questions they ponder.³⁸ Significantly, in the passages from Hume and *The Spectator*,

the closet is the architectural *sine qua non* of philosophy. John Lyons argues that René Descartes made the private philosophical as it were by placing an uncommon stress on the location of his reflections. “I stayd alone the whole day, shut up in my Stove [*poêle*], where I had leasure enough to entertain my self with my thoughts,” he tells readers of his *Discourse on a Method* (1637),³⁹ and in the *Meditations* (1641) he explains that his writing room “was dark and quiet, filling completely his needs for the exclusion of all that was not himself.”⁴⁰ By the eighteenth century the idea that closets were spaces for purely theoretical analysis had clearly been etched in the social imagination, a metonymy parodying a scientific rule, as though spatial boundaries predictably prohibited the more humane dimensions of thought.

Yorick’s composition in the *Desobligeant* adapts the conflation of studious solitude with a limited, cold perspective and philosophy’s densely analytical form to the context of travel. Yorick calls the system- and axiom-making he attempts there a Preface. He has taken the placement and the title of introductory materials too literally, misconstruing precedence as a reflection of authorial process rather than as a textual convention calculated to orient the reader after the fact of writing.⁴¹ What can he possibly say about traveling given his as yet negligible experience? The setting in which Yorick composes the beginning of his travelogue permits him to evade the temporal paradox his misperception produces. Without particulars Yorick can nevertheless adopt an authoritative stance and make some lofty-sounding generalizations: he can play the philosopher. Sterne’s use of the *Desobligeant* as a setting and a figure thus turns on the empirical thrust of Grand Tour rhetoric. If a journey is meant above all to expand the range of Yorick’s experience, then secreting himself away surely represents a false start.

The *Vis a Vis* and Lust in Transit

Shortly after leaving it, Yorick declares that he has written himself “out of conceit with the *Desobligeant*”(18). When he begins his second attempt at selecting a vehicle, he spies “another tatter'd *Desobligeant*.” But now he knows better: “notwithstanding it was the exact picture of that which had hit my fancy so much in the coach-yard but an hour before—the very sight of it stirr'd up a disagreeable sensation within me now; and I thought ‘twas a churlish beast into whose heart the idea could first enter, to construct such a machine” (32). He does not refer directly to either of the two French coach names again. Significantly, however, the next vehicle Yorick tries, the one he will eventually buy, is the setting of his first foreign flirtation. The artful Monsieur Dessein has ushered an appealing woman whom Yorick has just met, Madame de L***, with him into another chaise, one big enough to seat them both, if only barely. Though it is not necessarily a *Vis a Vis*, this vehicle certainly invites face-to-face contact,⁴² and Jonathan Lamb proposes that its inaugural interchange is the definitive one in the novel: “a situational sentiment at its best, where what is meant is what is being done, and what is being done is what is being said.”⁴³ Yorick doesn't succumb to extremes of any kind here; he doesn't ravish Madame de L*** with embraces or declarations as he imagines a Frenchman would (33). He seduces her slant instead. The best way to make love, Yorick says, is through a “course of small, quiet, attentions, not so pointed as to alarm—nor so vague as to be misunderstood,—with now and then a look of kindness, and little or nothing said upon it—” (34). He finds that understatement, along with “quiet attentions” and mild “looks of kindness,” communicates best as he observes Madame de L*** coming to enjoy the moment as well. “I solemnly declare you have been making love to me all this

while” (34), she blushes. Rather than classifying him as a traveler, the more sociable chaise allows Yorick to learn as he goes along how to think, speak, and act the part through an interchange in which he can attend and respond to the subtlest of words and gestures.

Yorick’s second chaise plays up a bawdy strand in the evolution of carriage sociability. Even prior to its interior reorientation in the seventeenth century, commentators had thought the coach peculiarly well disposed to producing, accommodating, and circulating sexual desire. Single and non-elite women who relied on hired coaches for travel, including girls going into service or for some other reason divorced from their families, were especially targeted, tapping into an ongoing connection between female mobility and their sexual availability. The link to whoring was especially strong for hackney coaches, and linguistically overdetermined:

hackney, meaning “for hire” or “common” (derived from the Old French *haquenée*), is a homonym of the name of the London borough where there were many brothels.

Taylor layers these meanings, depicting coaches as go-betweens: “many times a hired Coachman... may man, a brace of... [Hackney women] to their places of recreation, and so save them the charge of maintaining a Sir Pandarus or an Apple-squire.”⁴⁴

Peter Anthony Motteux’s opening song for *The Stage-Coach*, the farce he co-wrote with George Farquhar, adds the suggestion that erratic shaking of the moving carriage makes female passengers especially receptive to men’s advances:

Here chance kindly mixes,
All Sorts and all Sexes,
More Females than Men;
We squeeze them, we ease them,
The Jolting does please them;
Drive jollily then.⁴⁵

Whitsuntide Holidays (1783) (fig. 16) seems an illustration of Motteux's refrain.

