Sun, Shell, Mirror

Hiding Spaces
in the
Court of France

by

Edward Houle

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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ABSTRACT

If privacy, and even secrecy, are critical components of the domestic interior, then what is the shape taken by the domestic architecture of people who must uphold high standards of individual transparency? Monarchs and aristocrats in absolutist France face such obligations, and the means they invest to create private and even hidden spaces in their houses and gardens during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the beginning of our own Modern culture, not only set some precedents for how we now understand our homes, but are revealing with regards to how people attempt to preserve their personal autonomy. This thesis is primarily, though not exclusively, interested in the erotic sub-culture of the royal court and the *élite* of Paris, which generates a great deal of architectural, literary, and visual examples.

The noble tradition of personal display to justify power, most evident with the convention of the state bed, is expanded to its limit with Louis XIV, who curtails the intransigence of the nobility by making them dependent on their presence at his protocol-bound royal court, and consequently making his own life and person as visible as possible. However, this sacrifices considerable individual privacy for both courtier and monarch, and even Louis XIV eventually finds regular retreat in the appartment of the marquise de Maintenon, his solitude-cherishing second wife, incuring the resentment of his court in the process. After his death, aristocrats are obsessed with the private and sensuous amenities of their own houses while still upholding social requirements for display, resulting in the ingenious planning and expressive decoration of Rococo architecture. This is part of a larger cultural interest in hidden activity and intense sensation that also belongs to the erotic libertine novel; Louis XV is in some ways then an ideal king for this age, with his love of secret apartments and garden houses away from court obligations

he hates, and with his string of powerful mistresses. However, so much indulgence and feminine power with a mediocre king ultimately stains the reputation of the monarchy, contributing to growing criticism of France's government.

Neoclassical architecture expresses the response to this, seeking to undo Rococo's secrecy and duality, the Enlightenment's renewed standard of personal transparency that is ideally required of all people, not just those in power. Marie Antoinette's personality, however, is neither amenable to this standard nor to traditions of court publicity, and her own architectural follies reveal a desire to close off the outside world, sometimes literally. Nevertheless, with libertine culture having changed the reputation of the ruling class, Marie Antoinette's privacy is interpreted as selfish, and though neither politically agressive or sexually promiscuous, speculations of her power and sexual appetite are enough to justify her loss of respect, and eventually, her execution during the French Revolution. She loses her right to rule because she, along with the rest of the court, are seen as too banal to hold such power. Therefore, the privacy and secrecy of the aristocratic domestic interior, breached by the speculations of libertinism and rejected by Enlightenment transparency, offers an outlet for their full personalities without compromising public appearance.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS STORY EMERGES from an interest in secrecy and the domestic interior, questioning to what extent privacy and even concealment are principal programmes of the home. Philosopher and scholar Sissela Bok defines secrecy as intentional concealment from others, while privacy is the protection from unwanted access by others.[1] One should keep in mind that they are not necessarily the same thing, although according to Bok, secrecy and privacy overlap "most immediately in the private lives of individuals, where secrecy guards against unwanted access by others—against their coming too near, learning too much, observing too closely. Secrecy guards, then, the central aspects of *identity*, and if necessary, also *plans* and *property*."[2] Indeed, privacy (which secrecy sometimes reinforces) is frequently imagined in territorial terms,[3] bringing to mind the combined importance of the home's privacy and territoriality, where we have greater freedom of action than in public. But if our homes must offer us privacy and secrecy when necessary, does that not presume outside forces that threaten invasion? What is it about this public realm that not only compels us to confine certain behaviour to the private, but also risks violating that privacy?

Home as a *concept* of the private, comfortable space for family and individual life is articulated with the rise of wealth, materialism, and the middle class in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, the late Baroque age;[4] perhaps this era can also offer clues about the wider, collective world from which the home protects. And no-one better imagines more presciently or evocatively the Modern world born during the late Baroque than the Venetian-born Roman architect and illustrator Giambattista Piranesi, whose vast,

1. Bok, *Secrets*, 5–6, 10–11.
2. Ibid., 13. My italics.
3. Ibid., 11.
4. See for instance Witold Rybczynski's *Home: A Short History of an Idea.*

sublime interiors of the *Carceri* prints, or his *Campo Marzio* project's map of an Imperial Rome dense with enormous Classical architecture, are all too accurate speculations on the eventual shape of the world just emerging in his own mid-eighteenth century.

As is well known, Piranesi's visions are of infinite constructions and unfathomably endless spaces. In spite of the implied rational order, the *Carceri*'s ordinances are unknowable, the oblique perspectives denying our understanding of these buildings, whose scale and fragmented openness are inspired by Roman ruins; unpartitioned space is nevertheless obscured by the accumulation of piers and beams in the background. Dramatic light comes from hidden sources, perhaps skylights and clerestories we are not shown, and there is no view out of these interiors, only views to the next spaces, variations on their neighbours. There does not seem to be a firm ground, with floor-level grates and windows implying levels beneath us, and foreground stairs continuing to descend out of the image frame. We are surrounded by the same, deeply-shadowed construction, not quite claustrophobic since there is always a way beyond, always the promise of *somewhere else*, but no less terrifying, as the ropes, vaguely-sensed torture devices, and mysterious, emaciated figures emphasize. Meanwhile, the *Campo Marzio* multiplies the cheek-by-jowl crowding of the Imperial Forum's monumental courtyards, basilicæ, and temples to create a city-wide continuity of plans, interlinked in spite of their individual designs. Rome becomes an entire geography disciplined by competing geometries that are nevertheless much alike; the eye wanders over regiments of columns and strange, symmetrical spaces, just as we would wander in such a city from building to building, the unique orientation of each disorienting us overall. Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* is a labyrinth with no centre and no way out, like a single building comprised of all the variety of an inescapable empire.

In its vast interiority, Piranesian space is both possibility and oppression. We never see who builds here; people are no longer the masters of rational order, but are instead at the behest of it. We are left in this world to delight in its surprises, wander through it with awe, or suffer its tortures; we have no option but to submit.

Piranesi's spatiality is the spatiality of modernity, of the successfully justified extension of rational order to encompass, in various forms, every thing and every place modernity reaches; it is the truth of science and the

popularity of Western culture; the natural law of Capitalism and the haunting spectre of Communism; the surveillance camera, the Cartesian grid, the colony. Piranesi's vision is of an actual endless construction, not simply appearing so from one vantage point, not limiting its gargantuan accretions to a single city, but blanketing the world of its own internal necessity, unstoppably, inescapably. Piranesi leaves Venice—the floating offshore human invention, staring overseas more than to its own hinterland, whose incalculable wealth from trade and manufacture is tenuously captured in the gold, glass and marble moulded into Byzantine churches and spun into Gothic mansions, producing the precedent Modern metropolis, a teeming, creative, congested, deracinated, kaleidoscopic city reflected in shimmering lagoon waters—Piranesi leaves Venice to go to Rome, but unlike the young men on their Grand Tours, he does not find there the past, but instead, he finds the future. Piranesi looks to the last great age of European prosperity and order, the Roman Empire, to see what his own civilization is about to attain and surpass, to see a model of reason—or the approximation of reason, rationalization—exploded to the scale of the world. The recovery of the Empire, the long-hoped for dream, is finally at hand with an eruption of knowledge and strength, and Piranesi looks to the thickly skeletal ruins of Rome and the interiorized monumentality of the Foræ to see what form this new empire will take; marrying these precedents to his own experience of the Venetian ephemeral, he gives us visions of a new nature, of unconscionably claustrophobic grandeur, of Modernity as sublime enclosure.

As successful and even useful as it is, this total, blanketing order (or series of related orders) is unable to completely satisfy individual needs. Every system employs exclusion in order to eliminate that which might contradict or oppose it (that which is rational, after all, must be correct and absolute); the problem with the world's complete fold into the Modern interiority, however, is that exclusion becomes impossible, for modernity must therefore include *everything*. This is especially true for the individual who, with any manner of peculiarities and desires, seldom perfectly conforms to the surrounding ideals. As one option, these rogue characteristics must somehow be exorcised from the individual if the collective order all around is to justify its definitiveness; the other option lies in the individual finding a place out of the collective's view where full individuality may be expressed. Piranesi hints at this, too, when we see in the corners and interstices of his

vast spaces even further interiors, deeper, by necessity smaller territories defined as enclosures within the larger rationalized order, where, we might hope, the surrounding tortures and jurisdictions could be suspended.[5]

The late Baroque develops much in the way towards the modernity Piranesi represents, and the centralization of France under an absolutist monarchy is one of them. Does any building from this era come closer to the sublime scale and control of Piranesi than the Palace of Versailles? Behind its enormous, monotonous elevations, the building is like a giant matrix holding individual rooms and apartments of different generations that nevertheless are all in one way or another directed to the same goal—the power of the king. Absolutism not only offers a crucial early model for Modern rationalized order, but also offers early lessons in the threats such an order places to individual freedom and development, no matter how much this order is intended to liberate its subjects; for in spite of the privilege and power of French courtiers—a tiny group compared to the population of France—absolutism proves to oppress them in deeply-felt ways, prompting significant efforts to recover their individuality. At the same time, Versailles is the house of the king, three kings; Louis XIV who confidently builds it, Louis XV who unhappily inherits it, and Louis XVI, whose queen, Marie Antoinette, unsuccessfully tries to escape it. Versailles's rationalized order then focuses most heavily on its monarchs, prompting attempts to find privacy. So too do their courtiers create private spaces in their own houses in and around Paris, desiring as they do relief from social pressures, leading to some fascinatingly inventive results in the midst of a dualistic culture of display and concealment. Realized with the sizable resources available to its actors, these private and even secretive architectures leave us ample evidence to study how these men and women develop—in often eroticized domestic spaces serving the most intimate needs—very Modern personal freedoms.

This is a story about architecture, but it is also a story told *with* architecture, for if privacy is often territorialized, than it is quite often manifest spatially. It is also a story told with literature, theory, painting and image, as well as the stories of the monarchs and aristocrats, mistresses and lovers, *parvenus* and politicians who build and use these spaces. This is the story about the idea of personal autonomy told through architecture, but with far wider implications.

5. Of course, they could also be intensified …

CHAPTER ONE:

Sun

"Those people are gravely mistaken who imagine that all this is mere ceremony."

—Louis XIV[1]

NAMED FOR ITS TWO DISTINCTIVE bull's-eye clerestory dormers penetrating the ceiling vault—one a real window, the other a mirror—the Salon de l'Œil de Bœuf at Versailles is equally renowned for the festive children dancing and playing in the frieze above the wall cornice. (*1-1*) Their gilded mirth appears all the more cheerful early in the morning, when sunlight streams into this large antechamber through two tall windows at the far end, right next to the door around which the elite of the elite, the most favoured members of the court, tensely gather every day. These men and women are waiting for their *entrées*, when a scratch at the door will admit them to the room beyond, the door closing behind them one by one. Inside, they will participate in the most important daily ritual of French politics. To attend this ceremony is the highest and most sought-after honour of the court, though for those who have earned this prestige, attendance is also an obligation. Thus the assembling courtiers may be excited, or apprehensive, or both, though tedium might also be in the air, no matter how bright the golden moppets overhead. For in the room beyond is Louis XIV; it is his bedroom, and inside, the courtiers will watch and perform the *lever*, the rising of the king.

When, at eight o'clock, the king is awakened by the *valet de chambre* who sleeps at the foot of his bed and the pages take their positions, the first to enter are his chief physician, chief surgeon and his childhood nurse. They enter a room even more aglow with gilding and sunlight than the Œil de Bœuf (*1-2*). These three first supplicants are allowed beyond the gilded railing to the royal bed, a tall rectangular box of drapery, all gold and red in the winter, gold and silver in the summer, crowned with four cups spouting large, pure white

1-1 Pierre Lepautre, Salon de l'Œil de Bœuf, Versailles, 1701.

1. Louis XIV, *Memoirs*, 2:15. Quoted in Elias, *The Court Society,* 117.

1-2 Pierre Lepautre (?), King's Bedroom, Versailles, 1701.

feathers. Louis XIV's nurse kisses him while the doctors rub and, if necessary, change his nightshirt. The grand chamberlain is then called to admit to the royal bedroom the *entrée familière*, Louis XIV's legitimate children, illegitimate children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. With this immediate family enter the Princes of the Blood—the Orléans and Condés and Contis and all the families who, cousins of the Bourbons, are at the peak of the French nobility. They are closely followed by the *grande entrée*, the all-important noble officers of the king's bedchamber and wardrobe; once here, the tall bedcurtains are drawn and the king is presented with holy water and a prayer book for a short religious service. The king will then rise from bed to be shown his robe when the *première entrée*, readers and intendants, must next be called in. The following *entrée*, the *entrée de la chambre*—officers of the bedchamber, the grand almoner, ministers and secretaries of state, counsellors, officers of the bodyguard, some of the most important men in the land, both nobles and bourgeois, responsible for the functioning of the royal household and

of the French state—may enter only after the king slips on his shoes. Those courtiers favoured enough to be admitted to the fifth *entrée* begin at last to enter as the king puts on his robe, the right sleeve of his nightshirt pulled by the master of the wardrobe, the left by the first servant of the wardrobe. The grand chamberlain or one of the king's sons will bring the dayshirt, whose right sleeve is held for its royal wearer by the first valet, the left sleeve, yet again, the purview of the first servant of the wardrobe.[2]

At the *lever*, the private and public life of the king are compounded; the mundane needs of Louis XIV the man and the ceremonial grandeur of Louis XIV the sovereign are one and the same. In observing the first moments of the king's day, the courtiers are affirmed as members of a large household saluting the *paterfamilias* and being acknowledged in return, while the ruler's choreographed *toilette*, its individual roles determined through finely delineated hierarchies, make royal servants out of the nobility. But additionally it is sacred; as Louis XIV dons his coat and dagger belt, conversing with some and announcing the day's agenda to all, and as the bedroom continues to fill with those admitted to the fifth *entrée* one by one, attendants gently reproach anyone who might touch the railing that preserves the sanctuary around the bed; so exclusive is the space behind the railing that the sixth and most favoured *entrée*, reserved for the king's offspring and their families and certain other important officials, need not enter through the doors from the Œil de Bœuf like the rest, but may slip in at any time through doors to the bed alcove concealed behind curtains called *portières*; one's physical proximity to the king corresponds to rank, to one's social proximity to the king. The other courtiers must therefore regard this railing as though they are at church, and indeed now and for the whole day ladies curtsey as they pass the bed, contributing to the unmistakable resemblance of this bedroom to a theatre, and especially a chapel;[3] the draped and tasseled bed valence is like a baldachin, the bed itself, on the axis of the vaulted space's three arched windows, an altar.

King Louis XIV's golden bed in its golden room is the very centre of Versailles. From this place rooms unfold along intersecting axes of *enfilades*, the strings of rooms organizing the centre of the *château*, while the vast roads to the east and garden walks to the west have the bed as their origin and destination. There are no ends to the axes of Versailles; the long galleries of the north and south wings connecting the

2. For this account of the *lever*, I have relied on Elias, *The Court Society*, 83–84; Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:30–31; van der Kemp, *Versailles*, 78.

3. Nolhac, *Versailles and the Trianons*, 59; Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 115.

courtiers' apartments do not conclude climactically; the roads and gardens disappear somewhere on the horizons at the infinite limits of perspective. There are no ends to Versailles, only a centre, the King's Bedroom; equally, there are no ends to the French state, only a centre, the king himself. Louis XIV is, of course, *le Roi Soleil*, the Sun King, who achieves in his reign the greatest masterpiece of Baroque politics: absolutism, the Copernican state revolving around the near-deified monarch whose genius extends to the ends of the realm and whose glory draws all to him. The mediæval lord is now at a modern scale and sophistication. Louis XIV rules without a prime minister; all decisions rest on him; political and personal will are one. Thus the *lever* assembles the court around a morning routine with cosmic necessity, a *toilette* celebrating the rising of the sun in a bedroom that becomes an august solar temple with a bed that is the holy sanctum of the sovereign body.

After exchanging the short wig he wears during the *lever* for a larger one, the king prays once more, and then perhaps takes a breakfast of broth as courtiers petition him with particular requests, remaining standing while he sits. If the king chooses to complete this part of his *lever* in the Council Chambre beyond the bedroom, the courtiers follow him like a centre of gravity. At the end of the *lever*, the king passes from the Council Chambre to the enormous Galerie des Glaces (Hall of Mirrors; *1-3*), its tall reflecting glasses doubling the endless perspectives of André Le Nôtre's garden seen through the long row of windows, the hall filled with the rest of the court anticipating the king's passage and inspection, when they might have an opportunity to approach him on his way to the Chapel for mass.

The sun is risen. The day will now begin.

1-3 Jules Hardoin-Mansart, Galerie des Glaces (Hall of Mirrors), Versailles,begun 1678.

Bearing a crucial social and political programme, the ruler's house is not a home.[4] As a fortification and as an arena for formal display, the house of the noble or monarch assists in upholding the inhabitant's political legitimacy, the right to rule. And yet it is also a residence, where what we recognize as domestic requirements—convivial and intimate activities, the need for comfort and pleasure—also find fulfillment, but in interiors that must offer strong military defence, be open to the public and accommodate ceremony. As magnificence and representation become more important to political life, and the architecture and furnishings of castles and palaces are more refined, the relationship between the public and

4. Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 84.

private lives of their masters grows more complex. It is in France in particular—with its centuries-long wavering between centralization and decentralization, monarchs and feudal lords, producing a culture especially adept at expressing "unification and differentiation distinctly", but also harmoniously[5]—where manifestations of the public and private lives of the ruling class are especially articulate, and no more so than with the bed.

By the late fourteenth century, the tradition of the state bedroom is already well-established in France. Variously called the *chambre de parer*, *chambre de parrement*, or *chambre d'apparat*, the bedroom as formal space results from the constrained amenities of the mediæval castle, where the largest room of a master or mistress's private suite shelters in one space sleeping, living and working uses, and the reception functions where the occupant "holds state."[6] In the nomadic aristocratic household (the feudal court rotates between several houses, carrying most furnishings with them)[7], the bed is one of the largest items compared to the other portable fabrics and objects. The presence of the bed is augmented by the ceiling-suspended bedhangings[8] which, to keep the sleeper warm, make a small room within the larger bedroom. This architecturalization of furniture is complete with the subsequent introduction of bed frames to support valences, curtains, and the ceilour or tester (the bed's "roof")[9], the bed now becoming a permanent fixture in the room,[10] its size and elegant drapery consciously employed to impress visitors.

If the state bed is monumental in scale and treatment, it is also monumental in association, for this is the space of the lord or lady's body. In the feudal order, one is a ruler not only in action, but in one's life and person; thus the noble (literally) embodies his or her power, power that is usually inherited and must be passed on. Consequently, many of the ruler's intimacies set in the bedroom are crucial to dynastic permanence, the importance of these intimacies then becoming political, and even historical.[11] Thus the state bed is significantly enough the place where the sovereign body sleeps every night[12], but it is also the place where the heir is conceived and born, where marriage is consummated, illness and injury heal, and ultimately, where death ends one reign and begins another. The bed—largest, sturdiest, most protective of all furnishings—is a symbol of constancy, of the daily and generational cycles whose renewal preserve order against vicissitude.

1-4 French bed of 1680.

5. Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, 127.

6. *Parer*, *parrement*, and *apparat*, all roughly translating as "pomp" or "ceremony", are also related to *apparence*, literally, "appearance". Girouard, *Life in the French Country House*, 53–54; Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ..., 57.

7. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ..., 4, 97.

8. Ibid., 153.

9. Ibid., 149.

10. Ibid., 154.

11. Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 105.

12. When Louis XVI—well into the late eighteenth century—tours the port of Harcourt and demonstrates genuine interest in local technologies, townspeople kiss the royal bedsheets out of gratitude upon his departure. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 419.

1-5 A German prince lies in state in a formal French bed.

The state bed adopts one additional function in the noble *château*; it is the grand bed given up to the monarch's use during royal visits. Not just another reason to maintain a magnificent bedroom, in those countries where monarchic-aristocratic fealty are established, the state bed is also emblematic of those mutually respected powers. If the state bed represents the aristocratic body which may or may not be present at any given moment, in a kingdom's province it also represents the distant monarchic body whose authority is nevertheless much higher, and on whom the local lordship depends. Indeed, the state bed brings to mind the King's Two Bodies, which Ernst H. Kantorowicz examines through sixteenth-century English jurisprudence. In the theory of the King's Two Bodies, the monarch possesses both a "Body natural," the physical, defective, mortal body, and a "Body politic," [*sic*] the metaphysical body as permanent as the state, transfered to the new king upon the death of his predecessor.[13] This legal innovation points to the ruler's duality, both mundane and sublime. (Even though Kantorowicz is careful to state that the King's Two Bodies is a fact of English law with no direct parallel in continental Europe,[14] it nevertheless is not entirely inapplicable to French royal and noble formal traditions.) Thus the state bed, uninhabited at any given moment by the king's body natural, could be said to *always* be inhabited by the king's body politic, so long as the nation's continued sovereignty is honoured by the local noble. The noble's closeness to the king's body---physical or metaphysical---is then for him or her a matter of political authority, but also a matter of prestige. To bring the visitor into the state bedroom presents this emblem of power for exhibition; to be granted an audience in the state bedroom is a mark of esteem not only as a gesture of personal confidence, but also since its implies regard for the visitor's assessment of the host's authenticity.

The formal bed in France coalesces in the early 1600s into what is called abroad the French bed, and at home the *lit carré* (square bed; *1-4*, *1-5*).[15] Unlike other European beds of this era that are often crowned with elaborate wood cornices—recognizing the bed's full maturity as an architecture—the *lit carré* is topped only by the cloth valence, and frequently adorned with egret or ostrich feather-bearing cups at the corners. From behind the outer valence the curtains hang straight down; matching fabric cantoons conceal the wood posts, and the counterpoint (bedspread) overlaps another valence at the sides concealing the feet. The *lit carré*'s frame is

13. Edmund Plowden, *Commentaries or Reports*, London, 1816, 212a. Quoted in Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 7.

14. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 7.

15. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* …, 160–61.

So common is the *lit carré* in France that eventually to refer to "*un lit*" is to refer to no other kind. Ibid, 165.

typically plain, so completely is it concealed by stiffly-posed fabric. Taught and orthogonal, the bed textiles not only co-ordinate with each-other, but with the space around the bed or even the entire room; in concert with the seventeenth-century taste for *régularité* (regularity) and unified interiors, the space may be lined with matching wall fabric and tapestries, traditionally noble possessions.[16] In covering the structure, fabric is pressed into the role of architecture; architecture is paradoxically softened by "hardened" cloth. The state bedroom's comfort is therefore largely representational, or rather, symbolic capacity overtakes comfort.

At the same time that the French bed spreads across Europe, so do its counterparts, the so-called French chairs, upholstered and sometimes with curved backs.[16] If the *lit carré* straightens and flattens fabric to accommodate the idealized body, then its makers are equally adept at arching and curving wood to accommodate the real body. Such compensating comfort is matched with compensating privacy in architecture, beginning with the *ruelle*, the semi-enclosed space between the bed and the wall that is with time associated with intimate conversation.[17] With the first *chambres d'apparat* appear the inner *chambres de retrait*,[18] sometimes for occasional use and sometimes as the "real" bedroom, leaving the state bedroom for show; its name implies the regular need to pull away from ceremonial life with the self-preservation of an army recoiling from battle. We also know of the sixteenth-century *donjon* (keep), the small, exclusive *cabinet* or office in the top floor of a *château* corner tower, and the *estude*, a private room located deep within the house, reserved for the master who possesses the only key, an unseen room eventually regarded as the "soul" of the house.[19] Such private rooms are always located deep in the plans, beyond the main rooms. In the communal pre-modern lifestyle,[20] and without the distinction of circulation from destination spaces, the room-on-room planning of the *enfilade* is the default arrangement. Any room in an *enfilade* must then remain accessible as a passage, making it all the more suitable as a space of display, but creating all the more need for opaque spaces outside the *enfilade*'s transparency.

This duality of reception and retreat moves to the city with the *hôtel*, the noble's urban mansion, born as a type by the sixteenth century when François I makes Paris his capital. The court increasingly congregates in urban settings,[21] where the noble constantly hosts peers and business associates, and where the standards of display in

1-6 Seventeenth-century French chair, with curved, upholstered back and armrests.

16. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ..., 97, 103–04.

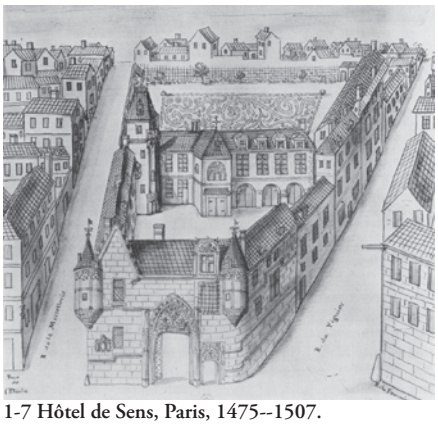
17. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ..., 198.

18. "Retreat bedrooms." Girouard, *Life in the French Country House*, 53-54.

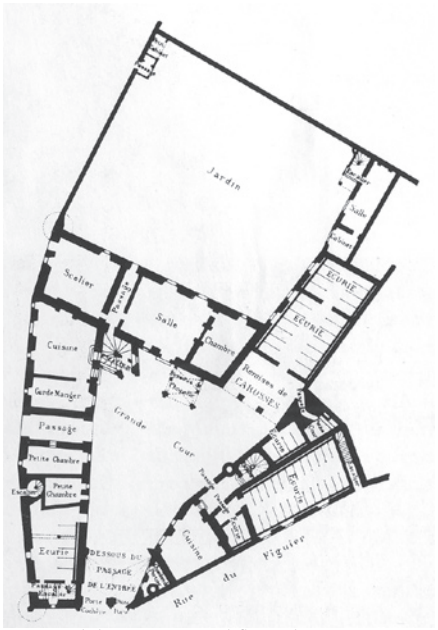
19. Ibid., 83, 115.

20. Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building* ..., 64–65.

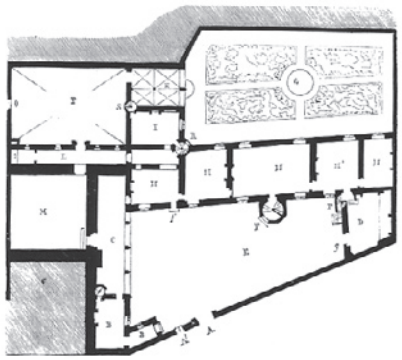
21. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 29, 31.