Other erotic associations targeted the strangely public-privacy of the coach that was novel for nonelite men as well. Taylor worries about what people hiding inside a coach might get up to, stressing the difference between the coach and its lowbrow cousin: "The Cart is an open transparent Engine, that any man may perceive the plaine honesty of it; there is no part of it within or without, but it is in the continuall view of all men: On the contrary, the Coach is a close hypocrite, for it hath a cover for any Knavery."⁴⁶ Furthermore, the coach "is never unfurnished of a bed and curtaines, with shop windowes of leather to buckle Bawdry up as close in the midst of the street as it were in the Stewes."⁴⁷ When Elizabeth Pepys accuses Samuel of being "seen in a hackney-coach with the glasses up with Deb [Willet],"⁴⁸ the nature of his offense need not be spelled out.⁴⁹

We saw that Johnson's ideal character-less traveler is a woman, but his other stagecoach passengers all self-consciously perform themselves and scrutinize others' reactions in an effort to erect status distinctions, regardless of gender. Writing about the erotic gaze in the coach complicates this quest for superiority between strangers: in such representations we see that an overtly sexualized spectatorial relationship might be experienced as pleasure, as melting away of difference or a merging with the object of visual desire. Especially by male spectators. For example, Casanova claimed to have executed his proudest conquest in a calash during a thunderstorm; but sitting opposite a new quarry and her officer boyfriend, he enjoys the carriage's more discreet ocular delights: "my eyes saw [Henriette] without my having to turn my head to give them that pleasure, which is certainly the greatest a lover can have among those which he cannot be



Figure 16. *Whitsuntide Holidays* (1783).

denied.”⁵⁰ As Manley shows in her *Stagecoach to Exeter*, female travelers weren’t always as thrilled to get such attention as men were to give it. In her second letter, Manley complains of Beaux, the Baronet across from her, “I think none was ever so plagu’d with dying Eyes; his are [so] continually in that posture, and my Opposites, that I am forc’d to take a good deal of pains to avoid ‘em.” “*I vow, this Indifferency does not look natural to you; your eyes promise us much more Fire,*” Beaux says, provoking her and Manley replies to herself, “I’ll shut ‘em... for ever rather than such a Fop shall find any thing to like them for—,” “*What! no answer, Madam...; I perceive your Attention by your Silence,*” he replies.⁵¹ Trapped in the stagecoach, she can’t elude Beaux’s looks or innuendo; and, significantly, while she maintains her indifference to the low women, Manley does warm a little, if reluctantly, to her pursuer over the course of the trip. If the erotic gaze was returned in a coach, the results could be especially electric. German satirist Georg Lichtenberg describes an English stage-coach journey as a multisensory frenzy of opportunity “[for] a dangerous exchange of glances but often also for a scandalous entanglement of legs causing a giggling in both parties and a confusion of souls and thought, so that eventually many an honest young man who only [wants] to travel from London to Oxford [goes] straight to the devil instead...”⁵² In this late eighteenth-century example, visual pleasure combined with physical proximity in the stage coach leads to a kind of cognitive meltdown – “giggling” then “a confusion of souls and thought” – that prepares the couple for conversation in the most embodied sense.

As critics have long insisted, Sterne’s novel lingers at, but never crosses that line. The reflective charge of Yorick and Madame de L***’s lovemaking delicately engages the coach’s notorious reputation. Yorick is planning to ask Madame de L*** to

accompany him to Amiens. The thought has first occurred to him soon after meeting her: “Now where would be the harm... if I was to beg of this distressed lady to accept of half my chaise?—and what mighty mischief could ensue?” (28) On articulating the thought, Yorick falls into his own mental trap. The words produce the idea of lust and a physiological response: “Every dirty passion, and bad propensity in my nature, took the alarm, as I stated the proposition—” (28). When Yorick is in the post-chaise with Madame de L***, Monsieur Dessein approaches to announce that the widow’s brother has arrived to escort her home (35). The turn of events is “fatal” to Yorick’s as yet unstated proposition, but elicits from Madame de L*** the parting words that demonstrate that the thought has nevertheless been conveyed. “I think, said she, looking in my face, I had no evil to apprehend—and... had determined to accept [a place in your coach]—If I had—(she stopped a moment)—I believe your good will would have drawn a story from me, which would have made pity the only dangerous thing in the journey” (35). The flash of sentimental fulfillment hinges on its setting: its whiff of lewdness (and the foreclosed though still palpable possibility of Yorick and Madame de L*** navigating that lewdness together) hovers there in the extended pause. The doubled sound and appearance of the name of the intimate coach (*Vis a Vis*) enacts this kind of connection: looking at and listening to one another, they mirror one another’s thoughts.

So whereas the *Desobligeant* leaves Yorick alone to speculate, classify, and generalize, the second chaise produces a more fluid relationship to communication – and to form. In the *Desobligeant*, Yorick predicts that his “travels and his observations will be altogether of a different cast from any of my fore-runners” (15). He wants to define this difference but he decides he had better wait “till [he has] some better grounds for it,

than the mere *Novelty of [his] Vehicle*” (15 original emphasis).⁵³ In this first phase, his book is just a husk, an idea of an idea of a genre. In the post-chaise for two, Yorick clarifies his direction as he talks to a foreign woman he has just met. When he buys the chaise (“I never finished a twelve-guinea bargain so expeditiously in my life” (36), he puns), Yorick confirms that the stuff of his journey and thus of his journal will be conversational minutiae. “I declare, said I, clapping my hands chearily together, that was I in a desert, I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections—If I could not do better, I would fasten them upon some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to connect myself to—” (36). He now understands he must avoid the perceptual limitations of his predecessors Smelfungus and Mundungus, each of whom was locked in a vicegrip of self. The former filtered his observations through his bad mood: he “set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he pass’d by was discoloured or distorted—” (37); the latter, possessed of “an immense fortune” but overly prudent, “made the whole tour... without one generous connection or pleasurable anecdote to tell of; but he had travell’d straight on looking neither to his right hand or his left, lest Love or Pity should seduce him out of his road” (37-8).

Intersubjective Form

Sterne’s witty contrast between *Desobligeant* and *Vis a Vis* thus structures both his critique of solitary modes of perceiving, writing, and traveling and their interactive re-invention in *A Sentimental Journey*. In effect Yorick continuously advocates for his own chosen “vehicle” throughout the novel, showing in each gregarious yet introspective

entry how well his many encounters on the road equip him to breathe life into the grand philosophical questions of his age about the mind, the self, and sentiment. A third set of eighteenth-century spatial associations further clarifies the significance of the chaise-shopping episode. Not only was the closet known as a room for thoughtful solitude, but a mechanical version of the closet, the *camera obscura*, had long been in use by philosophers as a metaphor for consciousness itself.⁵⁴ For the Cartesian rationalist, the *camera obscura* modeled the way in which the inner light of reason separates what one knows clearly and distinctly from less certain types of knowledge.⁵⁵ And, in John Locke's image of the empirical mind, sense impressions and ideas enter reason's domain from without, like light pouring through the window of a dark, empty closet.⁵⁶ Recalling these figures, Sterne's *Desobligeant* highlights the radical solitude of the subject of epistemology as he attends to his own mental processes. By contrast, the *Vis a Vis*, the *Desobligeant*'s counterpart, embodies an idea of learning as reciprocal and of the mind as a dynamic mechanism. We might say that what the *camera obscura* is to the theorist of knowledge, the *Vis a Vis* is to the sentimental novelist.

After the flirtation with Madame de L***, Yorick shares his own carriage only one other time. But actual coaches do shape several interpersonal encounters in *A Sentimental Journey*. In each other's way at the entrance of a Milan concert hall, Yorick and the Marquesina de F*** fall into a courteous *pas-de-deux* before Yorick thinks to stop moving to let the Marquesina pass (77). He follows to apologize and asks if he can escort her to her coach. She consents. "Upon my word, Madame," Yorick says, handing the lady into her carriage, "I made six different efforts to let you go out—" "And I made

six different efforts... to let you enter—” she replies. When she makes room to allow him to make a seventh attempt to enter, Yorick “instantly step[s] in—” (78).

The coach abets sexual opportunism again in a later incident: La Fleur asks Yorick for time off “*pour faire le galant vis à vis sa maîtresse*” and Yorick observes, “it was the very thing I intended to do myself *vis à vis* Madame de R***—I had retain’d the remise [coach] on purpose for it” (132). He relates to La Fleur’s desire to “*faire le galant*,” and the repetition of the relational preposition *vis-à-vis* reminds Yorick of the utility of the coach itself to this aim. On the other hand, the coach is also capable of impeding Yorick’s thoughts, such as when he tries to cultivate compassion for a man mourning his dead ass whom he passes on the way to Amiens. A crowd of sympathetic spectators gather around him, but Yorick does not join them, choosing to maintain his superior position instead: “as I continued sitting in the post-chaise, I could see and hear over their heads” (53). Yorick soon moves on, and though he remains “as candidly disposed to make the best of the worst, as ever wight was” (56), the postillion and the joltings of the coach seem to conspire against his attempts to savor the feelings aroused by the grieving man.⁵⁷

Like metaphors of consciousness in philosophical systems, then, the sociable chaise remains for the most part an implied structure, compelling a giddy and greedy openness to the moment, to movement, and to the possibility of connection rather than the certainty of attachment. This model of cognition is especially useful in mapping the range of Yorick’s encounters throughout the novel. One by one, he zeroes in on the people who catch his eye, encouraging them to return his gaze, his words, and sometimes

(especially if female) his touch, producing between them a reciprocal zoom whose very intensity and exclusivity ensure it will not last.