1-7 Hôtel de Sens, Paris, 1475--1507.



1-8 Hôtel de Sens. Ground floor plan.



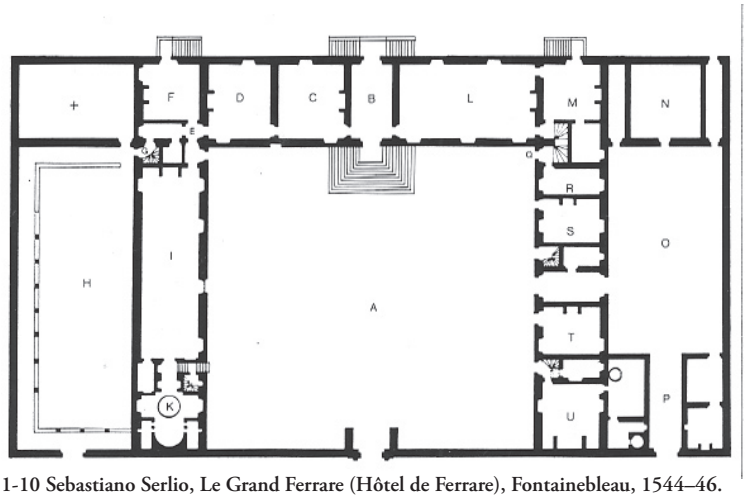
1-9 Hôtel de Cluny, Paris, 1485–1510. Ground floor plan.

such a large social congregation sharpen. The *hôtel*'s central *corps de logis*[22] separates the communal, semi-public entrance court (itself screened from the street by a gated wall) from a quieter rear garden, and the separation of side wings with their kitchens, service lodgings and stables, often wrapped around their own courtyards, establish a planning logic of primary and secondary, front and back, within the *corps de logis*'s *enfilade* and without it. At the Hôtel de Sens (*1-7*, *1-8*), corbelled corner turrets, like a rural *château*'s *donjon*, project out from the building to suspend its carefully held contents over the street traffic below, while the plan reveals enticing little rooms, one with an attendant *cabinet* and staircase, tucked into corners of the garden. The Hôtel de Cluny (*1-9*) also offers a small room overlooking the garden with two adjacent spiral staircases, filtered from the *corps de logis*'s axially-aligned doors and double-exposed rooms by a small passage. If Le Grand Ferrare (*1-10*, *1-11*), the *hôtel* built in Fontainebleau for Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, Cardinal of Ferrara, in the mid 1540s by Sebastiano Serlio, can be seen as a Renaissance clarification of the *hôtel* type, then the *cabinets* and bedrooms in the corners out of the way of the *enfilade* affirm that retreats are integral to the French house (whether or not built for an Italian cardinal). Le Grand Ferrare is strikingly clear and rational, no doubt by virtue of its Italian architect and client. Italian domestic spaces, after all, are disengaged from their functions to a degree that permits architectural abstraction and idealization; this rigour helps draw French architects to adopting Renaissance classicism, but appears almost plain next to the figural articulations of local mediæval precedents.

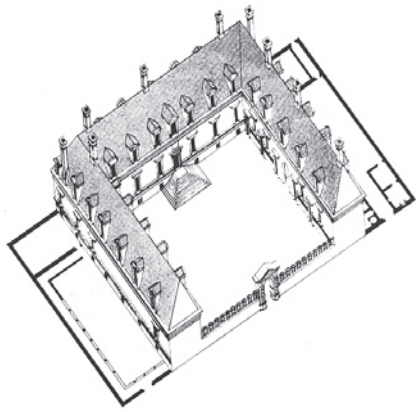
It takes another Italian import, Catherine de Vivonne, marquise de Rambouillet, to set new standards for the *hôtel*'s private amenities. A Roman noble finding herself in the somewhat rougher society of early seventeenth-century Paris, Madame de Rambouillet becomes the leader of the Précieuses, whose headquarters for their well-honed language, literature, and polite conduct is her house, the Hôtel de Rambouillet (*1-12*, *1-13*). The profession of architecture is as of yet young and small in France, so that many houses are still the designs of their owners who are free from theoretical responsibilities; the marquise herself, dissatisfied with her architect's design, proceeds with her own planning and decoration.[23] The marquise moves the grand staircase from the central room to the side wing, insisting on the importance of opening the *enfilade* axially across the whole length of the site.[24]

22. Literally, "body of lodging"; it is the central mass of primary rooms arranged in *enfilade*.

23. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 53.

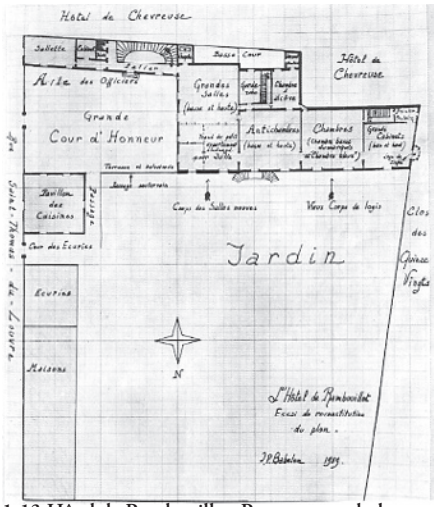


1-10 Sebastiano Serlio, Le Grand Ferrare (Hôtel de Ferrare), Fontainebleau, 1544–46. Ground plan.



1-11 Le Grand Ferrare. Axonometric reconstruction.

1-12 Marquise de Rambouillet, Hôtel de Rambouillet, Paris, 1630s–40s (?). Reconstructed view.



1-13 Hôtel de Rambouillet. Reconstructed plan.

Meanwhile, she decorates her famous salon and reception space, the Chambre Bleue (Blue Bedroom), completely in its eponymous colour, where, surrounded by such monochromy, the cultured elite of Paris practice *honnêteté*—the aristocratic philosophy of fidelity, politeness, and self-composure.[25] Equally influential is the marquise's former wardrobe, which she appropriates as a small *chambre à alcôve*(bedroom with alcove), and the floor-length French window might be her innovation as well.[26] Madame de Rambouillet apparently suffers from the cold,[27] necessitating a generosity of light and small, easily-heated spaces, but we can also imagine the busy hostess seeking at times to draw away from her company. The marquise simultaneously masters popularity and intimacy, an urge shared by the Précieuses with their sentimental novels that broadcast characters' emotions, and whose theories of comportment are said to originate from

24. Babelon, *Demeures parisiennes*, 187, 189–90; Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 69.

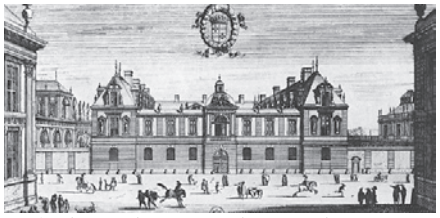
25. Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, 2:174; Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ..., 8.

26. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 69; Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ..., 80–81.

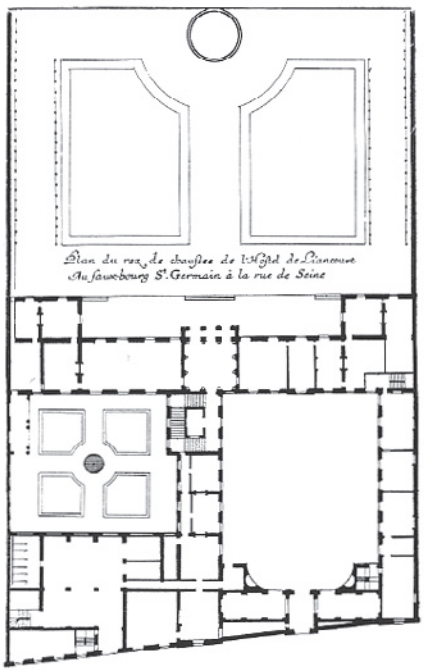
27. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ..., 8.

the cozy conversations of the *ruelle*.[28] Thus the *chambre à alcôve* de Rambouillet builds for her own needs becomes so widely fashionable that by the 1640s, ladies no longer sleep in their state beds,[29] and the marquise's Loge de Zirphée—a legendary and exclusive little room, half-hexagonal with windows on three sides, as inside/outside as a *donjon*, inhabited by sitting stools and Venetian vases, where worthies are brought for their gossip and admiration—is as publicly private as its owner.

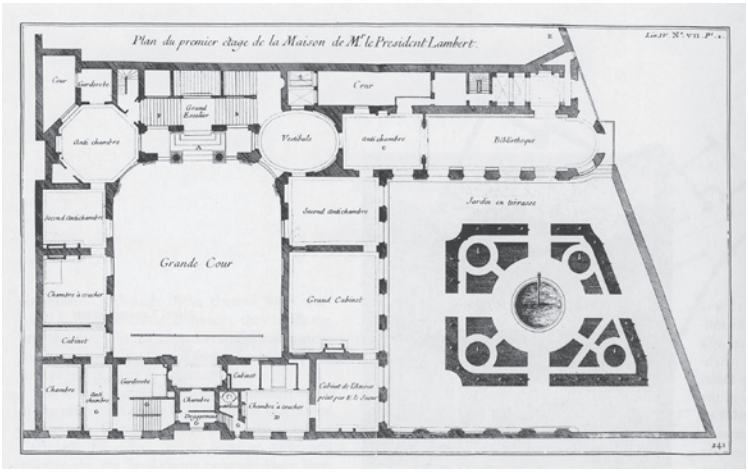
As their clients grow more sophisticated, so do architects in accommodating the *hôtel*'s public[30] and private needs. At Salomon de Brosse and Jacques Lemercier's Hôtel de Liancourt (*1-14*, *1-15*), the impressively articulated vestibule resolves the *corps de logis* with the unaligned courtyard and garden axes. Also, sibling apartments—one each for the master and mistress—extend to the garden with small bedrooms and *cabinets*, safely beyond the *corps de logis*'s grand axis. Meanwhile, Louis Le Vau arranges the diversely-shaped grand rooms of the Hôtel Lambert (*1-16*) along two perpendicular *enfilades* overlooking the Seine from its Île Saint-Louis site, taking advantage of the leftover corners (the plan's *poché*) for light wells, wardrobes, stairs, and a chapel. This *hôtel*'s specially-decorated Cabinet de l'Amour (Cabinet of Love) is, like the Loge de Zirphée, an example of the fashion for remarkably decorated inner *cabinets*; meanwhile, a cluster of intimate rooms ends the circulatory sequence directly over the main gate where the sequence begins. François Mansart's Hôtel de Jars (*1-19*) is one of the first examples of the double-*enfilade corps de logis* with single-orientation rooms, where the longitudinal demising wall separates the entrance from the *appartement d'apparat*, but also the formal spaces from the smaller *cabinets*. With Pierre Le Muet's Hôtel d'Avaux (*1-17*, *1-18*), the winter



1-14 Salomon de Brosse and Jacques de Lemercier, Hôtel de Liancourt, Paris, ca. 1610–23. Street elevation enclosing the entrance court.



1-15 Hôtel de Liancourt. Ground floor plan.



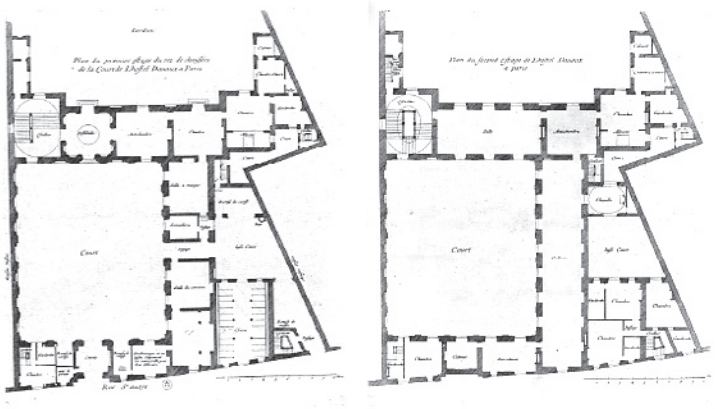
1-16 Louis Le Vau, Hôtel Lambert, Paris, 1642--44.Terrace level plan.

28. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 69.

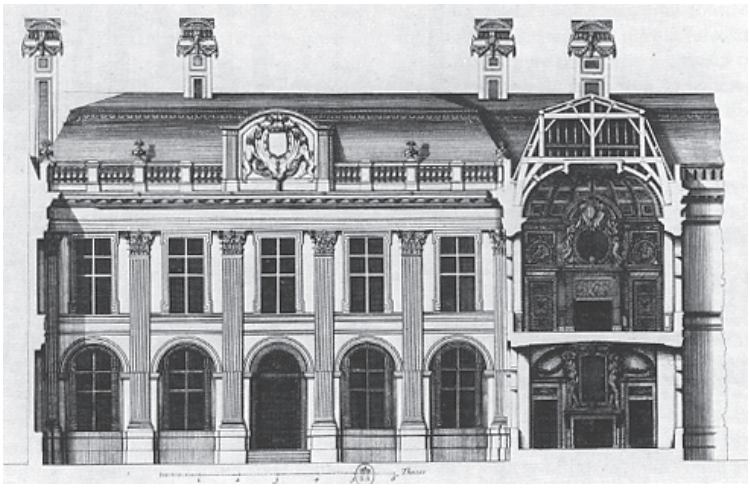
29. Ibid.

30. We should think of the noble house's formal rooms as public; some house owners charge admission to the large numbers of the general public who wish to see the interior. Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 282.

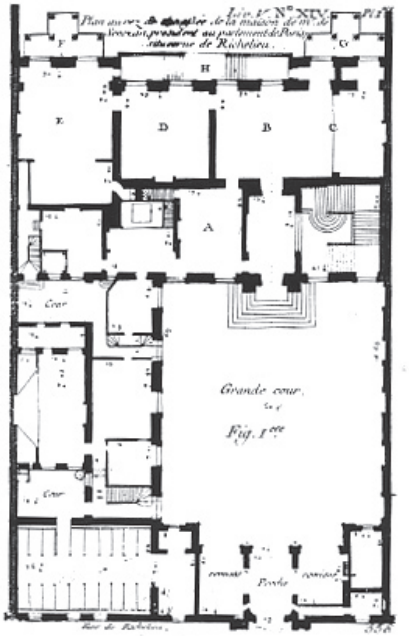
bedrooms and wardrobes of the superimposed master and mistress's apartments (connected by a tiny *escalier dérobé*, or concealed stair) only *appear* to project freely into the garden, as they in fact press against impenetrable perimeter walls to fill out the awkward site's corners. At Antoine Le Pautre's introspective Hôtel de Beauvais (*1-20–1-23*), too, a labyrinth of light wells, service passageways, stairs, bathrooms, small bedrooms—even a surprising hanging garden—jostle about the edges of the confined property, in marked contrast to the strongly axial figures and Baroque sequences of its formal spaces. The architect tucks the private world of the *hôtel* behind and around the ceremonial rooms that are



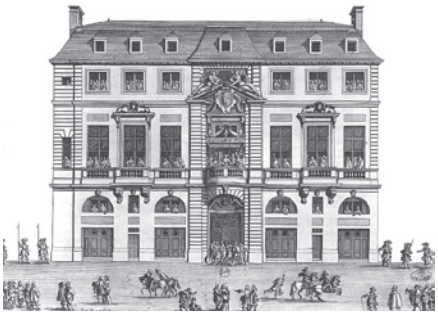
1-17 Pierre Le Muet, Hôtel d'Avaux, Paris, 1640. Ground floor (left) and first floor (right) plans.



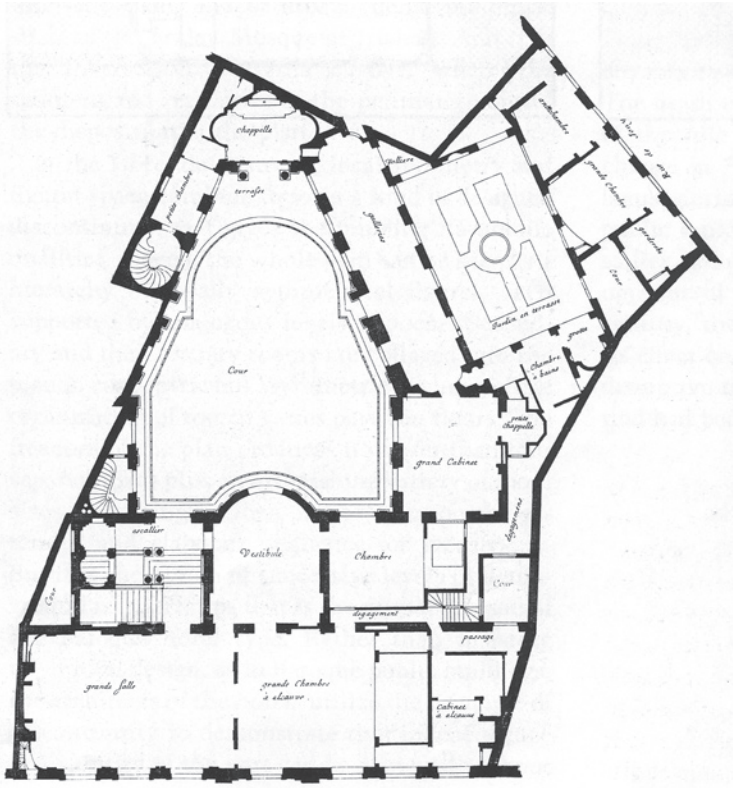
1-18 Hôtel d'Avaux. Court elevation and section through gallery.



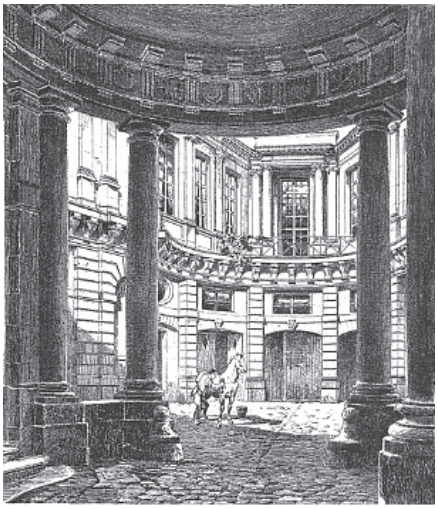
1-19 François Mansart, Hôtel de Jars, Paris, begun 1648. Ground floor plan.



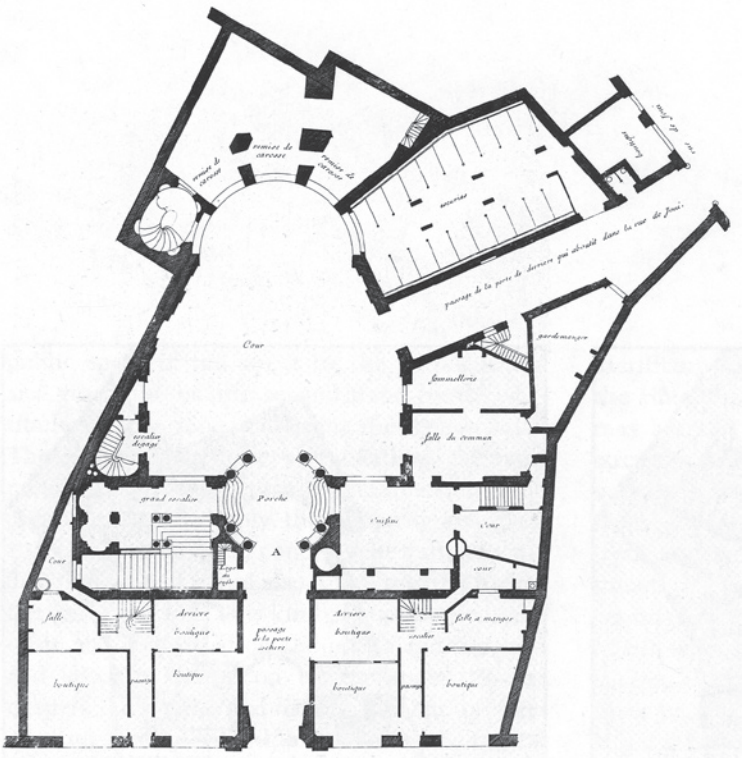
1-20 Antoine Le Pautre, Hôtel de Beauvais, Paris, 1652--55. Street elevation.



1-21 Hôtel de Beauvais. First floor plan.



1-23 Hôtel de Beauvais. View through entrance vestibule..



1-22Hôtel de Beauvais. Ground floor plan.

devoted to the comings-and-goings of urban court society; a compensatory deeper interiority is needed when much of the house becomes an extension of the exterior public realm.

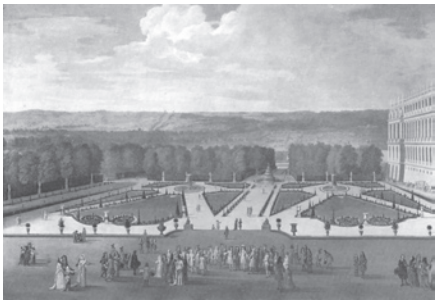
Though political space and responsibilities are the dominant concerns of the Baroque *hôtels*, the increase in the importance of outward representation is balanced by improvements in comfort and habitability. This balance corresponds to an era where the nobility's power and prestige is still largely conceived of along traditional lines; while increasingly dependent upon display and behaviour for their high regard, the aristocracy still, in theory, bears much of the responsibilities of government, defense, and land stewardship (the last of which is alluded to by the *hôtel*'s garden, not only an urban luxury), their rights and privileges as the Second Estate still safeguarded by the traditional laws of France. These traditions, however, are under considerable strain with the growth of capitalism and centralized government, a strain which the nobility is certainly conscious of as it competitively exhibits the achievements of its ancestors in picture galleries, and adopts an ever more civilized style of demeanour as proof of individual worth. At last, tensions under the centralizing policies of Cardinal Richelieu and his successor as prime minister, Cardinal Mazarin, erupt in the popular uprising in 1648 that becomes the Fronde civil war. Anger is not only directed at the Italian prime minister of France, but also the queen regent, Anne of Austria, and her son, Louis XIV (*1-24*), who in spite of his young age (he is ten years old when the Fronde begins) is very nearly personally attacked: Responding to rumours that Anne is preparing to flee Paris with the sovereign, a furious mob demands to see the boy-king in bed at the Palais Royal in the dark hours of the morning. The dowager queen can only respond by letting them in, and the crowd soon fills the royal bedroom. They open the bed curtains to find Louis XIV indeed asleep (or at least, pretending), his reassuring presence *now* prompting cries of fealty and love for the king.[31] In claiming its absolutely undeniable right to view the sovereign's public body, the people teach the king that the exposure required of him is frighteningly dangerous, but extraordinarily powerful. It is a lesson he never forgets.

The Fronde ends a few years later due to the aristocracy's disorganization. From then on, the king consolidates his power and dominates the nobility; this project leads to the transformation of Versailles from hunting *château* to palace, isolating the court from cities and provinces; ruling alone

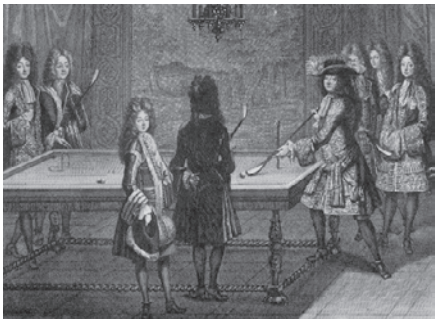
1-24 Louis XIV at age 11.

31. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 50.

1-25 Louis XIV presenting the Order of St. Louis.



1-26 Louis XIV walking through Versailles's gardens with his court.



1-27 Louis XIV playing billiards.

without a prime minister after Mazarin's death in 1661, Louis XIV not only offers welcome stability after the anarchy of the Fronde, but at the same time keeps the nobility in a perpetual state of instability, a condition of tension centered around the king's actions. Thus the concentration of state power in his hands assures that the ruling class will assemble to seek and await his decisions, while the astounding, fifteen-year-long construction project that is Versailles no doubt sustains widespread fascination for the long-awaited outcome. The aristocracy, whose estate incomes are less and less able to provide for their expensive lifestyles, must also for financial reasons stay close to the king, who pays the pensions and relieves the debts of loyal courtiers. This dependence is further guaranteed with mandatory, universal, high-stakes gambling at the Appartments, the thrice-weekly evening social gatherings filling Versailles's state apartment.[32] Amplified feudal traditions of display further keep the court on its toes; the impressive magnificence, where all must possess costly wardrobes befitting their roles in glorifying the king, likewise incur much debt—as do the households and servants that must be maintained at Versailles, whether the courtiers lodge in the *château* or in the adjacent town. Louis XIV himself masters and directs with extraordinary self-control the Byzantine system of etiquette that finely delineates mutable hierarchies and royal favour,[33] directing most aristocrats to attempt to perfectly satisfy the king who, as the memoirist, the duc de Saint-Simon tells us, has the power to "distinguish or mortify the courtiers, and thus render them more assiduous in pleasing him."[34] The king thus distracts the nobility from its loss of power with Versailles's enticement and instability, replacing feudal independence with the royal personality as the focus of the nobility's worth and energy; the court's scale and complexity defies comprehension and mitigates resistance. In the words of historian Thomas Carlyle: "Ever since that period of the *Fronde*, the Noble has changed his fighting sword into a court rapier ; and now loyally attends his King as ministering satellite ; divides the spoil, not now by violence and murder, but by soliciting and finesse."[35] Meanwhile, Louis XIV centralizes the French army and thereby minimizes aristocratic military strength, and fills most ministerial posts with the bourgeoisie; now that the nobility is sufficiently occupied, the modernization of France is unhindered.

32. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 224.
33. Bluche, Louis XIV, 487.
34. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 2:365.
35. Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, 1:14. Original italics and punctuation.

Versailles not only demonstrates the power of the absolutist king through its scale and unprecedented willfulness, but also through the theme of vision. Political right is presented visually in the feudal tradition, so an authority over sight is authority over social hierarchies that the aristocracy well understands. At the birth of absolutism under Cardinal Richelieu, his associate Laffemas claims, "We shall wage war with the eye."[36] Hence at Versailles the lavish rooms in the *enfilades* whose transparency is enacted by opening the aligned doors, the heavy multicoloured marble walls in the *grand goût* (grand taste; *1-28*), made all the more oppressive by huge glittering chandeliers suspended overhead; the (solid) silver-framed furniture and acres of costly glass windows and mirrors bouncing the light provided by thousands of equally dear candles; the *trompe-l'œil* paintings by Charles Le Brun everywhere, their visual tricks greeting visitors at the Ambassador's Staircase and Queen's Staircase, and glorifying Louis XIV's victory over the Dutch on the ceiling of the Hall of Mirrors, which itself exaggerates the metaphysics of perspective with its great length and its mirrored bays; and of course, the endless garden axes demonstrating Louis XIV's command of the infinite. With this rule over the visual, whomever the king does not see may as well not exist; if he is asked about a noble who never attends court, the king will dismiss him with, "C'est un homme que je ne vois jamais,"[37] ostracizing the individual. The king expects his nobles to be at court, physical presence a necessary demonstration of loyalty that he verifies visually; "He [Louis XIV] looked to the right and to the left, not only upon rising but upon going to bed, at his meals, in passing through his apartments, or his gardens of Versailles …; he saw and noticed everybody; not one escaped him, not even those who hoped to remain unnoticed."[38] Numerous images of Louis XIV show him looking away from his courtiers towards the viewer(s), as though his eyes momentarily rest on us while surveying his subordinates, drawing us into his circle, a reminder of the omnipresence of the gaze piercing this ruler's cultivated, inscrutable "court mask."[39]

Versailles represents one man's view over a multitude, and the multitude's watching one man; consequently, the subject's individuality is mitigated by the king's, which is continuous with the state. As mentioned above, the king is the spatial as well as thematic centre of Versailles. The gardens whose order is so clear from afar are in fact difficult to grasp at close scale when one is *in* them,[40] their maze-

1-28 Jules Hardouin-Mansart and others, Versailles. The *enfilade* of the *Grand Appartment*.

36. Weiss, *Mirrors of Infinity*, 25.

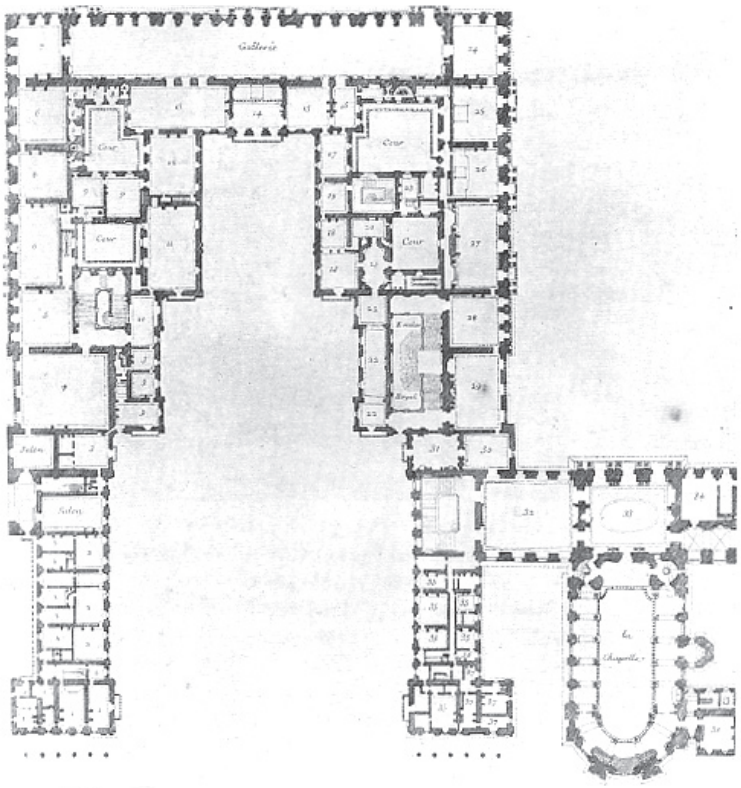
37. "That is a man I never see;" Dunlop, *Versailles*, 55. In another example of the importance of sight in court language, Louis XIV indicates that he will consider his courtiers' requests with, "Nous verrons." ("We will see.") Dunlop, *Versailles*, 92.

38. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 2:366. Even though the king seldom attends the Appartements towards the end of his life, the court is expected to be present. Ibid., 1:34.

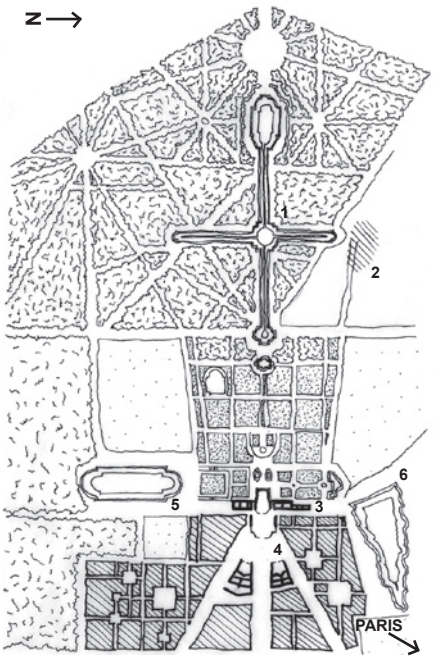
39. Weiss, *Mirrors of Infinity*, 25.

40. Weiss, *Mirrors of Infinity*, 50.

4. Large guard room
5. Queen's guard room
6. Grand Couvert (formal dining room), *grand cabinet*, bedroom, and private rooms (see Chapter 5)
7. Salon de la Paix (Hall of Peace)
10. Hall of the Queen's Marble Staircase
11. King's guard room
12. King's First Antechambre
13. Salon de l'Œil de Bœuf (Bull's-Eye Room)
14. King's Bedroom
15. Council Chambre
16. Cabinet des Peruques (Wig Room)
17. Dogs' Room
18. Jewell Room
20. Library
21. Salon Ovale (Oval Room)
22. King's Little Gallery
24. Salon de la Guerre (Hall of War)
25. Salon d'Apollon (Apollo, throne room)
26. Salon de Mercure (Mercury, state bedroom)
27. Salon de Mars (ballroom)
28. Salon de Diane (Diana, billiards)
29. Salon de Venus
32. Salon d'Hercule (Hercules)
33. Hall of the Chapel



1-29 Versailles. First floor plan of state rooms and chapel, early eighteenth century.



1-30 André Le Nôtre, Gardens of Versailles, begun 1660s. Site plan with palace and town of Versailles.

1. Canals
2. Village of Trianon (see Chapter 2)
3. Palace
4. Palace Stables
5. Swiss Basin
6. Clagny pond

like quality denying comprehension from any but one single, removed point located in the palace, garden visitors becoming little more than elements of a grand composition. The state rooms that would elsewhere be both destinations and passages are at Versailles subordinate to the overall sequence; they are luxurious but individually forgettable antechambers, each largely existing for the previous and next spaces, like the courtier whose only importance is relative to the other courtiers and to the king. The nobles' personalities, so strongly expressed during the Fronde that the revolt fails to cohere,[41] are under Louis XIV diluted along with their aristocratic independence. Now folded into the royal house, the king's environment of political display, and only functional as proof of Louis XIV's all-powerful sovereignty, the nobles also find at Versailles few of the compensations for formality they are now used to. The rooms are large and cold, there is little intimacy, few Cabinets de l'Amour or Loges de Zirphée; life here is one long, exceptional and unrelieved appearance. Versailles is the palace so lacking in private amenity that it is notorious for the excrement and urine found in corners and

41. Michael, Louis XIV, 66.

behind doors—sanitary habits that perhaps come not only out of necessity, Versailles having so few latrines, but are also some of the few remaining avenues of rebellion.

Versailles is also the palace with two formal bedrooms. The King's Bedroom where the *lever* takes place is not, technically, the state bedroom; that is the Salon de Mercure (Mercury Room) in the very public Grand Appartments (Grand Apartments).[42] The golden King's Bedroom is therefore the *chambre à alcôve*, so to speak, the king's "real" bedroom, as though even within the royal palace, the distinction between the king's two bodies is still accomodated, his physical and metaphysical selves acknowledged in accordance with their separate needs. With Louis XIV's uncompromisingly ritualized life, however, this "private" bedroom is more public and ceremonial than probably any state bedroom in France. Versailles's transparency requires sacrifices from the sovereign, too, and his granting the nobility access to his privacy just when they have begun to value their own likely contributes to his myth and success. Remember that the absolutist king's gaze over his subjects is reciprocated; though Louis XIV may have infinitely more power than anyone else, no-one at Versailles is free.

42. Originally, and more logically for the Sun King, the Salon d'Apollon (Apollo Room) is the state bedroom, before the construction of the Escalier des Ambassadeurs (Ambassadors' Staircase) reverses the formal sequence. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* …, 63

CHAPTER TWO:

THE ISLAND OF THE ENCHANTRESS

"I will die of symmetry."

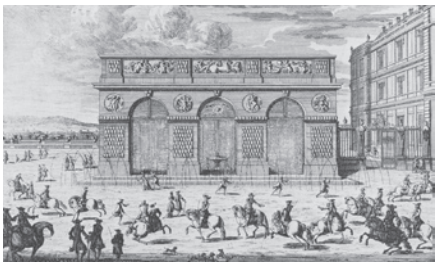
—Marquise de Maintenon[1]

FOR OVER ONE-HUNDRED YEARS, *Bath of Apollo*, the marble sculptural group by François Girardon and Thomas Regnaudin, lies ignored in the gardens of Versailles until 1778 when Hubert Robert builds a picturesque, heavily rusticated grotto specially for the sculptures, where they remain concealed today (*2-1*).[2] The sculputres depict the nightly ablutions administered to the sun god in the underwater palace of the titanness Tethys by six of her nymphs. Apollo represents, of course, Louis XIV, and his pose here is familiar; he is the centre of the composition, his eyes looking away from the devoted group gathered around him, and even his arm, outstretched for its bathing, would seem to be pointing to some far-off accomplishment. Nevertheless, this is an image of the sun at rest; Apollo is distinguished by his recline, in contrast with the active nymphs, and his distant gaze is tired. Even the young and invincible deity needs repose.

2-1 François Girardon and Thomas Regnaudin, *Bath of Apollo*, 1674.

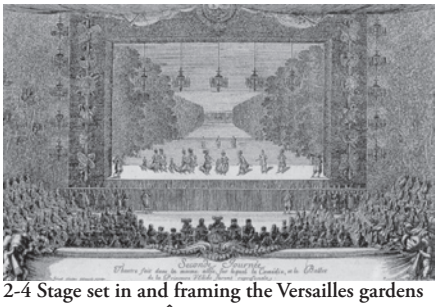
1. Duc de Noailles, *Madame de Maintenon*, 2:186. Quoted in Hautecœur, *Histoire de L'Architecture classique en France* 2:540. My translation.

2. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 182; Van der Kemp, *Versailles*, 206.



2-2 Louis Le Vau, Grotto of Tethys, Versailles, ca. 1674. Exterior view.

2-3 Grotto of Tethys. Interior.

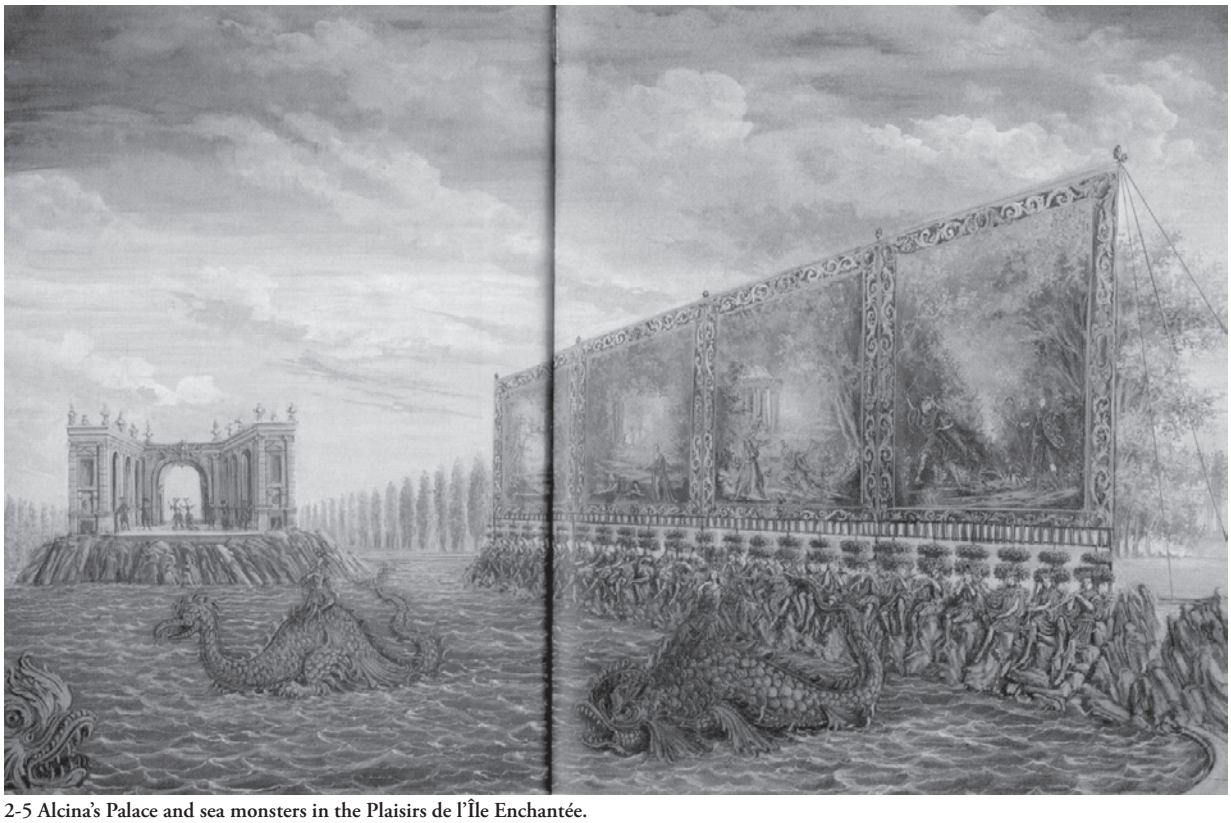


2-4 Stage set in and framing the Versailles gardens for the Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée.

Bath of Apollo is originally created for an actual Grotto of Tethys, a rectangular pavilion just north of what is now the central block of the *château* of Versailles (*2-2, 2-3)*. The grotto is considered one of the delights of the *château* in this period, well before Versailles is the court's permanent capital; the arches feature trellis sunbursts while reliefs depicting the descent of the sun god into the sea ornament a frieze containing a rooftop reservoir. Inside, the sculptural group and two tableaux of the sun chariot's horses are framed by arched niches in a pebble-covered interior, while water organs powered from the reservoir above recreate the singing of birds. The young Louis XIV enjoys entertaining here, no doubt delighting in the pavilion's many water tricks;[3] this grotto is understood in its day as a symbol of the Versailles of Louis XIV's early reign,[4] when his father's hunting pavilion is one of the favourite places for the young sovereign to relax in-between the strains of his duty, and where the court shares in his respite and pleasures. At this point in Versailles's history, the *château* is a smallish, charming red brick building, although Le Nôtre is already submitting the gardens to his axial discipline, pointing Versailles to its destined purpose.

These new gardens form the setting of the Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée (Pleasures of the Enchanted Island) in May 1664 (*2-4–2-6)*, a three-day entertainment directed by Molière and set to the music of Lully. Versailles becomes the island of the sorceress Alcina, where the trapped hero Roger and his knights (Louis XIV and his fellow gentlemen of the court, of course) welcome and entertain six-hundred guests. Fantastic costumed tournaments, ballets, feasts, and plays follow in succession until the final evening, when Alcina's palace, reflected in the waters of the Swan Basin, explodes in an astounding fireworks display at Roger's waving a magic wand (*2-7)*.[5] Officially staged for the queen mother and the reigning queen (Maria Theresa, a dowdy, pious Spanish *infanta*), the Plaisirs are in fact devoted to Louise de la Baume le Blanc de La Vallière (*2-8)*, the impoverished noble who rises to become Louis XIV's favourite mistress in 1671, and for whom this spectacle is her first appearance at court.[6] Thus Versailles is still removed enough from the complete formalities of the court (based at this time at the ancient *château* of Saint Germain) that the king's affair can here find its first, tentative affirmation. At the same time, the Plaisirs fulfills a propagandist programme as important as any other in these formative days of Louis XIV's personal rule; as a proof of his omnipotence, the king is the origin of the land's

3. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 26–27.
4. Walton, *Louis XIV's Versailles*, 60.
5. Bluche, *Louis XIV*, 179–182.
6. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 123.



2-5 Alcina's Palace and sea monsters in the Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée.

2-6 Molière, *La Princesse d'Élide* (*The Princess of Elis*), 1664. Premiere at the Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée.

This romantic comedy is composed specifically for the Plaisirs. In it, young Prince Euryale wins the hand of the obstinate Princess of Elis—a proudly independent huntress who fiercely rejects all suitors—by feigning disinterest in her. Euryale "conquers" the Diana-like princess through a mastery of self-possession, much as Louis XIV conquers nature (and his courtiers) at Versailles.

The play can also be said to obliquely approve of Louis XIV and Louise de La Vallère's relationship: in the first scene, Arbate, Euryale's elderly governor, praises Euryale for having fallen in love with the princess, it being a high virtue for a king to still demonstrate a tender soul. *La Princesse d'Élide*, 1.1.25–28.

2-7 Fireworks, and the destruction of Alcine's Palace.

2-8 Louise de La Vallière.

most remarkable celebration; and with an easy gesture, he wills its (violent) conclusion. This party is as magnificent as any formal ceremony or military victory, proving, like the Grotto of Tethys, that even entertainments are means for the state's ends.

Around 1668, Louis XIV determines to make Versailles the permanent seat of his court. Eventually the Grotto of Tethys is demolished and its sculptural groups removed to the gardens, not only to make way for the palace's north wing, but also because their themes of pleasure and retreat are incompatible with the new and final programme of Versailles. Grandiose entertainments notwithstanding, the exhausted face of the god/king while he submits his body to the succours of the nymphs contradicts the invincible image that Versailles builds around the ruler. There can be no mutual empathy between the people and the king; he is to be nothing like us, and we unlike him, Le Nôtre's infinite lines reminding us of the distance between the king and his subjects.[7] While the identification of Louis XIV with Apollo is generally suitable to the absolutist ideology, the anthropomorphism of the pagan gods can make for odd juxtapositions with a king who derives his right from the unfathomable Christian God. When Versailles becomes an absolutist capital, the king's respite, like *Bath of Apollo*, is moved out of view and into the corners.

Not long after her formal introduction at the Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée, Louis XIV bores of La Vallière; he soon finds his interests turning to Françoise-Athénaïs de Rochechouart-Mortemart, marquise de Montespan. La Vallière is kept for a time as official mistress, but by 1666, Montespan is in reality the new favourite,[8] and this famously witty, voluptuous, generally religious, and demanding woman is only openly acknowledged in 1673 when La Vallière quits court and, out of guilt ofr her extramarital relations with the king, enters a Carmelite convent, never to re-emerge. As the new favourite, her troublesome husband banished to his province, Montespan is initially housed on the first floor of Versailles, overtop the vestibule to the Ambassador's Staircase and adjacent to the king's Petits Appartements, his semi-private suite of cabinets and display galleries. Larger and somewhat more private accommodation is built for the favourite from 1669–71 on the ground floor directly below the Grands Appartements; it is called the Appartements des Bains (the Bath Apartments; *2-9, 2-10*), and it indeed contains

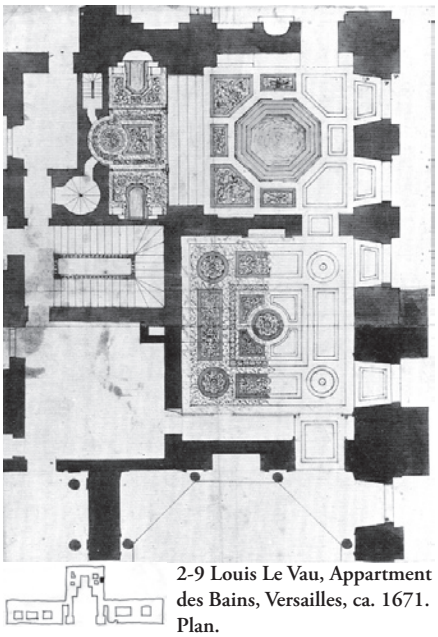
7. Weiss, *Mirrors of Infinity*, 67.

8. At the *château* of Saint Germain, Louis XIV must pass through La Vallière's bedroom to visit Montespan; Michael, *Louis XIV*, 140.

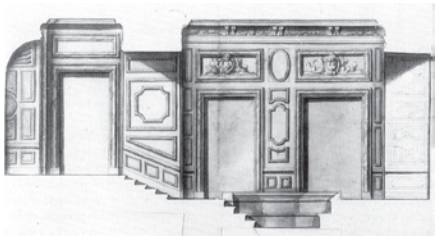
a ground-floor bath suite among its twenty-one rooms.[9] The bathroom itself is seemingly carved out of multi-coloured stone; the basins are scooped out of the earth, their large volumes and wide marble seats in accord with the old and still-extant practice of shared baths; the rooms are wrapped in one of the first uses of assorted marble wall panels,[10] a style soon to be used with more serious intentions in the grander rooms upstairs.

The village of Trianon, sited at the northern end of Versailles's Canal, is appropriated by the royal estate and demolished for a remarkable building project over the winter of 1669–70. It produces a small pavilion, the Trianon de Porcelaine (Porcelain Trianon, *2-11*), sitting in a large flower garden, and even its rapid construction prompts a contemporary observer to comment: "This Palace was regarded at first by every one as a work of magic, for it was finished in the spring, as though it had sprung from the earth with the flowers of the gardens that came into being with it."[11] The pavilion and two attendant buildings are among the first examples of Chinese-style follies in the West, their outside walls and roofs covered in blue-and-white faïence tiles immitating porcelain. The landscape, too, defies its location; the strongly-scented gardens bloom with hothouse-fresh flowers even during the northern French winter, and palm trees are planted directly into the soil, protected from frost by collapsible greenhouses. Visitors regularly tour the gardens before entering the pavilion to lunch, afterwards re-emerging to astonishingly discover these same gardens completely transformed during their brief absence, the clever work of a small army of gardeners re-arranging the grounds's 1,900,000 flower pots.[12] As the Appartements des Bains turns Louis XIV's *grand goût* to the service of pleasure, so do the Trianon's gardens turn Louis XIV's mastery of nature to delight.

The crisp tile pavilion is small, consisting of a central salon and twin private apartments, one for the king, the other for Montespan. Diminutive aviaries ajoin each apartment's cabinet, the birdsinging (the real thing, unlike the Grotto of Tethys's imitation) bringing the gardens's eternal spring indoors.[13] Montespan's bedroom is particularly renowned; called the Chambre des Amours (the Room of Loves), its fabulous bed (*2-13*), blue-and-white like the building exterior with an elaborate cantilevered canopy, gold and silver lace,[14] and mirrored bedhead, prompts the official French royal inventory to refer to it as "*un lit extraordinaire.*"[15] The



2-9 Louis Le Vau, Appartment des Bains, Versailles, ca. 1671. Plan.



2-10 Appartment des Bains. Interior elevation.

9. These are somewhat more generous provisions compared with the queen's eleven rooms at Versailles; Michael, *Louis XIV*, 186. Nevertheless, Maria Theresa and the marquise are on friendly terms, and Montespan is even made surintendant of the queen's house.

10. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ..., 23.

11. Unattributed. Quoted in Nolhac, *Versailles and the Trianons*, 248.

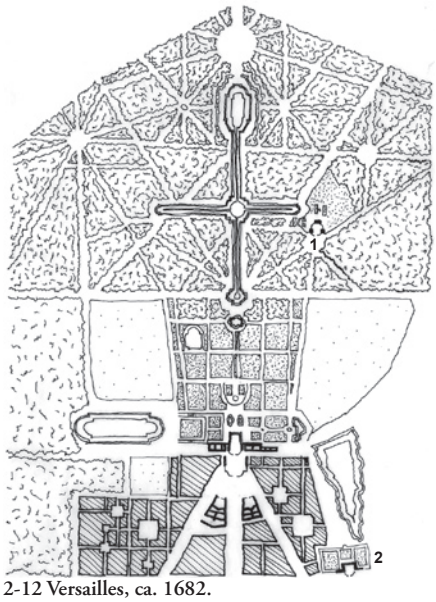
12. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 46.

13. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 48.

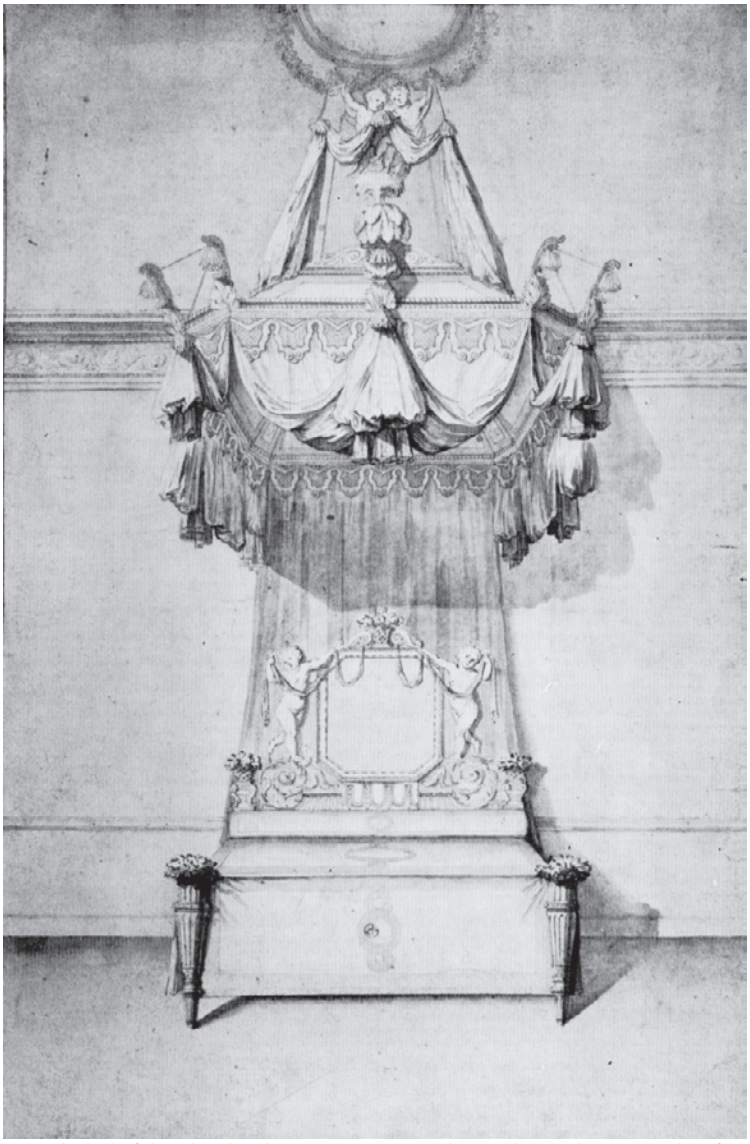
14. Dunlop, *Louis XIV*, 216.