Notwithstanding his memorable *rendez-vous* with the grisset, the *fille de chambre*, and Maria in the Moulines (69-75, 121-24, 149-54), I want to conclude by noticing how the *Vis a vis* paradigm shapes two telling encounters with men in the novel. The first of these, in which Yorick converses with an old officer while awaiting a performance at the *Opéra comique*, is another of the novel's clear illustrations of sentiment in action. When Yorick chances upon the Frenchman, he is reading the program notes through "a large pair of spectacles." On seeing Yorick, he takes off and pockets his glasses, a gesture which Yorick comprehends perfectly: "Translate this into any civilized language in the world—the sense is this: ... 'Here's a poor stranger come into the box—he seems as if he knew no body; and is never likely, was he to be seven years in Paris, if every man he comes near keeps his spectacles upon his nose—'tis shutting the door of conversation absolutely in his face—'" (76). The English parson responds with a similarly communicative bow. When they finally speak to one another the theme does not change, and at the end of the conversation, the officer proffers this maxim: "the advantage of travel... [is] by seeing a great deal both of men and of manners; it [teaches] us mutual toleration; and mutual toleration... [teaches] us mutual love" (84). Yorick cannot identify the source of his pleasure on hearing this: "I thought I loved the man; but I fear I mistook the object—'twas my own way of thinking—the difference was I could not have expressed it half so well" (84). The officer's trite message of tolerance is more striking as a performative than as a constative utterance. Yorick recognizes that something has been gained in his encounter with the officer, but what touches him? His own thought of

mutual toleration? The words in which the thought is expressed? Or the man who speaks them? The very problem of attribution attests to the success of the encounter in the opera box: at the level of cognition it is impossible to tell self and other apart.

The second and concluding incident between men I want to consider is an imagined encounter with a Duke. Yorick's journey is in jeopardy because he does not have a passport. Before approaching the Duc de C*** for help in acquiring one at his cabinet at Versailles, Yorick tries to calm his own nerves. Counseling himself to observe carefully, he proceeds to elaborate the process by which he has generated affective connections throughout his journey:

see Monsieur le Duc's face first— observe what character is written in it; take notice in what posture he stands to hear you—mark the turns and expressions of his body and limbs—And for the tone—the first sound which comes from his lips will give it you—: and from all these together you'll compound an address at once upon the spot, which cannot disgust the Duke— the ingredients are his own, and most likely to go down... as if man to man was not equal throughout the whole surface of the globe; and if in the field—why not face to face in the cabinet too? (101)

At the end of this self-instruction, Yorick confuses two interactive spaces: “man to man” is indeed equal on the battlefield according to an ancient heroic code that couples combatants in violence, but how this heroic parity will help him strike a deal within the baroque and hierarchical system of secrets and favorites governing the Duke's private chamber remains to be seen. “[W]hy not face to face in the cabinet too?” Yorick asks, defiantly naive. He supposes that in every case attentive proximity can be made to reduce difference, whether of status, nationality, occupation, or age, to tangible elements of conversational style that can be reproduced as soon as they are perceived. Once the “ingredients” of his conversation match the Duke's, an inherently status-bound relationship can and will – he imagines – transform into a more palatable relationship of

equals. This scene ostensibly depicts a moment of courtly solicitude not unlike those we have seen in other chapters of this study – the kind that flares up behind closed doors between kings and favorites, for instance, or masters and secretaries, closet supplicants and God (and potentially at least between Miss Hobart and Miss Temple in the Duchess of York’s bathing closet). Yet Sterne subverts the traditional power structure of this space by reimagining its intimacy as a mechanical and entirely reproducible process. Here the intimacy forged is contingent not on the will of the closet’s owner but of the careful and calculated actions of the invitee. The *Vis a vis* is the missing term here, naming both a place where diverse strangers encounter one another and the equalizing mode of perceiving and responding that Yorick, and his readers – fellow travelers – are learning to associate with it.

At the end of Chapter One, we saw how *Miss C---Y’s Cabinet of Curiosities*, a 1765 novella written in imitation of Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, capitalizes on the many connotations of the cabinet to suggest the status inconsistencies encapsulated by the space of the printed text: while the printed cabinet’s origins are exclusive or lofty, as a rule its readers are not. A later Sternian imitation, the anonymous *Adventures of a Hackney Coach*, finds in the accessible intimacy of the coach a figure through which to develop a more confident, protodemocratic view of the same theme. According the dedicatory epistle, *Adventures of a Hackney Coach* was composed after “[c]hance put into [the author’s] hand an old worn-out pen of Yorick’s”⁵⁸ and published just over decade after *A Sentimental Journey*. Whereas *A Sentimental Journey* makes Yorick, as passenger-subject, the mobile through-line of the work, the *Adventures of a Hackney Coach* puts the vehicle itself – imaginatively granted the power of thought and speech – at the center as

narrator of its many episodes. Directly addressing the reader, the hackney coach grounds his authority not in secret private spaces but in his close encounters with a diverse array of people. As he predicts, writing to the moment at the start of the novel: “I have no doubt, from my present elegant appearance, of being speedily acquainted with the various characters of life; and of putting into thy hands in a few years a repository of entertainment and instruction, as full as the Bath Machine [stage coach] that has just passed by.”⁵⁹ As promised, the coach reports on the dialogue and doings of pickpockets and grave-robbers, and lords and ladies, as they travel, conversing, through the city. Pointing to the reciprocal relation between new patterns of geographical movement and a more inclusive social imagination, *Adventures of a Hackney-coach* clearly affirms Sterne’s upbeat view of the coach as an important alternative to the more conflicted and convoluted encounters in and around the secret space of the closet. If the vehicle plays a part in the expansion of infrastructures that increase and speed up the circulation of people – and ideas and the books that contain them – through England, Europe, and beyond, these texts insist that it also represents the possibility of a mutual concentration or contraction of perspective, a pleasing if all too brief sense of mental and physical reciprocity with the power to span and (potentially) to level traditional social divides.