15. "An extraordinary bed." Quoted in Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* ...,18.

2-11 Louis Le Vau, Trianon de Porcelaine, Versailles, 1670. View towards entrance courtyard.



2-12 Versailles, ca. 1682.
1. Trianon de Porcelaine
2. Clagny



2-13 The bed of the Chambre des Amours, Trianon de Porcelaine. The octagonal surface on the headboard is a mirror.

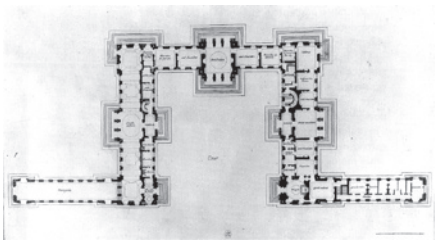
Trianon de Porcelaine is the fantasy setting for Louis XIV and Montespan's affair, their very own enchanted island removed from the palace, reached by the Canal on Venetian gondolas.

The Marquise de Montespan's architectural patronage peaks with Clagny, the *château* Louis XIV builds for her from 1675–1682 on the outskirts of the town of Versailles (*2-12*). Montespan rejects the first low and simple design by Antoine le Pautre as too light and simple, a one-storey garden house that she complains is "fit for an opera singer"[16] and not for the daughter of one of the oldest families in France who is now the most powerful woman at court. This prompts the first project's demolition and le Pautre's replacement

16. Berger, *A Royal Passion*, 85–86.

with Jules Hardouin-Mansart, who designs and constructs a handsome, long-winged house for Clagny (*2-14, 2-15*)so impressing Louis XIV that the young architect succeeds the deceased Louis Le Vau as royal architect, taking charge of Versailles. Clagny is as grand a noble's house as any, with its large forecourt, central dome, notable grand staircase, lengthy *enfilades* and huge gallery wing, fitted out with beautiful interiors rivalling contemporaneous royal work.[17] Those approaching Versailles from Paris are treated to an impressive glimpse of Clagny in its gardens by Le Nôtre, and Montespan's grand entrance gate is to be seen later on off to the right of the avenue just when the royal palace comes into view ahead in the distance.[18] Clagny's assertiveness makes visible the status and prestige of the royal mistress, but it is no erotic retreat; though the two private bedrooms behind the state bedrooms may be called the "*chambres à coucher du roy*"(king's bedrooms), they would seem to be more obliquely allusive to Montespan's position at court than functional to it.

2-14 Jules Hardouin-Mansart, Château de Clagny, Versailles, 1675–82. View towards entrance.



2-15 Château de Clagny. Plan.

For all its well-appointed beauty, Clagny is nevertheless Montespan's twilight accomplishment; just when construction of her domed salon with its view overlooking Versailles is finished, her real command over the palace is well into decline, the victim not only of her scheming reputation at court, but also of the Poisons Affair of 1679–81, a spiralling scandal that threatens to expose all of the court's secrets.

2-16 Madame de Montespan, with an imagined interior of Clagny's gallery in the background.

In a court as large yet tight-knit as Versailles, and for all the attempts at transparency and officialdom, secrets and rumours abound. History for instance preserves a bizarre story that queen Maria Theresa secretly mothers a black daughter who is rushed away and raised in a convent.[19] Less mysteriously, the Duchesse de Navailles is disgraced for blocking the doors giving Louis XIV private access to ladies-in-waiting;[20] also indicative of the king's sexual adventures and of court mischief is the amusing prank perpetrated by the duc de Lauzun. After discovering that his romantic interest, Madame de Monaco, is having an affair with Louis XIV, the duke finds when and where they meet. One evening, Lauzun hides in a small room opening onto a hidden stair's landing, opposite the door to the king's cabinet. Soon, Louis XIV appears and, believing himself unobserved, leaves a key in the cabinet door's lock. Once the king has entered his room and closes the door behind him, Lauzun quickly darts from his cover to grab the key and returns to the hideaway before

17. Berger, *A Royal Passion*, 89.
18. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 49–50.
19. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 126.
20. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 22.

Madame de Monaco arrives with a valet for her scheduled royal audience. Monaco is surpised to find no way to open the door, and must knock to request entry. Unfortunately for both of them, the Sun King is unable to open the door from inside as well; all he can do is explain—through the door—that he indeed left the key in the lock. Thwarted and perplexed, they eventually cancel the encounter and depart, while Lauzun in his hideout "laughs in his sleeve at their mishap with infinite enjoyment."[21]

2-17 The crimes of Catherine Montvoisin, a.k.a. "La Voisin."

But the Paris police discover far more dangerous secrets when, warned of a possible plot to assassinate the king, they investigate Catherine Montvoisin. "La Voisin" (*2-17*), as she is also known, runs a brisk business in fortunetelling, discreet midwifery, abortions,[22] and especially potions and poisons, profiting from a shockingly widespread underworld of concealed shame, regret, and desire. La Voisin leads 36 of the 411 suspects to the scaffold after interrogation by the special commission, the Chambre Ardente,[23] with suspicion extending all the way to the high aristocracy itself. Some of the Chambre's revelations prove merely embarrassing, such as when the duchesse de la Foix admits to purchasing breast-enlarging cream from La Voisin,[24] but other allegations of murdered spouses and love spells meant for the king fuel massive gossip and result in several court banishments. Especially troubling suspicion falls on the marquise de Montespan, based on the testimony of La Voisin's daughter and the priest Étienne Gibourg, one of the sorceress's accomplices. At first claiming, credibly enough, that madame de Montespan buys La Voisin's aphrodisiacs early in her relationship with the king, it is eventually said that she obtains lethal poisons and, most preposterously, that Abbé Gibourg performs black masses over Montespan's naked body, her torso the willing, blood-bathed altar for child sacrifices. Faced with alternatively explosive and questionable findings, Louis XIV finally closes the investigation and La Voisin's accomplices quietly disappear.[25] Nevertheless, the damage is done; when Marie-Angélique de Fontanges, Louis XIV's newish secondary mistress, dies in childbirth in 1681, even the king's sister-in-law records rumours that Fontanges is in fact the jealous Montespan's murder victim.[26] Perhaps out of lost trust, Louis XIV hesitates to submit Fontanges's corpse to an autopsy; and even though Montespan is in the end exonerated, the Poisons Affair's exposures prove to be one of the last chapters of his relationship with the marquise; even

21. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:390–91.
22. Her slum garden is a fœtus cemetery. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 127.
23. Dunlop, *Louis XIV*, 239.
24. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 196.
25. Ibid., 208.
26. Dunlop, *Louis XIV*, 239.

Montespan can see that the king's friendship with Françoise Scarron, marquise de Maintenon, is already blossoming into a more profound relationship.

Françoise Scarron, *née* d'Aubigné, is the granddaughter of a respected courtier of Henry IV, but the daughter of a disgraced Hugenot; she is born in prison and partly raised in exile on Martinique. After the death of her father, she lives for a time with her Protestant aunt, but family concerns over her religious upbringing bring her back under the neglectful care of her Catholic mother. When she is sixteen, the Précieux author and family friend Paul Scarron offers to take care of the young d'Aubigné as her husband, and his Paris salon soon introduces her to fashionable circles. When Scarron dies, his widow subsides on the small pension provided by the king (who is not yet well-acquainted with her) and the assistance of her friends, including Madame de Montespan. Through this relationship, the pious and elegant widow Scarron becomes the governess to Montespan and Louis XIV's illegitimate children; she is present at the first, private delivery in 1669, hiding behind a mask.[27] She raises the children in locations around Paris under such secrecy that for a time the eldest live in separate houses without ever meeting, their ward constantly travelling between them in disguise.[28] When later the king is more open about his bastard children, Montespan's offspring prove to be evidently less attatched to their mother than to their governess (who now goes by Madame de Maintenon after the estate the king purchases for her), strongly vexing the royal mistress. In the end there is little the former favourite can do; by the early 1680s, her affair with the king is over, and a few years later, shortly after Maria Theresa dies of a tumor, Maintenon, in the final and most surprising of her life's many twists of fate, becomes the Sun King's second, *secret* wife.

It is not know for certain when Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon marry (it is sometime in the fall of 1683 or winter of 1684),[29] nor where (perhaps in the king's private apartments with a small number of witnesses; ibid.),[30] but just as strange is the seemingly odd match between the two. Madame de Maintenon is Louis XIV's complement (*2-18, 2-19*); where he must appear grand, she is self-effacing; he is the wordly king, she the poor, pious widow; his ambition contrasts her simplicity; Louis must sleep with the windows open while Françoise insulates herself from drafts;[31] the man at the centre of the court marries a reclusive, gossip-hating

27. Bailly, *Madame de Maintenon*, 97.
28. Ibid., 100.
29. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 239.
30. Ibid.
31. Bluche, *Louis XIV*, 57.

2-18 The marquise de Maintenon.

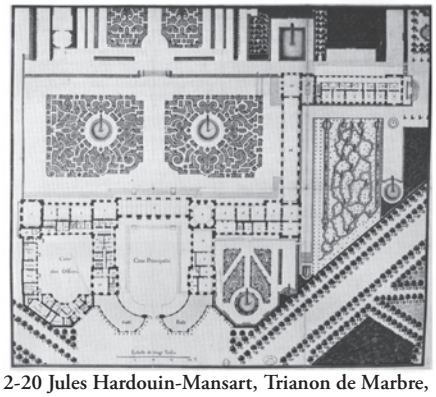
woman; and Louis XIV is famously indominable, but Madame de Maintenon is of a compliant nature. So obsequious is she, in fact, that she may very well be marrying the king out of clerical pressure to help fortify his growing piety and prevent his falling back into another sinful relationship, rather than out of her own love.[32] As for Louis XIV himself, he may see in Maintenon the kind of authenticity lacking at his own Versailles. His private conversations with her offer welcome respite from the courtly ostentations so embodied by the Marquise de Montespan that are likely beginning to wear on him, now that his reign is a its height and Versailles is complete as a gilded cage.

With a new favourite (and this marriage soon becomes an open secret, though it is never formally acknowledged by any party) comes a new garden retreat, and the Trianon de Porcelaine, small as it is, its tiles regularly spalling off, and very much associated with Montespan, is replaced with another of Hardouin-Mansart's sprawling mansions, the Trianon de

32. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 240.

2-19 Louis XIV.

Marbre (Marble Trianon; *2-20—2-23*). The new house's long wings with their large windows are clad in pink-red marble and yellow limestone, the colours of candy and butter; Louis XIV requests that the roof be kept low and behind balustrades in the Italian manner, rather than a more grand, steep French roof; so too does the king order the white-painted, wood-and-plaster interiors that contrast so refreshingly with the palace,[33] and it is he who suggests that the axial entrance to the house be a vestibule open to the outdoors on its long sides; this is the first peristyle in France, a lightly-delineated filter between two outdoor spaces respecting the continued importance of the Trianon's gardens. The house's long and shallow wings immerse the occupants in the surrounding flowers and, especially, the concealing woods,[34] but just as the Trianon is protected by its landscape, so does its plan shape and enclose its gardens. The grounds are laid out with a series of *bosques* or outdoor rooms, labyrinths, and ha-has defining its boundaries,[35] exploring, like the peristyle, themes



2-20 Jules Hardouin-Mansart, Trianon de Marbre, begun 1687. Plan.

33. Walton, *Louis XIV's Versailles*, 160
34. Ibid., 158.
35. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 82.

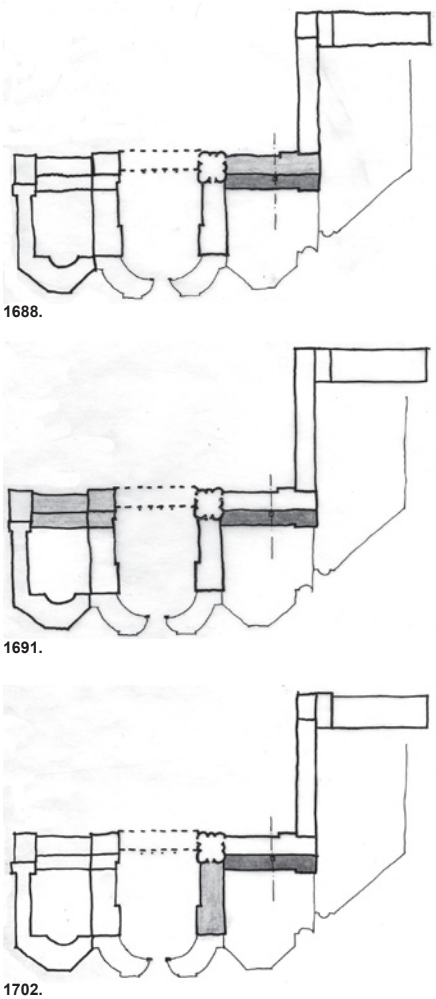
2-21 Trianon de Marbre. View from entrance court.

2-22 Trianon de Marbre. Gallery.

2-23 Trianon de Marbre. View from garden.

of permeable boundaries, as though moderating Versailles's visual expanses. In Les Sources (The Springs), the garden next to the picture gallery and guest wing, visitors wander under dark folliage among small serpentine canals and irregularly-spaced water jets; its designer, André Le Nôtre, proudly states,

> I cannot write you enough about the beauty of this place: it has a coolness where the ladies go to work, play, take a light meal, and [enjoy] the beauty of the site; you enter it directly from [Trianon-sous-Bois, the guest wing]; thus from that apartment you go under shade through all the various beauties … I can say that it is the garden, along with the Tuileries, that I know to be easy to walk in and the most beautiful. I leave the others their beauty and grandeur, but [Les Sources is] the most comfortable.[36]



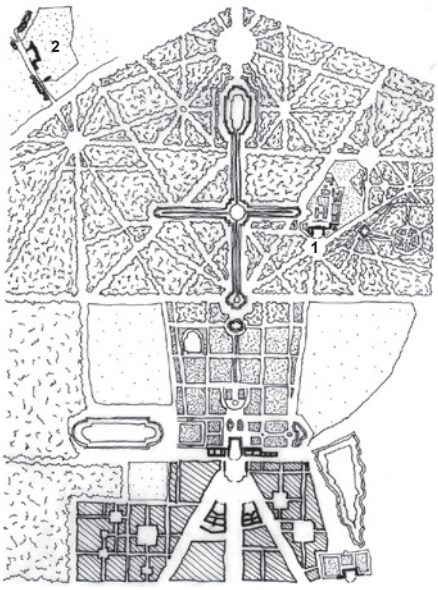
2-24 Trianon de Marbre. The movement of Louis XIV's suite (light grey) versus the permanence of Maintenon's (dark).

With satisfaction, the mastermind behind Versailles's infinities also offers the antidote.

Trianon remains a place of leisure for the king and his family, where it also hosts occasional parties. Invitation to join Louis XIV here is highly-sought at court,[37] with one curious policy: when a lady is invited to Trianon, she may not bring her husband unless he, too, is individually invited. Louis XIV is always more relaxed around women than men,[38] and so Trianon is all the more a retreat for him if he can surround himself with female company. This is not to say that he remains as restless as in his youth; his gallantry may be undiluted, but he proves far more faithful to Madame de Maintenon than to Maria Theresa, and while most court ladies sleep at arm's-length in the Trianon-sous-Bois, Maintenon's apartment is located just behind the mansion's formal *enfilade* between the peristyle and gallery. Whereas the peristyle sits almost exactly over the demolished Trianon de Porcelaine, preserving the site's entrance axis, we can really think of Maintenon's bedroom as the asymmetrical centre of an asymmetrical house, overlooking the king's personal walled garden in private contrast to the open peristyle. Louis XIV's own suite, meanwhile, changes location over the course of the years (*2-24*); in keeping with his standard royal transparency, he first inhabits the grand *enfilade* adjacent to Maintenon's apartment, though he also does not yet choose to sleep at Trianon overnight.[39] Later in 1691 when he wants sleeping accommodation, he moves to the Trianon's left wing;[40] husband and wife's apartments now lie on opposite sides of the central axis, recalling the king and queen's apartments at the Versailles palace. Finally in 1702 the king moves back to

36. Le Nôtre, *Mémoires*. Quoted in Berger, *A Royal Passion*, 125.
37. Dunlop, *Louis XIV*, 303.
38. Michael, *Louis XIV*, 24.
39. Marie, *Versailles au temps de Louis XIV*, 19.
40. Ibid., 61.

2-25 Jean Cotelle the Younger, *View of Grand Trianon, Versailles (Zephyr and Flora)*, **ca. 1690.**



2-26 Versailles ca. 1690.
1. Trianon de Marbre
2. Saint-Cyr.

the right of the entrance court,[41] both to overlook his beloved garden and be closer to Maintenon's static suite. Thus Louis XIV roams about the central void that is the peristyle and the more concealed centre represented by Maintenon's suite; at Trianon the wife is the centre, and not, for once, the king.

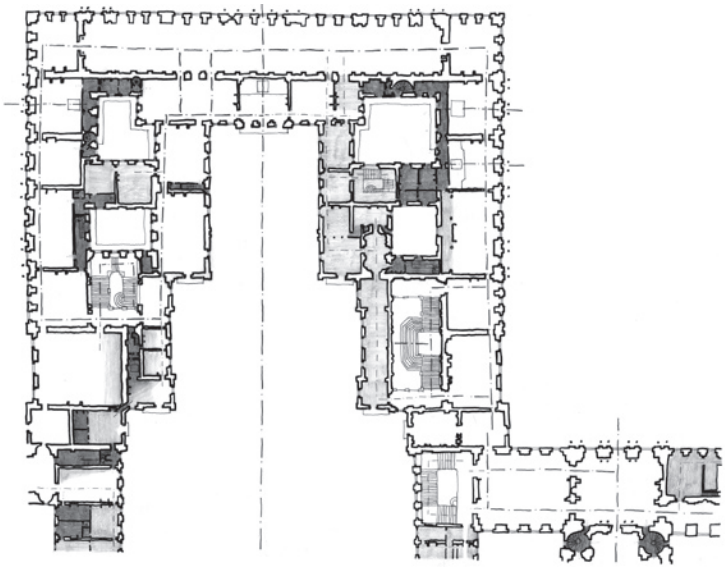
Commissioned paintings for the retreat depicting Flora and the Loves of the Gods (*2-25*) confirm the Trianon de Marbre's perpetuation of its predecessor's springtime theme. To celebrate spring is to celebrate youth, and we can detect a childlike quality to the place, in its bright and happy outdoor colours, fresh interiors, and its gardens' infatuation with discovery and delight. Louis XIV himself, so refined and serious at court, so intense and ruthless at the hunt or in battle, frequently withdraws into childishness; he gleefully operates the trick water fountain valves at Versailles's Ménagerie, soaking his companions,[42] and initiates food fights at the *château* of Marly's dinner table. This infantilism only increases with the presence of Marie-Adélaïde, duchesse de Bourgogne, the king's irrepressably spirited granddaughter-in-law whose games and pranks rejuvenate Louis XIV's increasing tedium with his tense, routinized court.[43] As the end of the Sun King's reign becomes ever more disappointing, with endless wars, the moral and economic strain of renewed anti-Protestant repressions, and devastating famines, Louis XIV increasingly seeks light and innocent imagery at the expense of the very *grand goût* so closely identified with him. Most famously, the king rejects Hardouin-Mansart's first, conservative scheme for the duchesse de Bourgogne's apartments at the Ménagerie in 1699, writing to his architect, "Youthfulness should be spread out everywhere."[44] sparking a change in court taste for the new century. At the Trianon, then, Louis XIV escapes into the childhood the Fronde denies him in the maternal presence of Maintenon; it is not only an attempt at a happy purity, but also to relive moments of promise, to recapture the feeling of an open future. In the Trianon de Marbre's long gallery, twenty-four paintings depict twenty-four years in the transformation of Versailles's gardens, reminding Louis XIV of the distant, invigorated peaks of his reign.[45]

Meanwhile, Maintenon desires stability and protection. Not only does she move her bedroom at the Trianon de Marbre to a more secluded *entresol*, but a niche is built in Maintenon's cabinet at Trianon de Marbre from which she can look out onto the King's Garden while reclining, and the dauphin gives Maintenon a "confessional" *fauteil* , a type of armchair possibly fitted with curtains drawn around the

41. Ibid., 109–10.
42. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 28.
43. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 2:632.
44. Quoted in Berger, *A Royal Passion*, 141. My translation.
45. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 83.

sides of the sitter's head.[46] Forever escaping the instability of her youth, in whose memory she builds and closely watches her own favourite retreat, the aristocratic girls' orphanage of Saint-Cyr (*2-27*), Maintenon takes advantage of her exalted position (more exalted than she might ever have really wanted) to ensure her personal space, especially difficult to achieve at the centre of such a crowded court. "I acknowledge that God has given me the grace to be insensitive to the honours that surround me and to feel only the subjection and constraint that they bring, *amour-propre* is dead on that point, but Monseigneur, my love of rest, freedom and my own way is still very much alive."[47] Indeed, Louis XIV affectionately calls her "*Votre Solidité*"[48], and this is is another quality that attracts him to Maintenon. Before long, the king removes himself every Versailles evening to his wife's quarters, (*2-28, 2-29*) which wrap her protectively from court stresses; though located on the same floor as the king and queen's apartments, and axially aligned with the king's, her small bedroom is sealed off from the Queen's Staircase landing by two vestibules watchfully occupied by officers of the guard. Thus insulated from the rest of the palace, the bedroom occupies a corner overlooking the Marble Courtyard below; on one side of the room is the bed alcove with labyrinthine wardrobes and a service stair behind, on the other side a diagonal passage leading to a drawing room.[49] It is in front of this alcove by the fireplace where Madame de Maintenon will sit in the evening, her husband meanwhile discussing state

2-27 Jules Hardouin-Mansart, Orphanage of Saint-Cyr, 1685–86. View to courtyard.



2-28 Versailles. First floor plan; spatial gradient.

46. Marie, *Versailles au temps de Louis XIV*, 121, 123; Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, 195.

47. Mme de Maintenon, *Correspondance Générale*. Quoted in Michael, *Louis XIV*, 296.

48. "Your Solidity." Dunlop, *Louis XIV*, 263.

49. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 2:549.

business with those visitors permitted through the double control of the vestibules. The duc de Saint-Simon describes the scene:

> When with the King in her own room, they each occupied an arm chair, with a table between them, at either side of the fireplace, hers toward the bed, the King's with the back to the wall, where was the door of the antechamber; two stools were before the table, one for the minister who came to work, the other for his papers.
>
> During the work Madame de Maintenon read or worked at tapestry. She heard all that passed between the King and his minister, for they spoke out loud. Rarely did she say anything, or, if so, it was of no moment.[50]

If we ignore the discrepancy between Saint-Simon's passage and the plan of the actual space—it is difficult to see how the king could have his back to the vestibule door *and* be seated on the other side of the fireplace from his wife, if she is in front of her bed—what is remarkable is how, for all her apparent disinterest, Madame de Maintenon's presence is strongly felt. Saint-Simon continues:

> The King often asked her opinion; then she replied with great discretion. Never did she appear to lay stress on anything, still less to interest herself for anybody, but she had an understanding with the minister, who did not dare to oppose her in private, still less to trip in her presence. When some favour or some post was to be granted, the matter was arranged between them beforehand; and this it was that sometimes delayed her, without the King or anybody knowing the cause.[51]

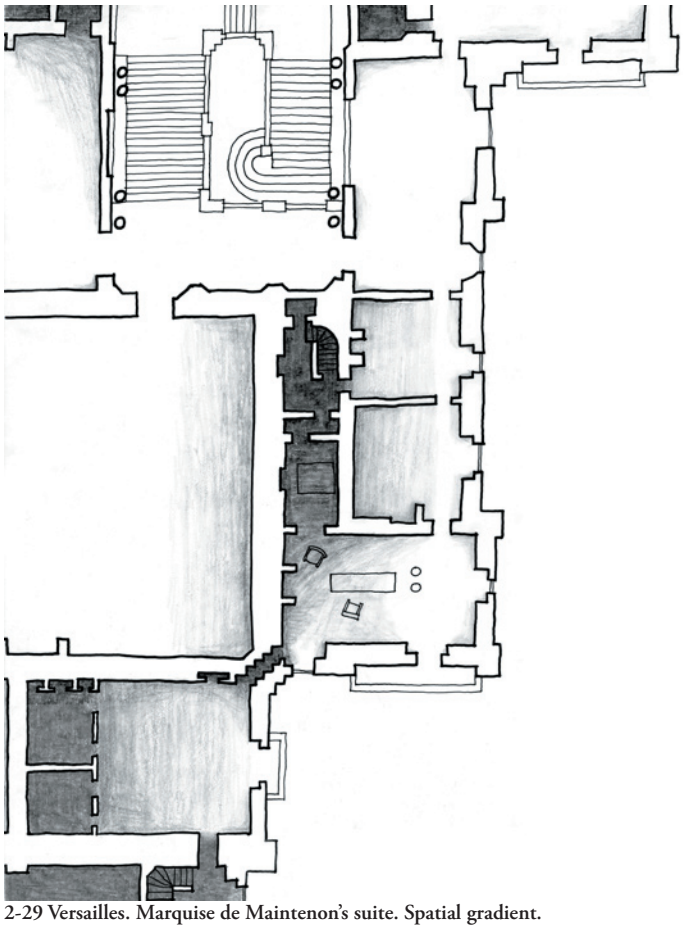
Saint-Simon is of course a subjective narrator, here and in the rest of his memoirs, but he nevertheless suggests that Maintenon has a powerful reputation. Elsewhere he calls Maintenon a "famous and fatal witch" of skilled duplicity; "Her best time, for she was three or four years older than the King, had been the dainty phrase period, — the superfine gallantry days, — in a word, the time of the «Ruelles,» as it was called; and it had so influenced her that she always retained evidences of it ... She was not absolutely false by disposition, but necessity had made her so, and her natural flightiness mader her appear twice as false as she was."[52] Insisting she has "an unlimited power … exercised by subterranean means", Saint-Simon's Maintenon schemes against the minister of war, the marquis de Louvois, and is the chief conspirator revoking the Edict of Nantes, ending tolerance of the Hugenots.[53] "The power of Madame de

50. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:22.

51. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:22.

52. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:11–12, 3:53.

53. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:13, 3:15, 3:16–17.



2-29 Versailles. Marquise de Maintenon's suite. Spatial gradient.

Maintenon was, as may be imagined, immense. She had everybody in her hands … Many people have been ruined by her, without having been able to discover the author of their ruin, search as they might. All attempts to find a remedy were equally unsuccessful."[54]

How different this is from the transparencies Versailles and its king are supposed to promote and embody. Aristocrats submit to the confinements and refinements of the court in the hopes of advancements of their service, wealth and power. Courtiers' resentments are therefore understandable when they see little of what is promised for all their sacrifices and efforts. They agree to the attrition of their noble independence only to see the highest ministries occupied by the bourgeoisie; additionally, now they must wait in the vestibule by the Queen's Staircase with the rest of the king's clients for permission to pass through two heavily-guarded rooms for an audience with the king, in the perhaps affectedly simple presence of the woman he secretly marries in all royal omnipotence, knitting by her warm fire while the petitioner must be content to sit on the bare stool

54. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:23–24.

mandated by etiquette, faintly aware that Maintenon's heavily draped bed alcove has somewhere in its red-damask depths a small door giving hidden access while everyone else is forced to traverse the vestibules' conspicuous *enfilade*, as though Maintenon has bypassed all official, visible, *fair* routes to power by carving her own secret way in. And to the bitter courtier, the king has somehow been tricked or seduced into abandoning his very own court for the comforts of a small, tightly-controlled apartment.

Regardless of her real or imagined power, Madame de Maintenon's suite is where the transparency of Versailles reaches its limit. In this comfortably-scaled apartment with its balance of light and dark, open and closed, total transparency is revealed to be impossible, showing that even the Sun King cannot forever overcome exhaustion and the need for solitude, and undermining for the courtiers the rationality of the absolutist state.

CHAPTER THREE:

Shell

"We even dared to jest about the pleasures of love … there was no such thing as a commitment (philosophically speaking) except for those commitments contracted with the public, when we allow it to discover our secrets, and when we agree to share in some indiscretions."

—Vivant Denon[1]

"No Tomorrow", the short story first published in 1777 by Vivant Denon, begins at the opera house. The young, admittedly naive narrator, troubled by the the infidelities of his mistress, happens upon an acquaintance, the "decent" Mme de T———. With seeming capriciousness, she soon whisks him away from her opera box to bring him to the country *château* of her husband, with whom she is recently reconciled after a period of estrangement. In the carriage, a sudden jolt in the road throws Madame into the narrator's arms, though she withdraws and accuses the young man of impropriety. At the *château*, her surly husband retires to bed after dinner, sarcastically telling his wife, "'I am greatful, Madame, for the foresight you showed in bringing Monsieur with you. In judging that I would be a poor resource for the evening you judged well,'"[2] leaving the hostess and guest alone. We increasingly comprehend Mme de T———'s motives.

Madame takes her guest for a stroll in the garden; "The night was superb; it revealed things in glimpses, and seemed only to veil them so as to give free rein to the imagination."[3] Conversation turns into a friendly kiss; kisses then "accelerate each-other, … excite each-other."[4] But Mme de T——— withdraws again, suggesting they return inside, only to be diverted from this by a quarrel. After accusing the narrator's mistress of indiscretion, she takes him toward a garden pavilion "that had witnessed the sweetest of moments."[5]

> We trembled as we entered. This was love's sanctuary. It took possession of us: our knees buckled, our weakening arms intertwined, and, unable to hold each other up, we sank down onto a sofa that occupied a corner of the temple. The moon was

1. Denon, "No Tomorrow," in *The Libertine Reader*, 740.
2. Ibid., 734.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 735.
5. Ibid., 737.

> setting, and its last rays soon lifted the veil of modesty that was, I think, becoming rather tiresome. Everything grew confused in the shadows. The hand that tried to push me away felt my heart beating. Mme de T——— was trying to move away from me but kept coming back all the more tender. Our souls met and multiplied; another was born each time we kissed.[6]

After enjoying considerable time in the pavilion, the pair leave, reflecting on their recent pleasures enjoyed "'without all the delays, the bother, and the tyranny of courteous behaviour,"' according to Mme de T———.[7] Madame starts to talk of yet another of the *château*'s charms, a "little room" attached to her apartment whose delights had once succeeded in arousing her lax husband. As worn out as the narrator now is, his curiosity nevertheless gets the better of him, and he pleads to be shown this room; "It was no longer Mme de T——— whom I desired, it was the little room."[8] She obligingly leads him through the dark, labyrinthine halls and stairs of the *château* until they come to a wardrobe and two sleeping maids. Madame awakens the trustworthy of the two to prepare the room while she changes attire, warning her young friend, "'Remember … you are supposed never to have seen, never even suspected, the sanctuary you're about to enter.""[9]

Finally, the anxious young hero is brought into the boudoir:

> I was astonished, delighted, I no longer know what became of me, and I began in good faith to believe in magic. The door closed again, and I could no longer tell from whence I had entered. All I could see now was a seamless, bird's view of a grove of trees which seemed to stand and rest on nothing. In truth, I found myself in a vast cage of mirrors on which images were so artistically painted that they produced the illusion of all the objects they represented. There was no visible light inside the room; a soft, celestial glow entered, depending on the need each object had to be more or less perceived; incense burners exhaled delicious perfumes …[10]

A completely artificial garden of love, the room also contains in its mirrored walls an altar to love, a grotto, and cushions under a baldachin where the pair embrace:

> … because the couple we formed was repeated in its every angle, I saw that island [the small room] entirely populated by happy lovers.
>
> Desires are reproduced through their images.[11]

6. Denon, "No Tomorrow," in *The Libertine Reader*, 738.

7. Ibid., 740.

I wonder whether she has already forgotten her earlier behaviour, or if her particular coy conduct is nonetheless efficient by eighteenth-century standards.

8. Ibid., 741.

9. Ibid., 742.

10. Ibid, 742–43.

11. Ibid., 743.

Retiring to the grotto, "some sort of cleverly contrived spring caught hold of us and, carried by its movement, we fell gently on our backs on a mound of cushions. Both darkness and silence reigned in this new sanctuary. Our sighs replaced language."[12] Their intimacies are resumed and repeated in the evening's second architectural fantasy.

Morning breaks, and the narrator is abruptly sent away. He ends up back in the garden—now vivid in the morning light—to ponder the memorable night he's just experienced, when unexpectedly the Marquis de ————, the man known to be Mme de T———'s lover, appears. "'Did you play your part well? Did her husband find your arrival quite ridiculous?'"[13] the marquis asks the narrator. Before long, the young man understands: He is at the *château* as a decoy, to make M. de T——— believe that his wife has rejected the marquis for someone else. The marquis is from now on free to visit Madame without her husband's suspicion. However, the marquis believes that the narrator is only at the *château* to *appear* to have an affair with Mme de T———; the marquis too has been duped, trusting that his mistress is still faithful to him, an illusion the narrator has the discretion not to shatter, no matter how much the marquis teases him.

The two return to the *château* and the husband—friendly towards the marquis but still curt with the narrator—joins them in greeting Mme de T———.[14] She treats all three with friendly respect, but her victory is not lost on the narrator: "M. de T——— had ridiculed and then dismissed me; my friend the Marquis was duping the husband and mocking me; and I was paying him back in kind, all the while admiring Mme de T———, who was making fools of us all, without losing her dignity."[15]

Leaving the *château* on good terms with Madame, the young narrator reflects again on what he (and we) might learn: "I looked hard for the moral to this whole adventure … and found none."[16] Thus this "moral tale" concludes ambiguously, as evasive as Mme de T———'s agenda, as obscure as the nighttime garden, as ungraspable as the mirrored room's walls. The young man is only really certain of the night's pleasures; even the final revelation of Mme de T———'s trick is not disclosed in its entirety, but only partly revealed, the protagonist completing the fragments with his own imagination.[17] The young narrator learns just how little he can really know.

12. Denon, "No Tomorrow", in *The Libertine Reader*, 743.

13. Ibid., 746.

14. The text does not indicate where this meeting occurs; given the habits of the time and her own delicious cleverness, we could apropriately imagine Mme de T——— at her *toilette* (ritualistically applying cosmetics and clothing) or still in her bed (as we have seen, the place of proper display).

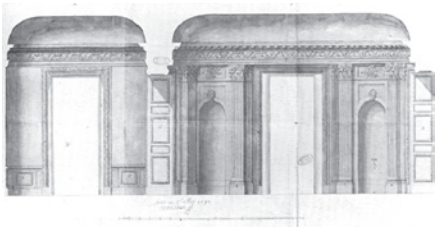
15. Denon, "No Tomorrow", in *The Libertine Reader*, 747.

16. Ibid., 747. Original ellipsis.

17. Can we even be sure that all three men have been duped, as the narrator believes? The marquis delightfully points out the husband's seeming gullibility, asking, "'If he had been fed his lines, could he have said them any better?'" (Ibid., 746.) But could M. de T——— in fact be in on the deception with his wife? (Admittedly though, his own reasons for doing so would be especially hard to speculate.)

This entire story unfolds (or not) in a world of ambiguity, of shifting targets and layered meanings, its inconclusiveness nevertheless not leaving the narrator unstatisfied. These themes are manifest in the very settings inhabited by the anonymous characters; the opera house, place of appearances, entertainment, and the temporary suspension of belief; the carriage, speeding its occupants' conversation past the landscape; the garden, made all the more beautiful in darkness; the pavilion, tiny and removed, a discrete place for discrete activities; and of course the fabulous boudoir, magically defying its physical interiority with an optical infinity. The architecture of "No Tomorrow" takes as much enjoyment in the dynamic, the uncertain, and the momentary as Mme de T——— does in her stealthy, risky, one-night stand.

"No Tomorrow" is one of the masterpieces of libertinism, the erotic literature and culture that flourishes in eighteenth-century Europe, especially France. Libertines in the early seventeenth century are free-thinking intellectuals who question all received moral values;[18] but by the eighteenth century, they are those who reject moral prudery for sexual freedom and adventure. This is the world of Casanova and boudoirs, of pornographic narratives interspersed with philosophy,[19] and erotic imagery from acclaimed painters; it is the world of seduction and sensuality. Catherine Cusset, scholar of French libertine literature, argues that at the core of libertinism is "a positive argument for the limit."[20] In the value placed in pleasure and the skillful manipulation of human emotions, libertinism seeks most of all to maximize the possibilites of the present. This eighteenth century interest in the instantaneous is striking in its modernity, avant-garde even; nevertheless, its emergence actually comes as a compensation to the inflexible monumentalism of the Baroque. Pleasure is here a serious response to absolutism and courtly restraint.



3-1 Jules Hardouin-Mansart, Salon Ovale, Versailles, 1692. Elevation of north wall.

As noted earlier, Louis XIV's taste lightens towards the end of his reign. Although certainly indulged at the Trianon de Marbre, the *enfance* the Sun King seeks in his garden pavilions is introduced to the palace as well. The Salon de l'Œil de Bœuf with its dancing children is of course the most obvious and public example, as is the Salon Ovale (*3-1*), the wood-paneled room for the display of paintings, whose plan is set like an encrusted bauble in the middle of the king's personal apartment (*1-29*).[21] These help disseminate the *goût moderne*,

18. Feher, *The Libertine Reader*, 11–12.
19. Cusset, *No Tomorrow*, 90.
20. Ibid., 3.
21. Walton, *Louis XIV's Versailles*, 181.

the new fashion in interior design and furniture achieved with carved wood, paint, and gilding that is to quickly supplant the heavy, expensive marbles of the *grand goût*. The freshness of the *goût moderne* points to its clientele's deeper yearnings.

In 1715, Louis XIV's seven-decade long reign comes to an end, but famously, his death is more cause for relief than sadness among the nobility:

> The King was but little regretted. ... As for the Court it was divided into two grand parties, the men hoping to figure, to obtain employ, to introduce themselves; and they were ravished to see the end of a reign under which they had nothing to hope for; the others, fatigued with a heavy yoke, always overwhelming, and of the ministers much more than of the King, were charmed to find themselves at liberty. Thus all, generally speaking, were glad to be delivered from continual restraint, and were eager for change.[22]

3-2 Antoine Watteau, *L'Enseigne de Gersaint* (*Gersaint's Sign*),1720.

As a portrait of Louis XIV is lowered into a coffin-like crate, stylish customers browse the wares at Gersaint's, one of Paris's most fashionable decorative art and material stores.

Louis XIV's demise also comes soon after the closely-spaced, very worrisome deaths of his son the Dauphin, the king's grandson the duc de Bourgogne, and his eldest great-grandson the duc de Bretagne, resting the entire Bourbon dynasty on the five-year-old duc d'Anjou, now Louis XV. The regent, the rakish duc d'Orléans, quickly consolidates his power and moves his capital back to Paris for the duration of the Régence, where he rules from his family house, the Palais Royal. Meanwhile, the child king is raised in the calm and bucolic setting of the royal *château* of Fontainebleau.[23] Thus the court temporarily abandons Versailles and can at last return to the city, accelerating an existing building boom given even further impetus by monetary reforms. A new generation of *hôtels* is built as though to express a revival of the nobles' independence under a regent, one of their own, who is friendly to their interests.

It however cannot be said that the aristocrats, as individuals and as a group, are truly liberated. No matter their unhappiness under Louis XIV—and we should rest assured that Saint-Simon is not the only disappointed courtier[24]—the standards of the absolutist court are so successful and operate for so long that they are self-perpetuating well into the eighteenth century. In exploring the qualities of French court society, sociologist Norbert Elias describes the routinization of tensions and conflicts among the nobility as "like a freewheeling machine;"[25] "Etiquette was borne unwillingly, but it could not be breached from within, not only because the king demanded its preservation, but because the social

22. Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:38-39.

23. Madame de Maintenon, meanwhile, enters secluded retirement at Saint-Cyr.

24. Roberts, *Morality and Social Class...*, 35.

25. Elias, *The Court Society,* 70-71.

existence of the people inmeshed in it was itself bound to it."[26] The nobility may find that etiquette and the cultivation of appearances (to maintain what Elias calls the "prestige value" of everything relating to the courtiers) do little in the pursuit of their personal advancement, but they are also the only means left for that class to assert itself above the lower classes.[27] Keep in mind that the from the sixteenth century on, it is the age of the so-called rising bourgeoisie; financiers and other successful, well-educated entrepreneurs increasingly outdo the aristocracy in wealth and achievement, and noble ranks swell with *parvenue* families purchasing their titles or earning them through administrative service.[28] So, beyond royalists and their sincere attachment to the continuity of etiquette, most aristocrats are resigned in spite of themselves to upholding courtly habits, conventions, and hierarchies.

In this way Louis XIV's watchful, evaluative gaze is internalized by the nobility who use it on each-other. Given the social power at stake, this gaze is intense and extraordinarily detailed; "Accordingly, these people experience many things that we would be inclined to dismiss as trivial or superficial with an intensity that we have largely lost."[29] For example, and in combination with the court's increasingly urban character, noble culture becomes correspondingly fashion conscious. Censorship of individuality is nevertheless sustained in the urban court with an equal attention to detail; one's dangerous exposure through unselfconscious expression promotes what Elias astutely characterizes as "*a curbing of the affects in favour of calculated and finely shaded behaviour in dealing with people.*"[30] The noble finds that public life after Louis XIV is almost as tense as before, but now without a Sun King to privately blame it on.

The only relief, then, is a renewal of the culture of privacy. So, while the new generation of *hôtels* continue to devote significant space and attention to public formalities, the considerable demand for private amenity prompts architects to innovate sophisticated planning strategies in the mediation between public and private.[31] The central *corps de logis* becomes increasingly articulated from the side wings as a thick entity between the courtyard and garden.[32] Plans ingeniously combine *enfilade* and *massé* arrangements, though arguably the fairly conventional arrangements of the formal rooms—planning standards largely worked out in the previous century—distinguish individual houses less than their deployment of smaller service and private spaces. These private spaces in particular—the carefully concealed

26. Elias, *The Court Society,* 87.

27. Ibid., 55–56, 63.

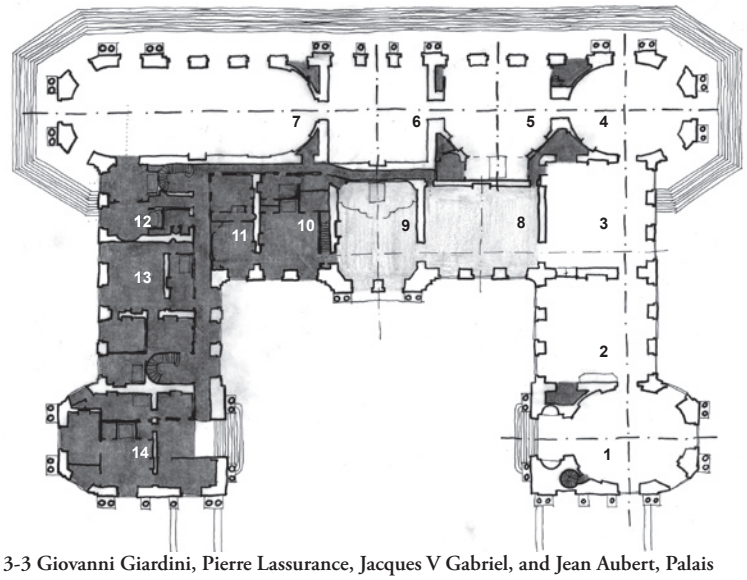
28. By the time of the French Revolution, only a third of aristocratic families are of mediæval origin the rest having appeared after 1600. Girouard, *Life in the French Country House*, 19–21.

29. Elias, *The Court Society,* 55-56.

30. Ibid., 111. Original italics.

31. Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century,* 74.

32. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 101.



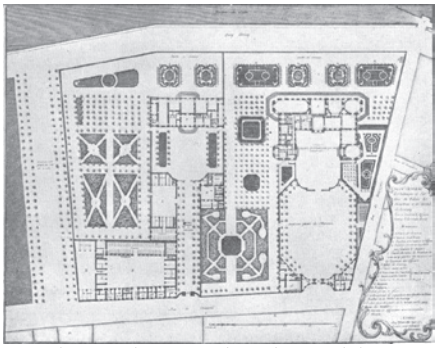
3-3 Giovanni Giardini, Pierre Lassurance, Jacques V Gabriel, and Jean Aubert, Palais Bourbon and Hôtel de Lassay, Paris, 1722-25. Gradient plan.

1. Vestibule
2. Antechambre
3. Dining Room
4. Lounge
5. *Chambre de parade* (state bedroom)
6. *Grand cabinet*
7. Gallery
8. *Salle d'assemblée* (assembly)
9. Bedroom
10. *Cabinet*
11. *Arrière* (rear) *cabinet*
12. Bath suite
13, 14. Bedroom

3-4 Palais Bourbon. Court elevation.

boudoirs,[33] and even hidden *cabinets* in *entresol* floors—are evidence of what historian Richard A. Etlin characterizes as the "bipolar system of display and retreat" in eighteenth-century house organization.[34]

The Palais Bourbon (*3-3, 3-4*) is a high points in the century's skillful planning. It is built on a river-front site in Paris for duchesse Louise-Françoise de Bourbon, a legitimated daughter of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan, who as a widow makes a large speculative fortune. Luxuriously for a city mansion, the Palais Bourbon is laid out on a single ground floor. The formal sequence leads from the entrance vestibule and turns to unfold along an axis parallel to the Seine; behind this sequence are a salon, the main bedroom, and a warren of private boudoirs, guest suites, and a bath apartment. Pre-eminent French eighteenth-century architectural theorist Jacques-François Blondel praises the Palais Bourbon's plan as setting the standard for French architects,[35] and indeed the house's clearly defined axes can be understood as a classic example of Blondel's tripartite programmatic classification of the house interior. This system distinguishes between *parade* ("parade" or formal sequences; the vestibules, galleries, and state bedrooms), *société* ("society" or informal



3-5 Palais Bourbon. Site plan. The Hôtel de Lassay (a.k.a. the "Petit Bourbon") is on the plot to the left, in line with the Palais Bourbon.

33. Small rooms with small beds; Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 3:199.

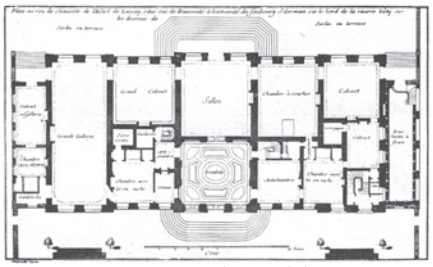
34. Etlin, "*«Les Dedans»*," 139.

35. Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century,* 273.

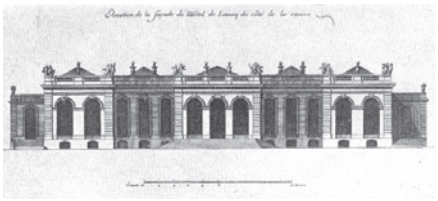
rooms; salons and sometimes dining rooms for family life and convivial entertainment) and *commodité* ("commodity" or "convenience"; not only service areas but boudoirs and small bedrooms, wardrobes and water closets, personal offices and any other room where privacy is needed; Blondel says with respect to the last category,

> We should add that these sorts of Apartments should never be part of the principal *enfilades*, which we show to outsiders; since they are destined for the rest & relaxation of the Masters, it follows that Strangers may enter & leave, after having visited the Building, without being obliged to observe a frequently embarrassing routine, among persons of the same rank, birth or dignity.[36]

I will come back to these categories.



3-6 Pierre Lassurance et. al., Hôtel de Lassay, Paris, 1722–25. Plan.



3-7 Hôtel de Lassay. Elevation.

The *dégagements* or small corridors separating the *parade* from the *société* and *commodité* apartments not only segregate domestic work from idealized spaces, but also improve the independence of the private rooms. This not only reflects general trends in house design, but also the personality of the mistress. The concealing double walls of the duchesse de Bourbon's house recall a similar device built into her suite at Versailles during her father's reign. There, a double wall hides a "flying chair" or mechanical chair-lift communicating with an *entresol cabinet* above; sitting in the chair triggers counterweights that carry the duchesse up to or down from her little room. The machine works delightfully while preserving the seclusion of her *entresol*—until the evening when it malfunctions while in use, leaving the duchesse trapped in the wall space for three hours before anyone hears her cries.[37] Whether with her flying chair or her house plan, the duchesse is clearly willing to pursue inventive lengths in safeguarding her autonomy. Paradoxically, some aspects of her private life are nevertheless broadcast, given that her avant-garde residences attract so much attention.

This is none the more true than with the Hôtel de Lassay (*3-5–3-7*), the Palais Bourbon's sibling house built on the adjacent lot by the duchesse for her long-time lover, the marquis de Lassay. Modest and compact compared to its neighbour, the Hôtel de Lassay recalls in its elevation a simplified Palais Bourbon.[38] The (breached) garden wall separating the properties notwithstanding, these houses make little attempt to conceal their occupants' relationship, what with their shared stables and the clear view of the happily side-by-side buildings from

36. Blondel, *Cours d'Architecture*, 4:210. My translation.

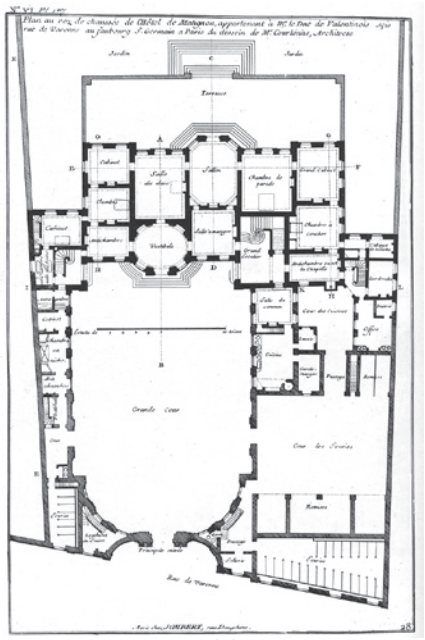
37. Louis XIV orders the flying chair dismantled soon after this incident. Marie, *Versailles au temps de Louis XIV*, 250.

38. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 3:23.

the Tuileries gardens across the river. The Régence is too permissive—and the Duchesse de Bourbon is too rich and powerful—to suppress such a liaison.

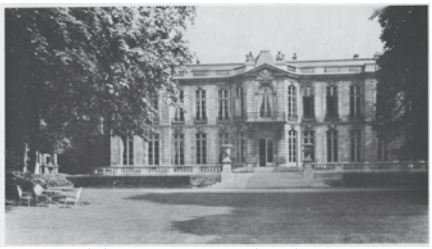
Architect Jean Courtonne in 1725 proposes that architectural symmetry is necessary only when all the parts can be seen at once, as opposed to symmetric geometries that can only be appreciated in plan;[39] consequently, while a building exterior should be symmetrical, each room only has to be symmetrical in itself, allowing the building interior to consist of a variety of rooms.[40] Courtonne nevertheless refrains from mandating that each room be completely unique, arguing that architecture also consists of organic relationships between parts, and his Hôtel de Matignon stays such a balanced course between unity and variety. He arranges the bay widths of the double-enfilade *corps de logis* in a symmetrical rhythm—the number of windows following a pattern of 2-3-2 on the court side and 2-3-3-3-2 on the garden side, both elevations articulated in the centre by projecting octagons—but the depth of each room changes by offsetting the longitudinal wall, resulting in subtle differentiations of space along the *enfilade* and even permitting the outermost bays to accommodate additional small rooms. The *chambres de retraite* are located on cross-axes to the principal *enfilade*, with other secluded *cabinets* at right angles to the bedrooms; additionally, like the previous century's Hôtel d'Avaux, the building mass and side wings absorb the plan's necessary asymmetries, but at the Hôtel de Matignon, the *corps de logis* projects into the garden, producing the effect of a pavilion in a bucolic setting. Of course such a move recalls in the city an aristocratic *château* and by extension, landed entitlements, while also representing in its implied stand-alone mass a widespread yearning for independence.[41] However, there is also remarkable contrast between the court and rear elevations. It may come as a surprise for the visitor to enter the house by way of the dense, enveloping urban mass of the courtyard, only to look back from the garden at the end of their reception sequence and see the house as an object in a landscape. Here and in many other contemporaneous *hôtels*, local symmetry (married to the discontinuity of the seventeenth-century double *enfilade*) results in multiple interpretations of the same house.

Also much like its contemporaries, the Hôtel de Matignon's elevations show an austerity compared with its seventeenth-century predecessors. Windows feel larger than ever, but also in distinction to the variety of interior rooms,



3-8 Jean Courtonne, Hôtel de Matignon, Paris, 1722--24. Ground floor plan.

3-9 Hôtel de Matignon. Court elevation.



3-10 Hôtel de Matignon. Garden elevation.

39. Courtonne, *Traité de perspective*, 97. Quoted in Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 3:197.

40. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 112.

41. Elias, *The Court Society*, 44–45; Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 101.

the fenestration is more repetitive and generic; concealing the inside variety behind a rational, consistent wrapper, the eighteenth-century elevation becomes a mask. Except at a few distinctive locations such as over entrance doors, exterior ornamentation is diminished. Overall pattern, proportion, and scale are more important than detail, as though the facade shirks from too close a scrutiny that might betray the heterogeneity within; but also, it can be said that it is the view *out* of these large openings, to the benefit of the interior, that is more important than the outside view of the elevation.

The architecture of local symmetries and exterior masks suits an age where the consistency of a person's behaviour is less important than his or her *situational* behaviour, a common theme in libertine literature. For example, we have already examined Mme de T———'s skillful navigation of a variety of roles, from more-or-less respectable lady to subtle coquette to open hedonist and back to the appearance of respectability. In the famous novel *Dangerous Liaisons*, masterful seductress the marquise de Merteuil crafts an upright public reputation so successfully that teenaged Cécile de Volanges's priggish mother encourages her daughter's intimate friendship with the marquise, mistakenly anticipating that her daughter will receive morally temperate advice. Meanwhile, the marquise's friend the vicomte de Valmont's dissolute reputation precedes him, so that much of his pursuit of the pure and resistant Madame de Tourvel consists in convincing her of his good and unselfish nature. Situational behaviour does not solely result from calculated deception, however; Tourvel eventually gives herself whole-heartedly to Valmont, and after Valmont aggressively takes virginal Cécile on their first night (she is tricked into giving him her room key, and he "seduces" her under threat of divulging all to her mother), she soon finds enjoyment in their affair.[42] This implies that contrasting conduct from the same individual may at times be an authentic human trait, and not always hypocritical and malicious; libertine literature begins to admit people's complex motivations.

Thus the house is able to support contrasting personalities. Katie Scott, studying the ideologies manifest in the French eighteenth-century house interior, describes how each of Blondel's programmatic spheres not only corresponds to a different mode of social relationship, but also to a correspondingly different architectural and decorative agenda. Thus in *parade* space, interaction is based on the class and priviledge of each actor; in the semi-public

42. Laclos, "Dangerous Liaisons," in *The Libertrine Reader*, 1141.

enfilades of *parade* sequences, social distinctions are displayed and affirmed, where masters instruct their servants and where hosts welcome their peers as guests. Classicism and iconography dominate in these formal settings; symmetry and the ancient orders uphold traditional taste (though the *goût moderne* relaxes this æsthetic slightly), while wall frescoes and tapestries present the family history. Where *parade* space is the theatre of etiquette, *société* space is the province of polite society. Given over to convivial activity like late-night suppers, games, and the debates of the various cultural salons, *société* rooms are where social distinctions are temporarily lifted and all are presumed to be equal; socially,[43] status in the *société* apartment is not based on pedigree, but on such action and competition as winning a card game or conjuring a biting witticism, though the victors risk being unseated at any moment. Similarly, a *société* room is decidedly *not* the place for iconography, and there is little need here for classical references; the design strategy is to establish a general ambiance rather than a narrative of family dignity.[44]

Lastly, *commodité* rooms are set aside for intimacy, where courtiers may drop their masks and finely shaded behaviour. It is in the boudoirs and *cabinets* where the warm, authentic friendships and passionate, secretive affairs that are craved after in the eighteenth century find free expression. More than any other space in the house, the *commodité* suite itself represents individual freedom, and the architecture and

3-13 Privacy (and discovery); *commodité* space.

3-11 Discussion and display; *parade* space.

3-12 Informality, polite society, and the swirl of conversation; *société* space.

43. As *société* space is also the space of the family, familial hierarchies do remain in place here, though perhaps manifested more intimately than in the *parade* suite.

44. Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 107.

3-14 Jacques Verberckt, *Boudoir* of the comtesse de Toulouse, Rambouillet, ca. 1735. Rococo curves and corners.

3-15 Rocaille by Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier.

3-16 Germain Boffrand, Salon de la Princesse, Hôtel de Soubise, Paris, 1735. Perhaps the most famous French Rococo interior.

decoration of these rooms are as fanciful, permissive, and capricious as the behaviour concealed within. *Goût moderne* then evolves into the Rococo style; classical architectural features continue to reduce and disappear from informal interiors while colours lighten, and wood paneling is carved into restless ornamental plant shapes that obscure divisions. Reliefs and paintings show racy humour (*3-18*), winking putti, the trysts of the gods, and especially erotic nudes; large windows blend room and garden, or mirrors multiply the space optically, an interior expansion. The smaller and more removed the room, the more Rococo's fantasies concentrate. Theorists such as Blondel explicitly state that such decorative freedom must remain proportional to the

degree of seclusion; though of course reality is never as neat at theory—and Rococo does sometimes make its way into the *parade* suites or even to the street elevation—in general the confinement of Rococo's full *panache* to informal and private rooms is respected.[45] Rococo is, in France at least, a style of the interior, about interiority, its frantic movement and artful frivolity sweetly enveloping the occupant (*3-14*).[46]

The name Rococo is derived from *rocaille*, sinuous, exotic, concave, shell-like forms. Juste-Aurèle Meissonier and Jacques de Lajoue publish engravings in the mid-1730's exploring a language of shell forms and shapes (*3-15, 3-17*). These convexities and concavities eliminate the regimentation of flat planes and abolish the definition of wall, floor and ceiling. They are the whiplash curves of an erotic, restless nature; *rocaille* is not only the shell, it is the twisting vine, the curling leaf, the voluptuous body, the clouds, a wave, rapids, fire; it is an almost violent, pagan dance. The shell itself carries metaphors intuited by the fashionable nobles chafing under their constraints. A shell is after all a volume expanding from some inner growth, straining the urge to burst; it is the opalescent, mysterious creation of nature, found washed up from the sea. From what strange submerged kingdom does it hail? How far this world must be from the rationality of our rectilinear human institutions. The shell is ultimately a shelter; in Meissonier and Lajoue's engravings, see how the centres of the shell forms are empty compared to their surroundings, as though they are meant for the occupation of the viewer's mind and body; *rocaille* composition is most interested in the shell's concavity, in its sensual, feminine embrace where one can recline in bliss, as barely conscious and untroubled as the shell's original mollusc inhabitant.

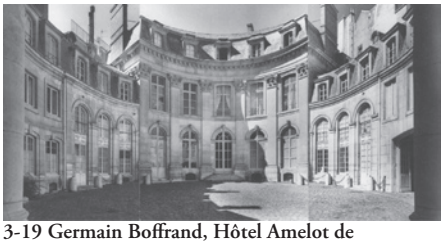
The shell is also of course the vessel that brings Aphrodite ashore, and we can say that the shell is in the final analysis about the body it displays. *Commodité* rooms in particular are tailored to the individual body; baths have transformed from the large bassins of Madame de Montespan's Appartement des Bains to the smaller modern tub, and wall niches form tightly-scaled precincts for couches (*3-29*). Couches and upholstered chairs are a particular obsession of the eighteenth century; the variety of models and names attest to the inventiveness pored into the comfort and marketing of these pieces. From the *fauteuil* or padded armchair comes the *bergère*, its arms completely padded down to the seat, more completely enveloping the body, more shell-like; even more relaxed is the *duchesse*, a *bergère* with a deep enough seat to

3-17 Rocaille by Jacques de Lajoue.

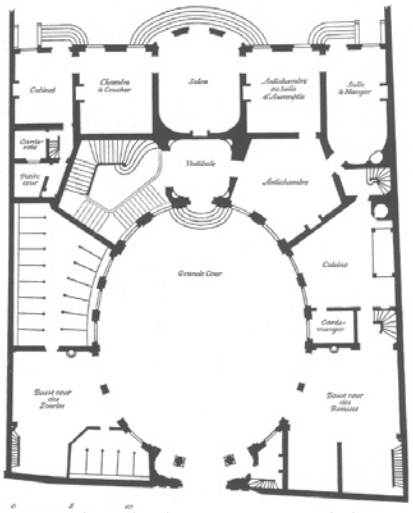
45. The escape of Rococo ornament to the elevation is sometimes snobbishly blamed on the bourgeoisie, as supposedly free as they are from noble conventions or the real need for *parade* sequences (Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century,* 102-103.). As we shall see, the aristocratic ambitions of some upper bourgeois defy this generalization.

46. In contrast, for instance, the contemporaneous, astoundingly Rococo churches of Bavaria prove that beyond France this style is not only fit for public display, but even religious representation.

3-18 Wall paintings depicting anthropomorphic monkeys, from a country *château boudoir*.



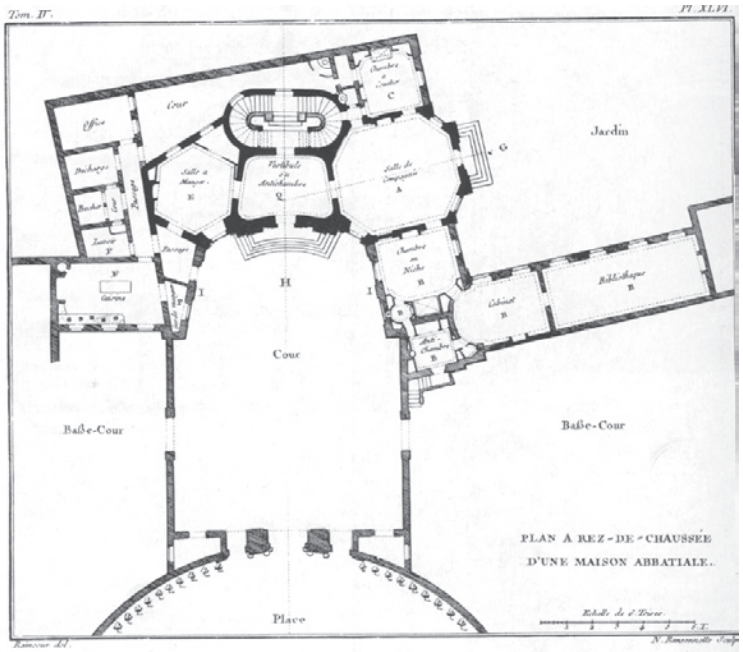
3-19 Germain Boffrand, Hôtel Amelot de Gournay, Paris, 1712. Court view.



3-20 Hôtel Amelot de Gournay. Ground plan.

support the legs. Couches have such exotic nomenclature as the *canapé* and *ottomane*; other evocatively-named variations of the day-bed include the *sultane*, the *turquoise*, the *paphose*, and the *veilleuse*, inviting the recliner to stretch out his or her arms and dream.[47]

The private couch is the counterpart in nearly every way to the public state bed.[48] Whereas the state bed represents the noble's duty and power, the couch is the emblem of the aristocrat's equally characteristic leisure;[49] if the formal bed is marked by the responsibility to carry on the family line, the couch is the place of momentary pleasures. There can be nothing further from the rectilinearity of the *lit carré* than the sofa's supple cushions and rounded ergonomics, and while the bed points the sleeping body down the major axis of the bedroom, the sofa lays out the body to fully face the boudoir from its half-open niche. Posture itself is significantly different; in the bed, one lies plainly flat, but eighteenth-century chairs and couches, with their backrests, armrests, low seats and pillows, encourage a reclining slouch, the feet hovering off the floor, the spine reshaped into yet another concave *rocaille* line (*3-22*).



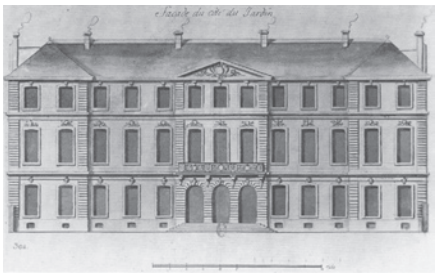
3-21 François Franque, Abbot's House, Villers-Cotterets, 1765. House plans like this one and the Hôtel Amelot de Gournay employ Rococo geometries, which Franque in particular uses to resolve spatial and programmatic challenges on a difficult site. Most French Rococo houses, such as de Cotte's project for the Montesquiou House, opposite, tend to have less florid plans. Typically, public and private axes are resolved parrallel and perpendicular to each-other; if they indulge in the Rococo style, it is usually in the decoration of room interiors or garden plans.

47. Verlet, *French Furniture and Interior Decoration of the 18th Century*, 178, 113, 131–32, 149–50.

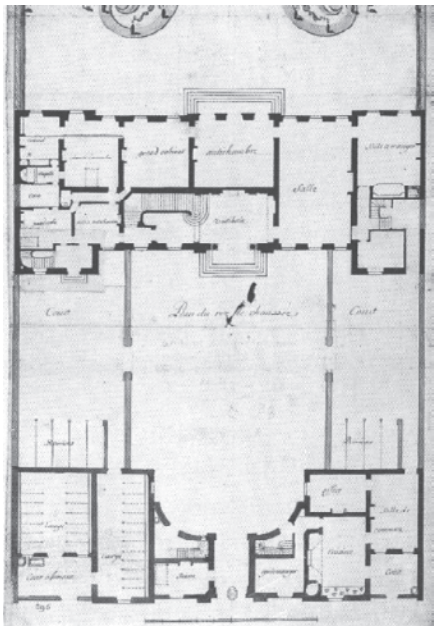
48. Verlet, *French Furniture and Interior Decoration* …, 146.

49. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* …, 172.

3-22 François Boucher, *Madame Boucher*, **1743**



3-23 Robert de Cotte, Montesquiou House (project), 1710s--20s (?). Garden elevation.



3-24 Montesquiou House. Ground floor plan.

Thus not only is the Rococo seat a shell, but so is the body. Hence the vogue for nude illustrations and paintings where the supine and relaxed figure (almost always female) is not only embraced by the furniture, but is herself made inviting to the viewer's imaginative caresses (*3-25—3-28*).[50] The Rococo nude is the receptacle for our desires and fantasies,[51] a "passive vessel,"[52] a space just for one in a warm, plump body itself folded into the soft hug of cushions and uphostery, well-protected in a closed, private, domestic space (in some images carefully illustrated, in others vaguely detailed), all these layers necessary to envelop us and shut away at least for a time the unending weightiness of life in the glaring *enfilade*.

The furniture's own inherently sensual contact with the nude, becoming, in a manner of speaking, her lover, is another way for us to "enter" the image. In Crébillon fils's novel *The Sofa: A Moral Tale*, Amanzei, a Hindu courtier of the Indian ruler Shah Baham, recounts his re-incarnation several times into the "bodies" of boudoir sofas, punishment from Brahma for Amanzei's dissolute behaviour. His soul observes a variety of candid conversations, negotiations, and seductions. This soul's passive voyeurism is broken only at the end of his story, when he becomes the couch of Zeinis, a woman so extraordinarily beautiful that Amanzei quickly falls in love. Much to the couch's delight, Zeinis stretches herself upon him for a nap: "'She cast herself carelessly upon me. Gods! With what rapture I received her! And as Brahma,

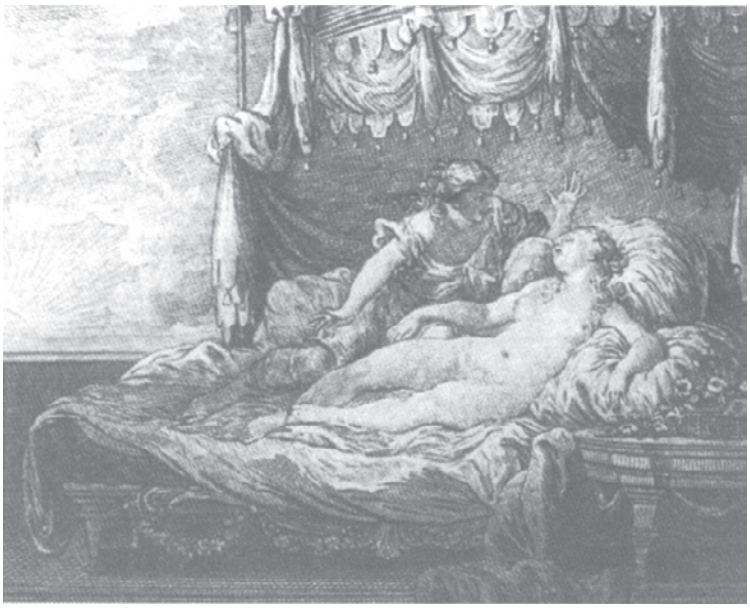
50. Stewart, *Engraven Desire*, 179.

51. The Rococo nude is of course almost always painted by a man, and presumes a male audience, but we can also regard it as emblematic to a female audience of erotic desire in general (Stewart, *Engraven Desire*, 335.). Also, we might identify with the figure herself; the Rococo nude's emotional "blankness" (Lucie-Smith, *The Nude*, 94.) is therefore open to the projections of the viewer—who in this case, ironically, may not necessarily be female!

In terms of the nude as receptacle of the artist's and viewer's vision, this parallels the largely allegorical function of female characters in libertine literature, who present the moral or philosophical key to their stories (Cusset, *No Tomorrow*, 12.); women as figures or characters embody our ideas.

52. Stewart, *Engraven Desire*, 175.

3-25 Charles-Josepth Natoire, *Cupid and Psyche*, **in the Salon de la Princesse, Hôtel de Soubise, 1738.**



3-26 Dorat, *The Morning Kiss*.

3-27 Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *Young Woman Playing with a Dog*, **1765--72.**

3-28 François Boucher, *Marie-Louise O'Murphy.*

in confining my soul to a sofa had given it the choice of being in whatever part it wished, with what pleasure did I not at once take advantage of this liberty!'"[53] While Amanzei's soul takes in every detail of Zeinis's body, she turns over in her slumber so that her lips nearly touch the cushion. As Amanzei narrates:

> "Thus, I could, in spite of Brahma's strict commands, somewhat gratify my violent desires: my soul transferred itself to the cushion, so close to Zeinis's mouth that at length it succeeded in adhering wholly to it. … [I] tried, but in vain, to glide entirely into Zeinis; but held back in its prison by Brahma's cruel commands, not all my soul's struggles could set it free. Its violent efforts, its ardor, its furious desires, apparently warmed Zeinis's. No sooner did my soul perceive the effect it was having on hers than it redoubled its attempts. It fluttered more rapidly over Zeinis's lips, dashed over them with greater speed, clung to them with hotter fire. The disorder that began to suffuse Zeinis's soul increased the pain and the pleasure of mine. Zeinis sighed, I sighed …"[54]

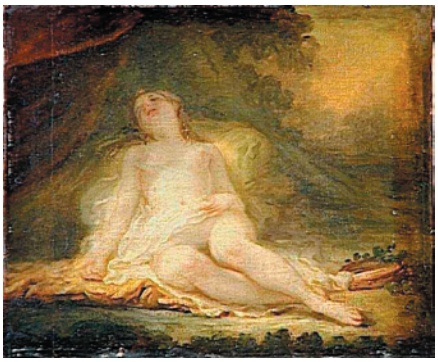
3-29 A *boudoir* alcove.

53. Crébillon fils, "The Sofa," in *The Libertine Reader*, p. 321.

54. Ibid., p. 322.

Such exquisite constraint! Amanzei's soul strains to overcome its physical confinement and freely experience pleasure, a struggle which, in spite of its hopeless vanity, bears pleasures of its own:

> "No doubt a soul, hampered by its bodily organs, forced to measure its transports by their weakness, cannot, when imprisoned in a body, give itself over to them so strongly as when it is rid of it. Sometimes we even feel it, during a keen pang of pleasure, trying to force the barriers of the body, diffusing itself throughout its prison, filling the whole with its devouring fire and turmoil, vainly seeking for outlet, till at last, spent by its efforts, it sinks into that lethargy which seems for a time to blot it out. That, it seems to me, is the cause of the exhaustion excessive delights brings upon us."[55]



3-30 Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *Sleeping Bacchante*.

Thus libertine culture makes a virtue out of barriers, Catherine Cusset's positive value of the limit. Life may be tightly circumscribed, but the libertine will take advantage of every opportunity left within these confines, making the most of every remaining scrap of liberty. But there is also an ambition to transcend the limit. Cusset argues that libertinism is rooted philosophically in a rejection of Descartes's metaphysics in favour of materialism,[56] and consequently, the sublime, a sensibility surpassing reason and therefore the senses, is also rejected by libertine culture: "*Libertinage* is incredulous of infinity."[57] Given the libertine fascination with the fleeting immediacy of physical pleasure and libertinism's fundamental critique of those moral absolutes that deny us such pleasure, Cusset is correct; however, is there anything less sublime than the soul in *The Sofa* yearning to escape its inert prison, straining with every ounce of incorporeal will to emancipate itself from the cushion's last thread and unite with its beloved? Is there nothing unearthly in the discovery that longing, in its combination of pain and pleasure, consists of desiring that which is beyond the self, and the imagination's attempt to complete that which is only partly possessed feeds the hunger and further increases the appetite? Quite simply, is the libertine location of desire in the soul not itself a metaphysical proposition?[58] Could the positive value of the limit not lie, in fact, in the possibility for transcendance *within* the limit itself?

Libertinism not only seeks to explore restrained liberty and find the limit's positive value, it ultimately wants to transcend that very limit, to enjoy what is hoarded and witheld, and derives energy from the unending struggle in this direction.

55. Crébillon fils, "The Sofa," in *The Libertine Reader*, 322.

56. Cusset, *No Tomorrow*, 2.

57. Ibid., 3. Original italics.

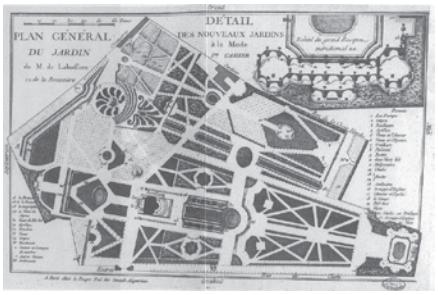
58. Cusset may herself have the same prejudice—that pleasure is entirely rooted in the sensual and empirical—that is one of the reasons pleasure is often dismissed or ignored.

This could not be otherwise in eighteenth-century France; when Amanzei rails against his god's cruel punishment, do we not hear the nobility's ineffective grumblings over the yoke placed by its own monarch and society? When *The Sofa*'s narrator muses that the futile battle of soul against body is the genesis of orgasmic rapture, can we not see how this discourse comes from a time of routinized court tensions, of both disappointment with and full-on resignation to the requirements of aristocratic display, of the acceptance of the tyrannical absolutist gaze as one's own? Libertinism desires freedom, but accepts freedom's impossibility, and so libertine transcendance is not an obvious emancipation—no bursting of shackles—but an infinitely more sophisticated search for freedom within confines, with and through its very limits (*3-31–3-32*). The libertine's space of pleasure is a kind of TARDIS, endless on the inside while maintaining its discrete outside scale. Mme de T———'s boudoir does

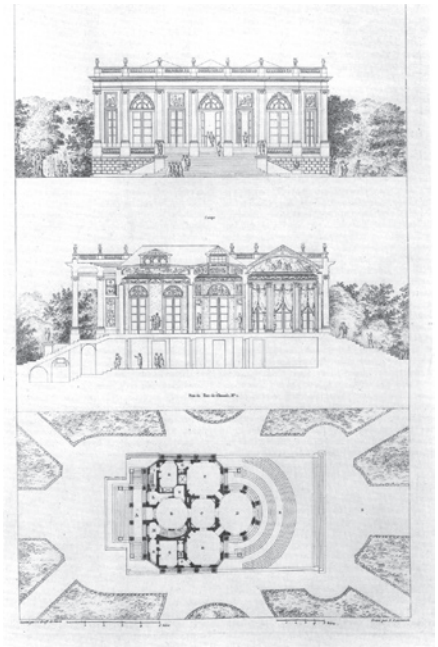
3-31 Juste-Aurèle Meissonier, Cabinet of Count Bielenski, 1734.
The window and door offer ways out, but the mirrors offers infinity.

3-32 Salon Doré, Hôtel de Matignon, 1725, Paris.

this, the mirrored walls perfectly screening the inside activity while interminably expanding that precious interiority, and the ingenious ways she manipulates her three men achieve a similar result, turning the very social conventions that would otherwise constrain her to increase her own personal liberty. Perhaps even the theorists' opposition to Rococo's escape from the boudoir onto the elevation is not only a matter of upholding public decorum, but also driven by the sense that to contain the Rococo is to maximize its potency, that fantasy is only as good as its total removal from the real world. It could be agreed that libertinism is not the art of trascend*ing* limits, but of transcend*ant* limits.



3-33 Jean-Michel Chevoter, Gardens of the Pavillon de la Boissière, Paris, 1751. Site plan.



3-34 Antoine-Mathieu Le Carpentier, Pavillon de la Boissière, Paris, 1751. Elevation, section, and plan.

An interest in the positive value of the limit may in part also explain the eighteenth-century fascination with the *petite maison*, or "little house", a garden pavilion type which reveals, upon reflection, a curious urge to build a small, contained environment set into the freedom represented by outdoor landscape. While often elaborately designed and well-viewed from the *parade* apartments, the *hôtel* garden is also secluded enough to be thought of at the same time as a private precinct (one eighteenth-century observer refers to gardens as a "*grande commodité*").[59] If, as we have seen, there is freedom in privacy, then the garden is another emancipatory space. Add to this the myth of bucolic idealism, in which the countryside is where lazy, lustful shepherds and shepherdesses savour love in unprejudiced nature beneath open skies and shielded if necessary behind hills and shrubery, and the garden nullifies the stresses of the urban court in the same way as any out-of-view dressing room. But if the nude painting creates its space of erotic freedom through layering, then so too does the *petite maison* that adds extra seclusion in the garden, an escape-within-an-escape. Nevertheless, the *petite maison* is far from introverted; its *massé* plan reduces the length of any *enfilade*, so that axes quickly lead to views or access back out to the garden (*3-34*).