¹ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (Volume 1), ed. John Warrington (New York: Dutton, 1966), December 31, 1660, 123.

² Laurence Sterne, *Continuation of the Bramine’s Journal, Works* (Volume VI), eds. Melvyn New and W.G. Day (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2002), April 18, 173.

³ In “Intimacy: A Special Issue,” *Critical Inquiry* 24 (Winter 1998), 281-88, 284, Berlant proposes that we might come to view intimacy “as a drive that creates spaces around it through practices,” rather than as an aspect of social life firmly and inextricably rooted in particular locations and institutions, narratives, and interpersonal relationships. The epigraph is also from page 284.

⁴ This argument owes special debts to four critical works. In “‘The Glory of Motion’: Carriages and Consciousness in the Early Novel,” *The Country Myth: Motifs in the British Novel from Defoe to Smollett* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 207-220, John Dussinger suggests that changes in carriage design, horse

breeding, and road building in the eighteenth century provided “a material basis for the Age of Sensibility, when self is felt to be a phenomenon of the nervous system, of the body in motion” (207). In *Sterne; Ou, Le vis-à-vis* (Lille: Presses-universitaires de Lille, 1984), Jean-Claude Dupas invokes the figure of the carriage in a discussion of Sterne’s intimate authorial voice. Christopher Nagle, “Sterne, Shelley, and Sensibility’s Pleasures of Proximity,” *ELH* 70.3 (2003), 813-45, emphasizes the degree to which sensibility focuses on “establishing relationality, not on cultivating the self” (818). Jonathan Lamb’s “The Language of Hartleian Associationism in *A Sentimental Journey*,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 13 (1980), 285-312, outlines the role of metaphor in the Sternian episteme. My essay aims to demonstrate that the interdependence of these themes in *A Sentimental Journey*.

⁵ John Taylor, *The World Runnes on Wheelles; Or, Odds between Carts and Coaches* (London: 1623), 11.

⁶ Taylor, *Wheelles*, 11.

⁷ Taylor, *Wheelles*, 12.

⁸ Because the number of hackney coaches had risen so rapidly King Charles I prohibited their use within three miles of the town:

the great numbers of Hackney Coaches of late time seen and kept in London, Westminster, and their Suburbs, and the general and promiscuous use of Coaches there, were not only a great disturbance to his Majesty, his dearest Consort the Queen, the Nobility, and others of place and degree, in thier passage through the Streets; but the Street themselves were so pestered, and the pavements so broken up, that the common passage is thereby hindered and more dangerous..

Cited in Ralph Straus, *Carriages and Coaches: Their History and Evolution* (London: Martin Secker, 1912), 90. The privilege of a hackney coach license was reserved for those who were willing to keep four good horses continually available for His Majesty. Also see Lazlo Tarr, *The History of the Carriage*, trans. Elizabeth Hoch (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1969), 237.

⁹ Henry Peachum, *Coach and Sedan Pleasantly Disputing for Place and Precedence* (London: 1636), 7.

¹⁰ Straus, *Carriages and Coaches*, 89. Straus also remarks on the persistence of these signs of an older more stately moment in coach history: “Nearly every hansom and four-wheeled cab at the end of the nineteenth century bore some sort of coronet on its panels.”

¹¹ Peachum, *Coach and Sedan*, 17-18.

¹² Rochester, “Tunbridge Wells” (1674?), *Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. David Vieth, 73-80, line 2. Line numbers are cited directly throughout the rest of the discussion of this poem.

¹³ Taylor, *Wheelles*, 19.

¹⁴ Richard Steele, Number 144, *The Tatler* (1709-11) (Philadelphia: Woodward, 1831), 266. All citations of this essay are from this page.

¹⁵ John Gay, *Trivia; Or, The Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716), *The Poetical Works of John Gay*, ed. G.C.Faber (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 57-87, 2.574-590. Line numbers will be cited directly throughout the rest of the discussion of this poem.

¹⁶ With this last item in particular the Walker recalls Steele’s censor’s promise, *Tatler*, 266, to collaborate with “all the coach-makers and coach-painters in town” to compile a list of the arms, words, devices, and cyphers decorating coach doors which will form “a collection which shall let us into the nature, if not the history, of mankind, more usefully than all the curiosities of any medalist in Europe.”

¹⁷ Peachum, *Coach and Sedan*, 18.