Sufficiently distanced from the public sphere and rejecting *parade* sequences, the *petite maison* is composed primarily of *société* and *commodité* spaces, and is just as free of architectural rules.[60] Consequently, it is the frequent setting for informal social gatherings, but the garden pavilion is also well-known as the place of seduction. Mme de T—— — has already introduced us to this with her *petite maison*, beautiful enough to bring her courtship of the young man to its first climax.[61] The *petite maison* described in detail in

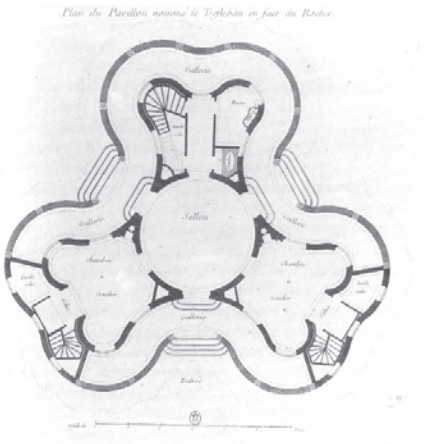
59. "Great commodity." Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 283.

60. Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century,* 108.

61. How many of today's architects can say their work inspires as much?

The Little House: An Architectural Seduction by architect Jean-François de Bastide is equally carnal and focused in purpose. This book basically promotes contemporaneous painters, garden designers, furniture makers, interior designers—even a pyrotechnician!—by name to potential clients, disguising its propaganda as an erotic novel. The marquis de Trémicour wears down the resistance of his object of interest, Mélite, by overwhelming her with the delight and beauty of his *petite maison*. Mélite, an especially tasteful woman, is astonished with every feature of the pavilion, and its design is meant to elicit immediate, emotional reactions; its salon "inspired the tenderest feelings, feelings that one believes one could have only for its owner;"[62] the bedroom "coerced even the coldest minds to sense something of the voluptuousness it proclaimed."[63] Mélite marvels at the mirror-lined boudoir, painted and decorated to resemble a garden (recalling "No Tomorrow"), and she is so weakened by the luxury of the bathroom and wardrobe that she must sit down. Trémicour begins to suggest that the artistic virtues of his house are proof of his own virtuous feelings: "'Admit,' he challenged, 'that my *petite maison* is worthy of its name. Although you have reproached me for not feeling love, you will at least concede that so many things here capable of inspiring it should honor my imagination. Furthermore, I am convinced that you still fail to comprehend how one can possess an insensitive heart and such tender ideas all at once.'"[65] Trémicour is seldom this forthright, largely refraining from excessively pressing Mélite, a tactic that helps win her over: "What seduced Mélite here was Trémicour's inaction in expressing such tenderness. Nothing alarmed her defences, for she was not being attacked. She was being adored, and adored silently."[66] The seducer need not say much; architecture speaks for him.

That Trémicour manipulates Mélite by equating the intimacy of his house with the intimacy of his soul implies that this is a common idea, and it can even be used against an opponent.[67] To be allowed into someone's private room or pavilion is a special privilege, often with obvious erotic associations. The marquise de Merteuil, the seductress of *Dangerous Liaisons*, sets up such a charged scene for her lover. The chevalier, anticipating an evening with the marquise, shows up at the door of her *petite maison* only to be turned away, but also given a note to meet someone at a different location. He there meets an unknown footman (Merteuil's loyal chambermaid, Victoire,[68] in disguise), who brings him



3-35 Emmanuel Héré, Trèfle, Lunéville, ca. 1742. Plan.

62. Bastide, *The Little House*, 67, 71–72.
63. Ibid., 74.
64. Ibid., 76, 83.
65. Ibid., 84.
66. Ibid., 102–103.
67. Recall that centuries earlier, the *estude* is regarded as the "soul" of the house.
68. "Victoire" is the French "Victoria," but also the French word for "victory".

back to the *petite maison* to find the marquise waiting for him. They stroll the garden, then enter the house; as Merteuil recounts to Valmont:

> First he sees a table laid for two, next—a bed prepared. We pass through to my boudoir, decked out for the occassion in its full splendour. There, half deliberately, half impulsively, I put my arms around him and sink to my knees. 'Oh, my dear!' I say, 'I am sorry that I distressed you by a show of bad humour. It was but for the sake of arranging this surprise. I am sorry that I could for an instant have veiled my heart from your gaze. Forgive me, and let my love make amends for my sin.' You can imagine the effect produced by this sentimental speech.[69]

As in *The Little House*, Merteuil's *petite maison* is an architecture meant to be penetrated, the sequenced discovery of its ever-more private rooms analogous to the uncovering of the owner—emotional, and otherwise.

A curious theme emerging throughout libertine literature is the inclusion or exclusion of the servant. The libertine's servant is either a confidante or an unwanted observer. We have already observed Mme de T———'s deciding over which servant to wake to prepare her boudoir, and are acquainted with the marquise de Merteuil's appropriately-named Victoire. The vicomte de Valmont also has a few telling encounters with servants early in his pursuit of Madame de Tourvel. Wishing to get his hands on Tourvel's private correspondence, Valmont conspires with his valet to "catch" the servant with Tourvel's chambermaid one night. Found in such a compromising condition, the maid readily succumbs to Valmont's blackmail and procurs for him her mistress's letters, in order to keep her affair secret.[70] The maid is the back way into Tourvel's private life, so to speak, but is human and flawed enough herself to be open to manipulation. Elsewhere in the novel, Tourvel has Valmont followed by her manservant during his hunting excursions in the countryside, an espionage he quickly realizes. This shadowing he quickly turns to his advantage; one day he amuses himself by following an awkward path, making the spy's pursuit all the more exhausting, until Valmont "happens" upon an impoverished family whose possessions are to be seized in lieu of unpaid taxes (in truth, of course, Valmont has learned about their situation ahead of time). Magnanimously paying the family's debts, Valmont is celebrated by the village crowd, including the spy who has now come out of hiding

69. Laclos, "Dangerous Liaisons," in *The Libertine Reader*, 957. Original punctuation.

70. Ibid., 1007–1009.

and will assuredly report this story of authentic generosity to his sentimental mistress.[71] Valmont turns the tables on the servant spy to control Tourvel's intelligence; because Tourvel distrusts external appearances, she is more willing to trust what is unguarded, an assumption Valmont uses against her.

The idea of servants as operating in parallel to their masters, and the danger of their intimate knowledge, finds its architectural equivalent in domestic service spaces. The network of *dégagements*, small staircases, and servants' attic in the Palais Bourbon is one example of the hidden systems used to simultaneously circumvent and connect the public and masters' spaces of the house. It is as though the service space is not supposed to exist; indeed, much of the enjoyment in studying eighteenth-century house plans lies in following the networks of passageways slipped in behind boudoir sofa niches and cut diagonally through structure, the wardrobes tightly clustered in contrast to the breadth and geometric clarity of the main rooms, and the strange little hidden stairs tucked in wherever the plan will accept, implying mysterious connections to surprising half-storeys whose plans the architect has declined to publish. In these service networks we are aware of a hidden world within the house as fascinating as the house's more open, social world—or even more fascinating, simply by virtue of its concealment, necessary in such a house where public and private requirements are so complex. Service spaces contain the dirty laundry of the house, both literally and figuratively. Where great effort is placed in refined display and preserved privacy—resulting in numerous possibilities for deception and secrecy—it is in those places set aside for the work behind it all where we often imagine the truth is to be found, where the whole story is known. Additionally, service passages offer an alternative way in or out of a suite of rooms, improving our independence by increasing our choice of movement—but they also leave the suite more open to intrusion.

Sometimes the masters themselve build these devices for their own use, such as those super-private *entresol cabinets* reached by hidden stairs not only meant for service use (*3-36–3-38*). The marquise de Merteuil has such a hidden staircase leading to her boudoir, and she conspires to have her would-be lover, Prévan, use it to meet her for their first tryst. In actual fact, the marquise has decided to make a fool of him; at the decisive moment when they are alone, Merteuil calls her servants for protection, claiming that Prévan has invaded

3-36, 3-37, 3-38 The low ceiling of a small *cabinet* conceals an *entresol* floor above, connected by a hidden stair.

71. Laclos, "Dangerous Liaisons," in *The Libertine Reader*, 969–971.

her room, thus branding the gentleman a criminal. Though the hidden stair proves to be an omen of deception for Prévan, we imagine that it leads other friends of Merteuil's to more comfortable results.

At other times, hidden architectures are used to minimize or eliminate the presence of servants altogether. While Mme de T———, the marquise de Merteuil, and the vicomte de Valmont each have at least one servant they can trust, Trémicour does not seem to be so blessed. He sends his valets away when he first approaches his *petite maison* with Mélite,[72] and for the rest of the visit, servants are a largely hidden presence; musicians play for the couple from behind a screen, and the table is already set to eat when they enter the dining room.[73] Human table service during the meal is replaced by remarkable architectural devices (unsurprisingly, in the professional advertising that is *The Little House*), so that a revolving door is "served by unseen hands, at Trémicour's signal,"[74] and the table suddenly drops through the floor into the cellar to be replaced by another table from above.[75] Trémicour explains to Mélite that he has gone to such lengths to dismiss the servants because "'they gossip, and would give you a reputation,'"[76] bringing us to the problem at the heart of the servant's domestic presence.

The noble's household, large and complex, is traditionally seen as a close-knit unit, an extended family that includes the servants.[77] With the reassertion of privacy, however, the aristocrat's independence becomes a very *personal* rather than political one, and servants are now often seen as more intrusive.[78] Add to this the change in the servants' social origins; whereas in past generations, the upper and middle nobility's servants tend to belong to the lower nobility, they are by the seventeenth century almost entirely commoners.[79] By the eighteenth century then, awareness of the lower class's troubling presence in the *hôtel* and *château* is widespread, troubling because these commoners now have intimate knowledge of the reality behind the display of aristocratic power which, after all, is one of the very means—and during absolutism, one of the only means—to assert superiority over those very commoners. This intimacy is uncomfortable enough with regards to normal states of discomposure—what Blondel refers to as frequently embarrassing routines—but it is all the more dangerous when it involves sexuality, threatened by the possibility of exposure.

72. Bastide, *The Little House*, 67.

73. Ibid, 80, 98.

74. Ibid, 99.

75. Ibid., 99–100

76. Ibid., 98.

77. Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 96.

78. One telling change in habits is the growing trend for personal servants to sleep in the wardrobes adjacent to their masters' bedrooms, rather than at the feet of their masters' beds.

Another example of the interest in privacy is the architectural debate between the use of corridors or multiple staircases for circulation; each side (Blondel, for instance, prefers stairs) counts among the merits of its championed preference the reduction of noise to the masters' rooms. Etlin, "*«Les Dedans»*",144–145; Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 3:200; Blondel, *De la Distribution* …, 1:129.

79. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* …, 59.

Libertine activity is the contravention of moral rules without repercussion; herein lies its fullest appeal to the aristocrat. Of course there are many other reasons for the importance of libertinism in the eighteenth century: eroticism is a logical topic of interest in an era fascinated with privacy and sensuality; there is the stereotypical boredom of the nobility, with little political work left but prevented from engagement in bourgeois professions or industry; the economic and prestigious nature of most noble marriages leading many to seek passionate variety and sometimes even loving relationships elsewhere, court society generally grown permissive of private infidelity;[80] sexual adventures are one of the petty means of interpersonal competition within static court life,[81] where, like Merteuil and Valmont in *Dangerous Liaisons*, the winner of a seduction often exposes the loser's intimate feelings while keeping his or hers under control, thereby proving mastery over courtly self-composure. But libertinism's fullest value is in the satisfaction it brings to those who, even if only in private, can experience a moment of precious omnipotence, enjoying one of the small freedoms their social rank still offers them. Aristocrats reclaim their privilege as above the law in a small but powerful way by giving themselves hedonistic licence.

The culture of display under absolutism compensates its actors with maximum private liberty; so long as nobles uphold the traditional order in public, they may go so far as to maintain contradictory values in private. Eventually, in an era and ideology so dominated with the visual and appearances, many come to feel that all that matters is maintaining appearances rather than upholding the values behind them. Sissela Bok calls such a condition of holding secret moral positions "esoteric ethics."[82] Bok also explains that such practices are, of course, by their nature corrupting, and unless group secrecy is not confined and held immediately accountable, it tends to lead to widespread cynicism, the world being seen as composed as insiders and outsiders.[83] It is a dangerous game that dissolute nobles play. The very fear of secrets becoming too well-known is not only the fear of individual exposure and the personal loss of face, but if widespread enough, it will erode faith in the noble class itself, something its precarious position can ill-afford. This is the fear represented by indiscreet servants, not only as commoners who see more of the aristocracy's lives than they should, but also because they are in a position to carry knowledge of the noblity's esoteric ethics to the

3-39 Nicolas Lancret, *The Morning*, ca. 1738.

80. Elias, *The Court Society*, 51.
81. Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 204.
82. Bok, *Secrets*, 112.
83. Bok, *Secrets*, 112.

outside. Servants are a reminder of the house's inevitable porosity, in spite of all attempts to keep it and its secrets airtight. But they are not the only example of this porosity; the erotic novel, the *petite* nude,[84] the fashion for Rococo interiors, are all cultural expressions of private life that in one way or another make their way into public discourse. In celebrating the recuperation of their personal independence, the aristocracy begin to alter their very reputation as a class.

84. Clark, *The Nude*, 148.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Distractions

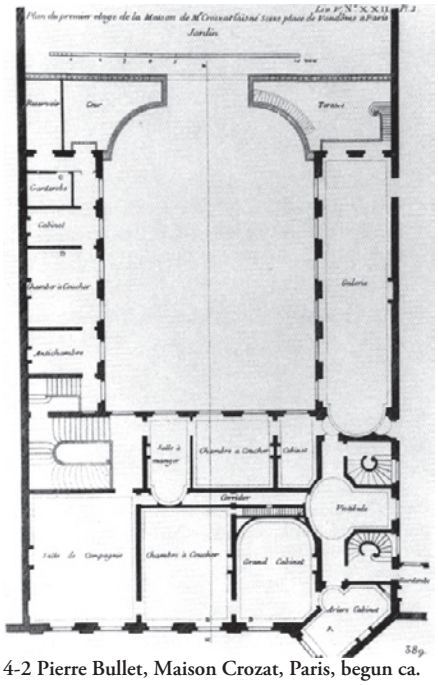
"Separating Louis de Bourbon from the king of France was, as is well-known, what the monarch found to be the most piquant *about his royal existence."*

—Madame Campan,
Lady-in-Waiting to
Marie Antoinette,
on Louis XV[1]

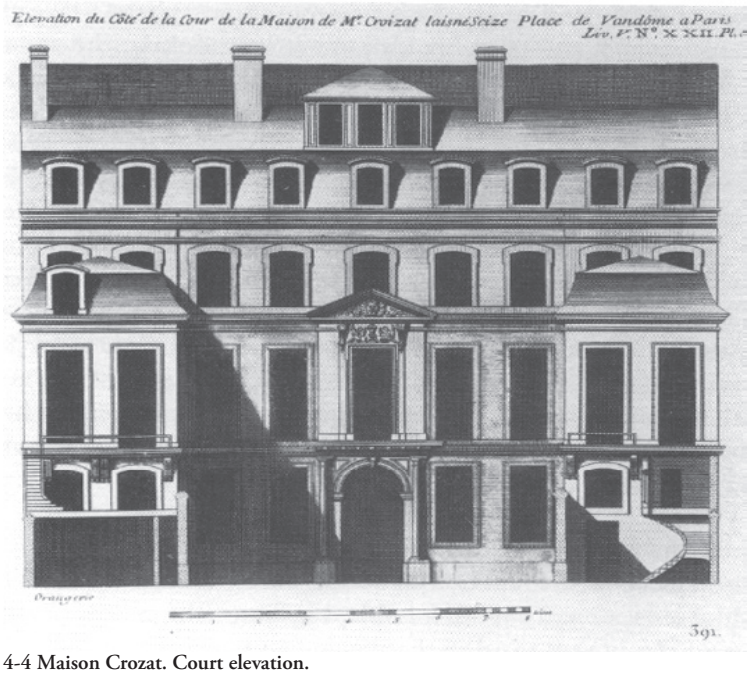
The Maison Crozat is built by the northwest corner of the Place Louis-le-Grand, better known as the Place Vendôme (*4-1*), by the wealthy financier Antoine Crozat in 1700. The square itself, at first meant as a royal public square but reconceived as a residential development when royal finances begin to strain, is one of the most prestigious addresses in Paris towards the end of Louis XIV's reign; a consistent facade is first built, demarcating a rectangular public space with bevelled corners, behind which investors—a mix of nobility and bourgeoisie—purchase lots where they build as they wish. Crozat's house is centred on a courtyard with a garden at the back (*4-2–4-4*); the grand stair to the left of the entry passage leads to M. and Mme Crozat's suites, separated by a narrow corridor; his apartment overlooks the courtyard, hers overlooks the Place Vendôme. Another stair to the right of the entry first leads to an *entresol* where Crozat's cashier lives facing the square,[2] and then further up to a keyhole-shaped vestibule. This vestibule is not only a circulatory hinge, but as it were, it lies between Crozat's two public faces; at one end is a *cabinet* that is for a time used by Antoine Crozat as a home office (the secondary stair is likely used for business callers); on the other side of the vestibule, its door in line with the *cabinet* entrance, is a long, mirrored gallery whose painted ceiling by an Italian artist draws many visitors, and whose gilded surfaces conspicuously violate sumptuary laws. The *cabinet* is Crozat as the successful and clever entrepreneur belonging to France's Third Estate, the class of commoners. The gallery, with its court and garden view, culminating as it does all the ceremonial sequences

4-1 Ærial view of the Place Vendôme, Paris.

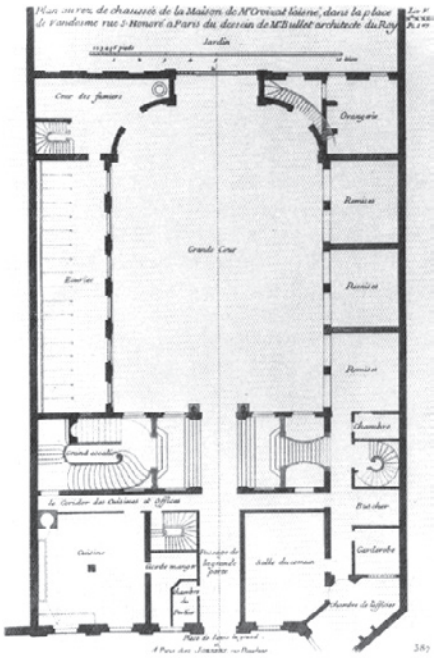
1. Campan, *Mémoires*, 22. My translation.
2. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 45.



4-2 Pierre Bullet, Maison Crozat, Paris, begun ca. 1700. First floor plan.



4-4 Maison Crozat. Court elevation.

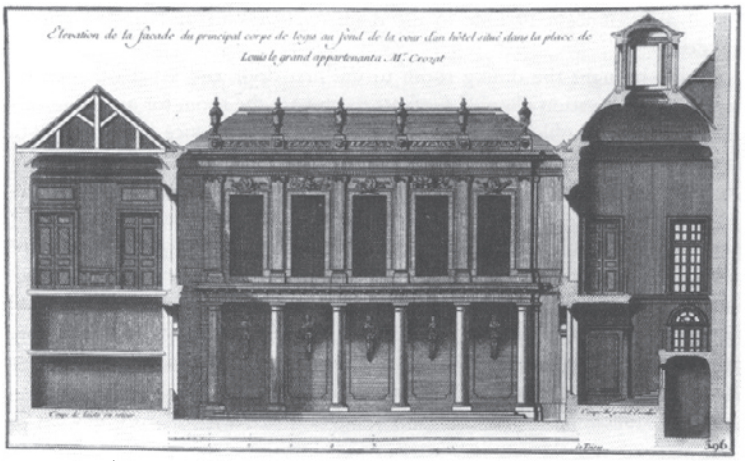


4-3 Maison Crozat. Ground floor plan.

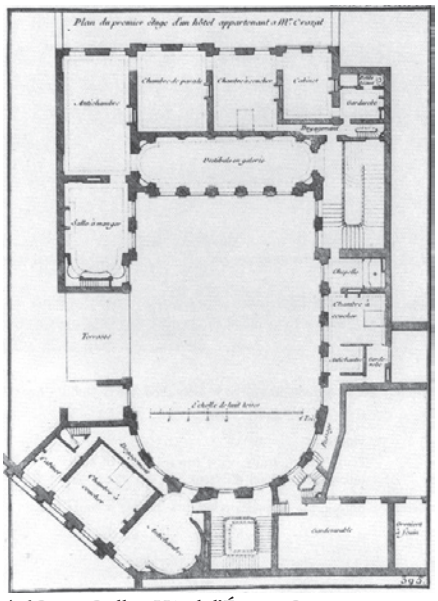
of the first floor, is Crozat as the society man, exhibiting the taste and possessions worthy of an aristocrat, if not a member of the noble court itself.

A few years later in 1706, Antoine Crozat takes a significant step to realizing his aristocratic pretentions. In a transparent and widely-mocked arrangement, Crozat marries off his twelve-year-old daughter, Marie-Anne, to the twenty-eight-year-old, heavily indebted Henri-Louis de La Tour d'Auvergne, comte d'Évreux (*4-9*), agreeing not only to pay off his son-in-law's debts on top of a lavish dowry, but also to pay for his living expenses for six years, and to build for the couple a new house next to Crozat's own.[3] This house, the Hôtel d'Évreux (*4-5–4-7*)—technically, only nobles have the right to call their houses *hôtels*, while even the wealthiest bourgeois may only call their houses *maisons*, though this custom already loosens by the 1600s—re-uses and translates some of the Maison Crozat's devices. For instance, the *hôtel* courtyard is the same shape as the *maison*'s, but reversed, and the main staircases are accessed from the court and not the entry passage, assuring the courtyard's use as a place of reception. Between court and garden is a double-room deep *corps de logis*, the ground floor for the comte's summer inhabitation, the first floor for the rest of the year and formal use.[4] It is unusual in an *hôtel* for two floors to be devoted to one person; usually both husband and wife each live on one floor, their apartments superimposed.[5] But d'Évreux's

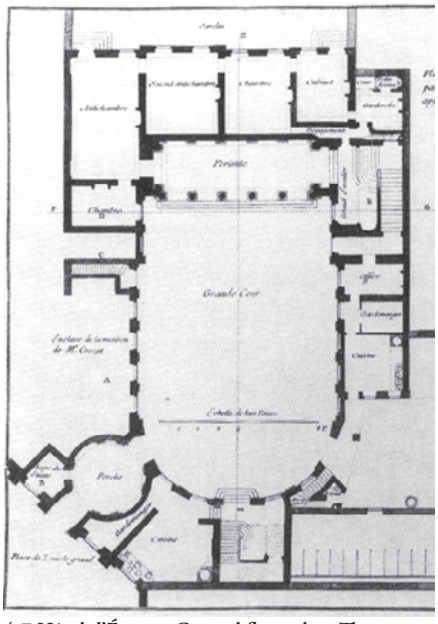
3. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 50–51.
4. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 52, 60.
5. Ibid., 53–55.



4-5 Hôtel d'Évreux. Court elevation, with collonade vestibule.



4-6 Pierre Bullet, Hôtel d'Évreux, Paris, 1707. First floor plan.



4-7 Hôtel d'Évreux. Ground floor plan. The carriageway and stables to the right extend to a back street.

wife does not live in the *corps de logis*; instead she lives on the other side of the courtyard, her main apartment, like her mother's, overlooking the Place Vendôme, with its own separate staircase.

Aristocratic marriages are of course seldom very close, though beyond this there may even be some embarrassment on the part of d'Évreux. Marriages between noble and aristocratic families are not uncommon, but what the wealthy bourgeois gains in prestige the noble often loses, in spite of financial benefits, and we can imagine d'Évreux, as a high-ranking courtier, keenly feeling the class disparity between himself and his young wife. However, the locations of the husband and wife's respective suites are also representationally significant. Nobles live somewhat removed from the city, in spite of the aristocrat's publicity of person; as discussed earlier, the courtyard and garden recall the noble's *château* and country estate. Thus, though the front court and *parade* sequence of the *hôtel* are extensions of the city's public space, the *hôtel* simultaneously constitutes the noble's feudal territory. Wherever the noble lives becomes a public space "ruled" by him or her, an idea represented by the "interiorized publicity" of the *hôtel* ceremonial spaces (See Chapter One.).

In her exploration of the Crozat and d'Évreux houses, Rochelle Ziskin explains that the way Marie-Anne Crozat lives on the square is, on the other hand, entirely consistent with her own bourgeois background.[6] In elaboration, consider that the *bourgeoisie* are literally town-dwellers, citizens of the city; they derive their livelihoods, political rights and duties, and social identities primarily in a shared community to which public urban spaces like the Place Vendôme belong. Thus while the nobility, public persons with bodily sovereignty,

6. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 34.

4-8 Alexis Simon Belle, *Antoine Crozat*, ca. 1721--24.

4-9 Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Comte d'Evreux*, 1700s (?).

seem to carry about a public space particular to them—the space around them conceptually their own territory—the *bourgeoisie* consist of private persons in a public, shared space—conceptually, bourgeois citizens are points in a civic field. Mediating between person and public space is the private *bourgeois* house, the *maison*, its traditional programme far less public than the *hôtel* (the pretensions of characters like Crozat not withstanding). This is not to say that the *maison* is necessarily hermetic or unwelcoming. Like Marie-Anne's wing, the house is usually provided with reception rooms of some kind, which are very likely to overlook the public space, a sign of the inhabitants' presence in the community as citizens; the two-dimensional membrane of the house envelope therefore sufficiently controls the degree of communication between the inside world of the private person and family, and the outside world of the city. But the noble needs to be removed from the shared space of the *polis*, maintaining the volumetric buffer of the courtyard and garden around the *corps de logis* to set aside his or her own space from conflict with the city's space—or, for that matter, with another noble's.