¹⁸ Jeffrey Schnapp's "Crash (Speed as Engine of Individuation)," *Modernism/Modernity* 6.1 (1999), 1-49, 6, notes that, uncritically in love with Walter Benjamin, "American cultural studies have all too readily conferred upon Baudelaire's epoch an inaugural role vis-à-vis modernity that could just as easily be extended back to the prior century." A case for backdating the *flâneur*'s aesthetic project could certainly include Gay's *Trivia* since, like the artist-wanderers in the Parisian Arcades, the speaker envisions his stroll as a means of poeticizing his experience of the urban marketplace.

¹⁹ Glass coaches – coaches with windows made of glass – were first known in France in the early seventeenth century and introduced in London during the Restoration. See Straus, *Carriages and Coaches*, 119.

²⁰ Taylor, *Wheeles*, 14.

²¹ A nineteenth-century transportation scholar posits that the structural change in coaches "from the long barge shape of Charles I's time to [the smaller, face-to-face design] of Charles II[s] was, no doubt, suggested by the shape of the sedan chair." Sedan chairs carried by footmen had been in use in London since the early seventeenth century. Quoted in Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (1977) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 74.

²² Schivelbusch, *Railway Journey*, 74.

²³ Quoted on Schivelbusch, *Railway Journey*, 75.

²⁴ Manley, *Stagecoach Journey to Exeter* (London: 1696), 5. Page numbers will be cited parenthetically throughout the discussion of this text.

²⁵ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, Number 132, *The Spectator* (Volume 2) ed. Donald Bond (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 25.

²⁶ Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), ed. Martin Battestin (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1967), 52.

²⁷ Samuel Johnson, Number 84, *Adventurer, The Idler and The Adventurer*, eds. W.J.Bate, John M. Bullitt, and L.F.Powell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 406-8, 407.

²⁸ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy by Mr. Yorick* (1768) *Works* (Volume VI), eds. Melvyn New and W.G. Day (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2002).

²⁹ Melvyn New and W.G. Day point out in their introduction to Volume VI of the Florida edition that the *Journal* and the *Journey* "were intertwined for many months in Sterne's own mind, and the reading of them should be similarly intertwined in our own" (xlv). Also see Gardner Stout's considered reassessment of earlier criticism which sharply contrasts the sensibility and style of the contemporaneous texts in Appendix E of *A Sentimental Journey* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 322-326.

³⁰ Sterne, Letter 167, *Letters of Laurence Sterne*, ed. Lewis Perry Curtis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 281.

³¹ In the *Journal* he tells Eliza, "I've been as far as York to day with no Soul with me in my Chase but yr Picture—" (June 22:206). Then he comes up with a plan to make a necklace of the little portrait, so "—it shall be nearer my heart—" (July 9:220). Eliza translates into Sterne's fictional world in exactly the same form: that is, as a miniature virtual traveling companion around Yorick's neck – quite literally a cameo role. Yorick addresses her directly in the first paragraph of the novel (3).

³² James Buzard, "The Grand Tour and after (1660-1840)," *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 37-52, 37.

³³ My reading underscores the inconsistencies and pessimism of the Preface in the *Desobligeant*. Conversely, Stout's extensive notes, 78-85 and Appendix E, 326-30, elucidate the efficacy of the Preface in cataloguing contemporary attitudes toward the Grand Tour and glosses its many allusions, including to Sterne's own sermon on the Prodigal Son which urges intellectual and emotional preparedness for travel.

³⁴ The interplay between these coaches and their narrative context in *A Sentimental Journey* has not gone unnoticed. Dussinger, "Carriages and Consciousness," 212, comments in passing that there is "a metaphysical structure implicit in such names as desobligeant and vis-a-vis..." For other critical treatments of these figures, see Lamb, "Associationism," 293; Keymer, "Readers," 210; James Chandler, "Moving Accidents: The Emergence of Sentimental Probability" in *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820*, eds. Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 137-70, especially 153; and George Haggerty, "Amelia's Nose; Or, Sensibility and Its Symptoms," *The Eighteenth Century* 36.2 (1995), 139-56, 141.

³⁵ Addison, Number 10, *The Spectator* (Volume 1), 44.

³⁶ David Hume, "Of the Study of History," *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), 563-8, 568.

³⁷ Samuel Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare, 1759," *Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Sherbo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 86.

³⁸ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), eds. Ruth Grant and Nathan Tarcov (New York: Hackett, 1996), 2.A.94, 68, also features the closet in a discussion of the necessity of learning morality *in situ*: "it is not possible now (as perhaps formerly it was) to keep a young gentleman from vice by a total ignorance of it, unless you will all his life mew him up in a closet, and never let him go into company. The longer he is kept thus hoodwink'd, the less he will see when he comes abroad into open daylight." The closet keeps the gentleman-scholar pure, but poorly equips him for dealing with the ethical complexity of "company."

³⁹ John Lyons, "Camera Obscura: Image and Imagination in Descartes's *Méditations*," *Convergences: Rhetoric and Poetic in Seventeenth-Century France*, eds. David Lee Rubin and Mary B. McKinley (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 179-95, 179, cites the original: "Je demeurais tout le jour enfermé seul dans un poêle." The translation above is from the first English edition of *Discourse of a Method* (London: Thomas Newcombe, 1649), 16.

⁴⁰ Lyons, "Camera Obscura," 179.

⁴¹ For a different reading of the spiraling temporality of the Preface, see Nagle, "Proximity," 827-8.

⁴² The question of whether or not the coach Yorick buys is a *Vis a Vis* may be moot: as transportation historians point out, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century carriage names were often used interchangeably. On the other hand, Ralph Straus, *Carriages and Coaches: Their History and their Evolution* (London: Martin Secker, 1912), 172, footnotes his discussion of Sterne with an announcement from *The Gazeteer and New Daily Advertiser* for July 21, 1767, in which a certain Monsieur Dessein, the real-life coach broker and hotelier on whom Sterne's character is based, advertises "a Travelling *Vis-à-Vis*... varnished in the newest taste, and covered with an oiled case to preserve it from the weather in travelling, and [requiring] nothing but a new set of wheels to be in perfect repair." Evidently there was some factual basis for Sterne's fictional association of that vehicle and the Calais coach yard.

⁴³ Lamb, "Associationism," 285, defines "sentimental situations" as those which allow a word, idea, and interpersonal context fleetingly to unite, producing a meaning that oscillates pleasingly between literal and figurative levels. Since *sentiment* is Sterne's crucial key word in the second novel, it is worth quoting Lamb's illustration of it at length:

...at the end of Slawkenburgius's Tale in *Tristram Shandy*... Tristram comes across the strange phrase 'the lambent pupilability of slow, low, dry chat.' His brain can make nothing of it, but the vibrations round his heart teach him that the sentimental part of this conference between Diego and Julia can be preserved only if their eyebeams stay on a level, and glance neither at the ceiling nor at one another's laps. In this way Tristram can feel he understands it... Between... cool reasoning... and... urgent animality... there is room for the cardiac vibrations that signal the arrival of sentimental knowledge and the production of sentimental words. The word sentiment... is a pun, referring to [this] natural linkage between feeling and thought, gesture and utterance. (285-6)

So sentiment first of all gives a name to a precariously balanced mode of perception: whereas dipping awareness down too low, solely to words, things, or laps, breeds vulgarity or crude literalism, tipping it up too high, to ideas or the ceiling, results in ethereal abstraction or whimsy. Like Diego and Julia's eyebeams, sentiment rests in a nebulous in-between zone. At the same time, it gives a name to the quasi-emotional, quasi-rational *recognition* of this perceptual balance such as when Tristram "can feel he understands" in his heart what "lambent pupilability" means in the context of Diego and Julia's "slow, low, dry chat." Sentiment therefore also signifies meta-sentiment, the awareness of sentiment. Lamb identifies *heart*, *hand*, *exchange*, *situation*, and *volume* as subsidiary key words: they allow for brief fusions between their most tangible (material or physiological) denotations and their most abstract or suggestive connotations. In effect this chapter makes a case for the *Vis a Vis* as another key word in the novel.

⁴⁴ Taylor, *Wheeles*, 8.

⁴⁵ George Farquhar and Peter Anthony Motteux, *The Stage-Coach* (London: Benjamin Bragg, 1705), 19. First produced on the London stage in 1701 or 1702, the play is a translation of Jean de la Chapelle's *Les Carrosses d'Orléans* (1680).

⁴⁶ Taylor, *Wheeles*, 13.

⁴⁷ Taylor, *Wheeles*, 15.

⁴⁸ Pepys, *Diary*, January 12, 1668/69, 564.

⁴⁹ In the decades following the publication of *A Sentimental Journey*, the *Vis a Vis* in particular association with female promiscuity. In the mock-epic poem, "The Vis-a-vis of Berkeley Square; Or, A Wheel off Mrs. W*t*n's Carriage" (London: 1783), 14, the luxurious golden vehicle is both the cause and the effect of the heroine's notoriety as she rides about the city:

All these [men] have paid for their approach,
All these have paid to make this Coach,
This Comet upon Wheels!
Which, burnish'd as it runs, doth blaze;
Of all, the wonder and the gaze!

The real-life Mrs Watson whom the satire targets was said to have seduced the Prince of Wales (with the help of her sister) and to own "the smartest vis-a-vis in town." Another well-known courtesan, Agnes Townshend, was known as Vis-a-vis Townshend, despite the fact that she drove herself all over the country in a phaeton. See Horace Bleackley, *Ladies Fair and Frail: Sketches of the Demi-Monde During the Eighteenth-Century with Sixteen Illustrations* (London: John Lane, 1909), 282.

⁵⁰ Giacomo Casanova, *History of My Life* (Volumes 3 and 4), trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), 25.

⁵¹ Manley, *Stage Coach*, 10.

⁵² Paraphrased in Tarr, *History*, 257.

⁵³ Lamb, "Associationism," 293, and Chandler, "Probability," 152, also gloss this metaphor.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1991), 25-66, 29, outlines the extensive influence of the *camera obscura* on ideas of perception throughout the early modern period: "For two centuries it stood as a model, in both rationalist and empiricist thought, of how observation leads to truthful inferences about the world; at the same time the physical incarnation of that model was a widely used means of observing the visible world, an instrument of popular entertainment, of scientific inquiry, and of artistic practice."

⁵⁵ Lyons, "Camera Obscura," 181.

⁵⁶ John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 2.11.17, 163, draws this analogy cautiously: "[M]ethinks, the understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light with only some little opening left, to let in external visible resemblances, or ideas of things without."

⁵⁷ In keeping with the empirical separation of subject and object, works such as Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), ed. Knud Haakonssen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), conceive sympathy as a virtual or parasitic affective structure. Spectators at best experience feelings which parallel those of the agent or "person principally concerned": "Whatever is the passion which arises from any object in the person principally concerned, an analogous emotion springs up, at the thought of his situation, in the breast of every attentive spectator," writes Smith. "In every passion of which the mind of man is susceptible, the emotions of the by-stander always correspond to what, by bringing the case home to himself, he imagines should be the sentiments of the sufferer" (1.1.1.4, 13). The payoff of the *Vis a vis* as a paradigm of emotional connection is its immediacy and perfect symmetry: two equal participants play both spectator and agent at once.

⁵⁸ *Adventures of a Hackney Coach*. (Third edition corrected) (London: 1781), v. (ECCO notes indicate that this book is sometimes attributed to Dorothy Kilner.)

⁵⁹ *Hackney Coach*, 3.

Conclusion

A central aim of this dissertation has been a recuperative one: to call attention to the prevalence and versatility of closets and coaches in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British print culture. We have seen that the discourses and practices associated with these spaces were extremely diverse. Throughout the period the elite continued to value closets not only as places to write, read, lust, lounge, bathe, excrete, or dress in peace, but also as places where knowledge and power could be shared with a select audience while engaging in any or all of the above. At the same time, the middling sort, along with specialists from nonelite social strata, made more and more closets and cabinets in which to experiment, collect books and things, and converse with God and others in their own way. Meanwhile, carriages, no longer strictly noble vehicles of public display, were increasingly necessary and available as means of transportation. The writers inspired by both kinds of settings were equally various: the imaginations of celebrated men and women of letters and the grubbiest of hacks were stirred by them.

We have seen that, notwithstanding all this variety, what very frequently drew seventeenth and eighteenth-century writers to closets and carriages as settings and figures were the complex modes of interpersonal connection associated with them. Occupants' unusual physical proximity in closets and carriages lent their interactions a powerful if fleeting charge. Unlike larger and more inclusive sites of sociability such as parlors, parks, and assembly halls, closets were by definition peripheral spaces where rehearsed manners and grand gestures could and should be set aside. And, as they became popular as public vehicles, coaches too, like their static architectural complements, gave rise to fluid, unstructured exchanges across the ranks. Informality, improvisation, and

immediacy were requisite for successful communication here. Emphasizing these qualities, my study of closets and carriages has thus also pointedly aimed to expand our sense of the scope of intimacy in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century life. Perhaps the most beloved masterplot in the history of intimacy over the past thirty years has concerned domesticity, the concomitant architectural and emotional cocooning of married couples and their families; another theme in the history of intimacy has been the polite commerce championed by urbane citizens, men of business, and periodical essayists; a third storyline has centered on the self-interested individuals who navigated both these domains with increasing confidence and expertise. Peering into and around closets and coaches, all of these standard motifs fade into the background and less familiar forms of affective experience come into focus. My dissertation has shown that, on the one hand, privates spaces often represented aristocratic modes of intimacy on the decline. When Anthony Hamilton portrays the homely Miss Hobart's clumsily wooing her female favorite in a bathing closet, for instance, or when Swift, ventriloquizing Lady Acheson, immortalizes their rural friendship through the figure of an outhouse, we are clearly confronting efforts to symbolize the decaying social structures of the court and the country house respectively. On the other hand, we have seen that closets and coaches also come to be associated with inchoate, emergent relationships: residual bodily effects of royal favor and of "riding in state" lend respective thrills to the voyeurs who gaze through portals and keyholes at visual objects of desire in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century textual closets and cabinets, and to coach passengers, like those in Manley's *Stagecoach to Exeter*, whose nervous, inflated postures express both desire and uncertainty about their entitlement to this mode of transportation.

Finally, throughout the dissertation we have observed that the close-up and interpersonal perspectives invited by private settings and figures have had an unmistakable impact on their generic containers. Descriptions of encounters set in closets and coaches (and cabinets and privies) give rise to odd new strains of erotic poetry and more richly subjective forms of third-person narration. My curiosity about the dynamic interactions among material, emotional, and literary structures in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British writing has propelled this study: the methodological investigation represents its most fundamental aim. In the first and last chapters in particular we saw how intimate spaces point to shifting paradigms of knowledge production and transmission. While this relationship currently provides a diffuse throughline linking all the chapters, in future incarnations of this project I expect to continue to explore the broad metacommentary on print culture developed in and through literary representations of intimate space.

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