These differing ideologies of noble and bourgeois space—and the differences between husband and wife—are also to be found back in the Maison Crozat. While the Crozat *corps de logis* is also two rooms deep, M. Crozat's suite looking over the courtyard and garden and leading directly into his valued gallery fits with his courtly self-conception. Mme Crozat's apartment is placed in a typically middle-class way against the square. Class overgeneralizations aside,[7] Mme Crozat's suite does seem to speak as much about her character as her husband's does of his. Ziskin notes the uptight reserve in Mme Crozat's portrait (*4-10*) when compared to Antoine's extroverted, even showy portrait (*4-8*), as well as the contrast between her decidedly non-aristocratic house cap versus his *cordon bleu*, a privilege normally of the highest aristocracy that Crozat purchases for himself during the Régence.[8] Mme Crozat's apartment is the larger of the two (if we do not include M. Crozat's gallery) for, in such families where the husband is often out on business, the wife performs most of the entertaining. Yet in her *chambre de parade*, Mme Crozat places not one but two beds;[9] though the husband and wife have separate suites (ostensibly kept apart by the corridor to separate business and social noise),[10] she chooses to display these emblems of a cozy (and, by extension, moral) bourgeois family. Though from a wealthy

7. Many busy and fashionable bourgeois houseowners place their *corps de logis* between court and garden, at the same time as many of the Place Vendôme's widowed noblewomen live directly behind the facade to be closer to the square's comings-and-goings. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 62–64.

8. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 62–63.

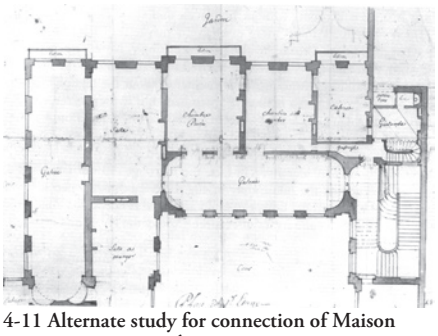
9. Ibid., 50.

10. Ibid., 46.

family herself and with an ambitious husband like Antoine, Mme Crozat, Ziskin argues, is not only comfortable with her bourgeois status, but she proudly upholds her physically and morally circumscribed world,[11] declaring the self-sacrifice her husband can never achieve. Mme Crozat would likely be very pleased when the duc de Saint-Simon assesses (from his aristocrat's perspective) that, unlike her husband, Mme Crozat does "not lose her good sense;" for instance, when the comte d'Évreux's mother sends some noble relatives to call on his mother-in-law, Mme Crozat is notably meek, to the point of respectfully *not* retruning their visit.[12]

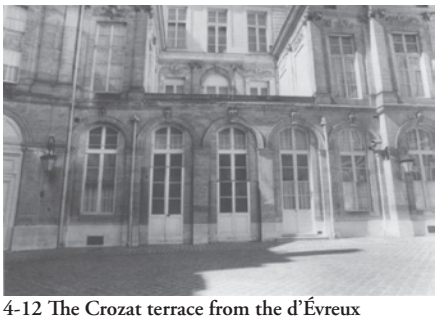
An early design for the Hôtel d'Évreux proposes that two doors penetrate the party wall to connect Crozat's gallery with d'Évreux's dining room and *appartment de parade* (*4-11*).[13] With this second opening, the gallery would no longer terminate Crozat's formal sequence; like an addendum, his son-in-law's suite would extend Crozat's reception rooms, showing off the financier's latest, greatest accomplishment. This scheme is not pursued, but the Crozats make their way into the *hôtel* nonetheless: a first-floor terrace extends from the keyhole vestibule to the d'Évreux courtyard (*4-12, 4-13*). From the terrace, we can imagine Antoine Crozat watching the comte's variety of visitors pass through the courtyard and the first-floor gallery that shields the rest of d'Évreux's suite from sight. But envy often coexists with prudery, and so we also might imagine M. and Mme Crozat keeping a watchful eye on their daughter; while Mme d'Évreux's reception suite is concealed from the terrace, a smaller *chambre de retraite* and adjacent chapel are in line with the Crozat terrace.[14] Chapels in private houses are a noble privilege, and they are usually located near the wife's apartment, women considered (or expected to be) the more pious sex.[15] The Crozats—and most likely, especially the good mother—can then rest assured that their adolescent daughter is not just well-treated in general, but is upholding proper moral behaviour in spite of her undisciplined gambler husband. According to Ziskin, the terrace then replicates the patriarchal gaze that holds women to a higher standard;[16] this could additionally be described as the gaze that Mme Crozat has speculatively adopted, reigning in any ambition to surpass her place as middle-class housewife, and it is the same pressure that forces their daughter into an empty marriage merely satisfying her father's ego. The keyhole vestibule replaces the gallery as the climax of the Maison Crozat's first floor sequence; the vestibule now gathers both husband and wife's reception *enfilades* as well as the corridor

4-10 Jacques-André-Joseph Camelot Aved, *Madame Crozat*, 1741.

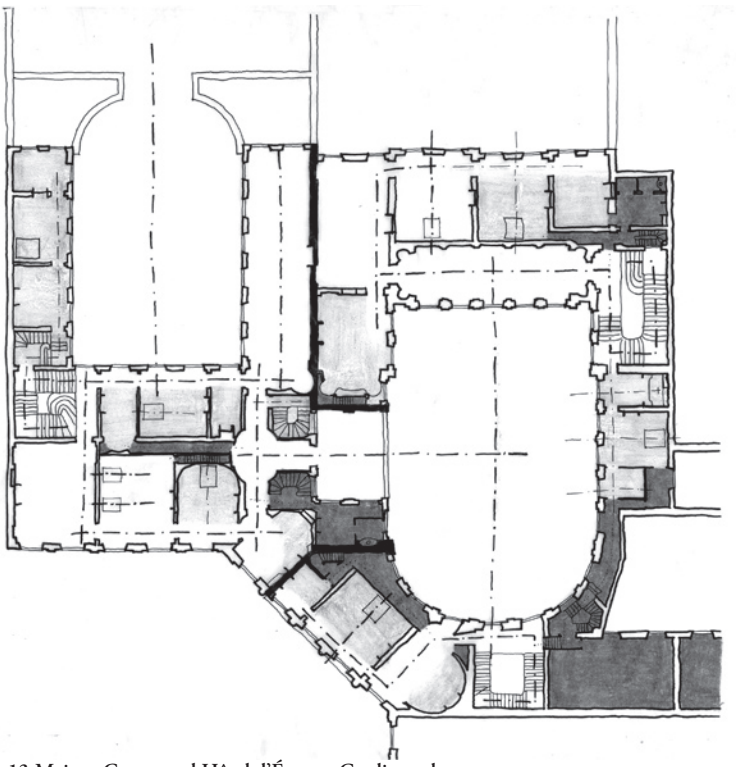


4-11 Alternate study for connection of Maison Crozat and Hôtel d'Évreux.

11. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 61.
12. Quoted in ibid., 174.
13. Ibid., 57.
14. For unclear reasons, Marie-Anne's *commodité* suite is also a few steps lower than either her own main *appartement* or her husband's. The possible explanation that a drop in floor level renders her interior more visible to her parents' house comes to mind, though with the carriageway and servants' *entresols* beneath this end of the house, the undulating floor may have a more mundane origin.
15. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 24.
16. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 63.



4-12 The Crozat terrace from the d'Évreux courtyard.



4-13 Maison Crozat and Hôtel d'Évreux. Gradient plan.

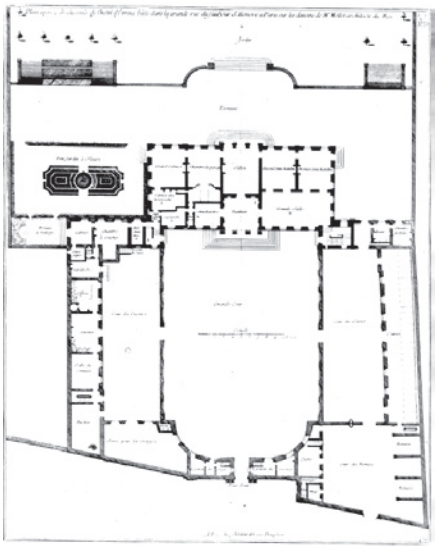
between them to launch all momentum out onto the terrace, culminating the *maison* with a claim on d'Évreux's *hôtel* (what Ziskin refers to as a "proprietary relationship").[17] Thus while the d'Évreux courtyard is a noble's public reception space, it is at the same time appropriated into the Crozat's intimate domestic realm with all its bourgeois ambition and anxiety.

But the terrace is not the only penetration from the Maison Crozat into the Hôtel d'Évreux: adjacent to it is a small wardrobe and a lavatory with a window on the courtyard. While locating such rooms in seemingly exposed locations is not unheard of—an early scheme for the Maison Crozat's ground floor has a bathroom with a window right on the Place Vendôme—the Crozat's latrine is especially striking. If the Crozats regard their son-in-law with both aspiration and concern, does this water closet point to a certain contempt as well? What does it mean when an aristocratic courtyard becomes a lightwell for a bourgeois toilet? No matter how successful, tasteful, or well-behaved, the Crozats will never have the comte d'Évreux's power or respect, and they know it. But it is nevertheless within the Crozats' ability to remind the comte of his economic dependence on them, regardless of rank. The latrine's window also offers a more concealed scrutiny of the d'Évreux courtyard than the terrace, underscoring the degree to which the comte is observed by

17. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 57.

those who may by tradition be his inferiors, but who in reality are very much his competition. The Maison Crozat and the Hôtel d'Évreux represent the complex tensions between commoners and nobility, a matrix of mutual responsibilities, desires, and suspicions that increasingly involves not only their public lives, but their private lives as well.

As for the comte d'Évreux, he soon finds the *hôtel* built for him intolerable, along with the entire family arrangement. He abandons his young wife in 1712, using her dowry to build another *hôtel* for himself[18]—much more sumptuous and private than the first (*4-14*). Fortunately for him, d'Évreux is able to recover some of his independence and noble dignity; a few decades later, however, Louis XV is not so lucky to escape the noble-commoner conflict, nor does his personal life escape the corresponding intense gaze.



4-14 Armand-Claude Mollet, Hôtel d'Évreux, Paris, 1718. Ground floor plan.

Louis XV, an orphan, is crowned at the age of five (*4-15*). His nurse, the marquise de Ventadour, is motherly but very protective—it is she who prevents the doctors from bleeding the little boy when he has smallpox, thus saving his life. His guardian, the duc de Villeroi, thinks largely of court etiquette, exposing Louis XV at a very early age to the royal duties of appearance that will bind the young king for the rest of his life. His teacher, Cardinal Fleury, is kind and wise, but his moral guidance eventually saddles the king with a guilty conscience. The successor to Louis XIV then grows up conflicted; the role of absolutist king weighs heavily on him from the start, yet he is too sheltered to develop the necessary confidence; though by many indications he is intelligent and empathetic, he is notoriously reserved and even a little distrustful in public, indecisive in matters of policy and, in private, melancholy, with a strange obsession with death; and finally, his Catholic morality is not enough to dissuade him from his intense search for human contact, prone as he is to loneliness. It is also from this search for escape and contact that he acquires his debauched reputation, the most enduring legacy of his reign.

4-15 Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XV*, 1715.

His marriage to the plain but affable Polish princess Maria Leszczynska begins faithfully enough, and she will eventually bear him ten children, but by 1737 Louis XV takes Mme de Mailly of the Nesle family as his mistress.[19] This starts a series of relationships with that family, for the king moves on to her sister Pauline-Félicité, marquise de Vintimille, and when the latter dies (in childbirth) in 1741, Louis XV moves on to yet another Nesle sister, the imposing and ambitious

18. Ziskin, *The Place Vendôme*, 60.

19. Consequently, the King also stops taking communion at mass.

4-16 Jean-Marc Nattier, *Marie-Anne de Mailly-Nesle* **(duchesse de Châteauroux), ca. 1740--44.**

4-17 Carle Vanloo, *Louis XV*, **1748.**

Marie-Anne, marquise de La Tournelle, created duchesse de Châteauroux in 1743 (*4-16*). The duchesse de Châteauroux belongs to the circle of the duc de Richelieu, Versailles's famous rogue, and she is for this faction a powerful means of influencing the king; influence requires nearness, and she is installed in a suite above the Grand Appartement du Roi at Versailles, near Louis XV's suite. Stubbornly at his side, in 1744 during the War of the Austrian Succession she insists on accompanying his tour of the battlefront. At the town of Metz, a gallery is built to connect the house where the king is staying to the convent lodging the royal favourite;[20] in this time of royal power and libertine culture, their relationship could be no less apparent or tolerated.

The freedom for this arrangement is shattered, however, when Louis XV suddenly falls seriously ill. Fearing his death, the queen and the royal children are summoned from Versailles, while prayers for his recovery are said throughout France in a popular outpouring of affection. Meanwhile, the royal confessor—under pressure from the *dévot* (devout) faction of French ecclesiasts who are opposed to absolutist authority—refuses to grant the king last rites until he not only renounces Châteauroux, but makes his confession public. The king has no choice but to acquiesce to this breach of precedence and royal privacy; while Châteauroux is dismissed from Metz and the connecting gallery is demolished, Louis XV is forced to beg forgiveness from his court for his infidelities, declaring that he is unfit to be Most Christian King.[21] Maria Leszczynska and the children arrive at the king's bedside as the scandalous confession is read aloud in churches across France, bringing Louis XV's private life into the open. The mysterious disease just as suddenly wanes, however, and his unexpected recovery is cause for relief. The king may be warmly welcomed back by his subjects, but the illness at Metz is a threshold. As we will see, if earlier the Régence lightens France's political mood, after Louis XV's confession its people will feel even less constrained to criticize their king. It is also a personal humiliation the king never forgets.

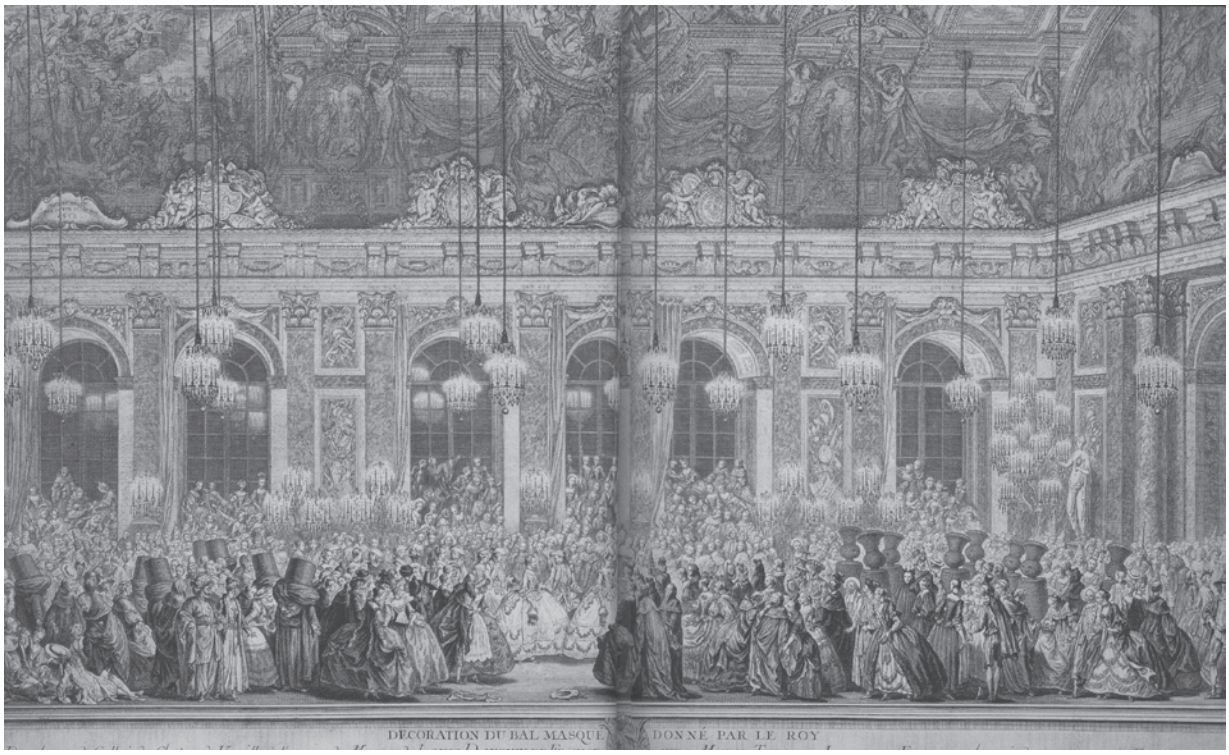
Back at Versailles, Châteauroux is soon Louis XV's mistress again, but her abrupt death leaves the unofficial position of royal favourite empty. Some months later, Louis XV attends a lavish costume ball in the Hall of Mirrors celebrating the dauphin's marriage (*4-19*), disguised as one of several topiary trees from the palace gardens, and he there meets a shepherdess, Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson,

20. Bordonove, *Louis XV*, 145.
21. Bordonove, *Louis XV*, 128, 147.

Mme d'Étiolles. Mme d'Étiolles is pretty, intelligent, and fashionable; of middle class birth (and perhaps illegitimate), she is married to a member of the robe, or magisterial, nobility. With the backing of several allies, including the powerful Pâris family of financiers, she secures an invitation to this ball expressly to meet and charm the king. The meeting is successful; Louis XV and Mme d'Étiolles are soon intimate, and after a legal separation from her husband, she is made marquise de Pompadour and formally presented at court to take her place as royal mistress. Pompadour is at first housed near Châteauroux's former suite on the second floor of Versailles, where a hidden stair and a flying chair connect her with the king's apartment.[22] From this place Pompadour begins to wield large powers at court, advancing certain financiers, securing the duc de Choiseul's career as minister of foreign affairs, influencing construction projects, even (likely ingratiatingly) convincing the king to renovate the shabby Queen's Apartment that Maria Leszczynska is too modest to complain about. Many decisions emerge from the privacy of her *boudoir* during her morning *toilette* (*4-18*), where visitors can chat openly and freely, etiquette suspended until the mistress applies the court mask of her makeup.[23]

4-18 François Boucher, *Madame de Pompadour at her Dressing Table*, **1758.**

22. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 135–36.
23. Jones, *Madame de Pompadour*, 78.



4-19 The masked ball in honour of the dauphin, where Louis XV meets Mme d'Étiolles.

4-20 François-Joachim de Pierre de Bernis, Pompadour's choice for foreign affairs minister, carries his sizable patroness in this typical *poissonade* from Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's *Livres des caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises* (*Books of Equally Good and Bad Charicatures*).

Pompadour's authority is resented at court not only by competing cabals, but also because she is bourgeoise. Her rise is so rapid that she seems to sweep the behaviour of the middle class into Versailles with her; she often speaks of her family, uses common language in the midst of Versailles's peculiar accent, and she looks to Paris trends for her wardrobe, shifting court taste from formal to popular inspiration.[24] So threatening is her power, and so easy a target is her background, that various nobles anonymously commission libellous pamphlets—called *poissonades*, after her maiden name Poisson, which also means "fish" (*4-20*)—even before she is presented at court.[25] These papers, along with the mocking "street" songs that are also produced on commission, circulate widely for the rest of Pompadour's twenty years as favourite, turning rumour into fact in the popular imagination without foresight of the wider political implications.[26]

Pompadour responds to these attacks by becoming one of the most important art patrons of the eighteenth century, contracting a steady stream of complimentary portraits by talented artists to be displayed at salons and academies. In these images, she is variously shown working or reading,

4-21 Étienne-Maurice Falconet, *Threatening Love*, 1757.

Originally meant for Pompadour's estate at Bellevue, this sculpture ends up at the (second) Hôtel d'Évreux, which Pompadour purchases as her Paris residence. Jones, *Madame de Pompadour*, 94.

4-22 Carle Vanloo, *Madame de Pompadour as a Sultana*, ca. 1752.

The marquise in trousers, clearly in charge of the feminine space of the harem, a hierarchy the figure of the reverent black servant reinforces.

24. Bordonove, *Louis XV*, 170, Jones, *Madame de Pompadour*, 153.

25. Bernier, *Louis the Beloved*, 135.

26. Ibid., 154.

thoughtfully gazing away or looking graciously at the viewer; she is worldly, beautiful, and always self-possessed, always with a gently commanding presence (*4-22, 4-23*).

The themes of fidelity and discretion—appropriate qualities for a royal favourite, especially the favourite of a king as leery and private as Louis XV—recur throughout these portraits and much of the other work she commissions (*4-21*).[27] The king may indeed esteem her fidelity and discretion, but many comment on the importance of her talent in keeping the king entertained as well. Pompadour is, beyond her good taste, worldly, a talented singer, and socially genial, and much of her energy is devoted to distracting Louis XV's notorious propensity for boredom. The maréchal de Mirepoix puts it simply to Pompadour: "It is your staircase the King loves. He is accustomed to going up and down it. If he found another woman at the end of it, to whom he could chat about his hunts and his affairs, in three days it would be the same for him."[28] This allusion to the staircase, with its promise of an unseen destination, is apt; listlessness as chronic as Louis XV's is not only satiated by variety, but also by the anticipation of the next event. Louis XV lacks the patience to savour reading, for example, and though Pompadour is extremely well-read and even a friend of Voltaire's, the king has little regard for literature; on the other hand, he is an avid ivory-carver, turning out small sculptures on his lathe, pores over his excellent map collection, indulges in the macabre hobby of small animal dissection, has like Louis XIV before him a passion for hunting and botanical gardening, and also enjoys, as we shall see, architecture—or at least, architecture projects. He takes pleasure in those tasks that offer the most novelty, especially those involving enough transformation to hold his attention.

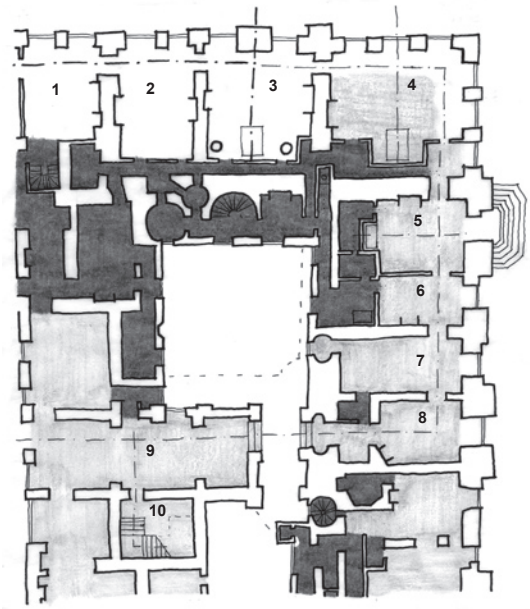
Most of Louis XV's personal life at Versailles is centred around the multi-story network of private suites arranged around the internal Cour des Cerfs (Stag Court, named after its architectural ornamentation), which he constantly adds to and subtracts from, redecorates and renovates, over the course of his reign. In spite of these changes, the state of these apartments in 1750–51 presents as typical a layout as any period (*4-25, 4-26, 4-28*). Around this time, due to declining health and rumoured frigidity, the marquise de Pompadour ceases physical intimacy with the king, though they remain inseparable friends and, interestingly, she keeps her position as favourite; with this change in relationship she moves her suite from the second floor above the king's

4-23 Maurice-Quentin de La Tour, *Madame de Pompadour*, 1755.

4-24 Jacques Verbeckt, Cabinet d'Angle (Corner Study), Versailles, 1737--38.

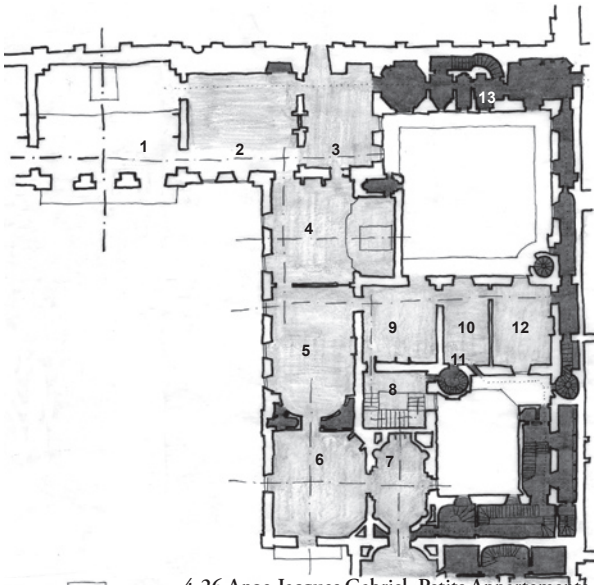
27. Jones, *Madame de Pompadour*, 95. There is a paradox in this public suggestion of discretion, but it is after all not inconsistent with Rococo's exposure of the private, or for that matter with the very paradoxical nature of a royal mistress who is more-or-less *openly* acknowledged as the king's *intimate* companion.

28. Quoted in Barry, *Passions and Politics*, 222.



4-25 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Marquise de Pompadour's apartment, Versailles (ground floor), ca. 1750.

1. Antechambre
2. Formal lounge
3. State Bedroom
4. Bedroom
5. *Boudoir*
6. *Arrière* (rear) *cabinet*
7, 8. Antechambre
9. Vestibule
10. Petit Escalier (Little Stair)



4-26 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Petits Appartements, private apartment of Louis XV, Versailles (first floor), ca. 1750.

1. King's Bedroom
2. Council Chambre
3. Cabinet des Perruques
4. Bedroom of Louis XV
5. Cabinet de la Pendule (Clock Room)
6. Cabinet d'Angle (Corner Study)
7. Salon Ovale
8. Petit Escalier (Little Stair)
9. Antichambre des Chiens (Dogs' Antechambre)
10. Buffet Antechambre
11. Stair to Petits Cabinets
12. Dining Room
13. Private Stair

4-27 Petits Cabinets, Versailles.

state rooms to the ground floor beneath them,[29] on level with the gardens. The suite incorporates both an *enfilade de parade* underneath the Hall of Mirrors, and at a right angle to this a private *enfilade* of smaller *cabinets* and *boudoirs*. This second axis is so long, offering at its end another entry to the suite, that we can say it constitutes a second string of smaller antechambers equivalent to the formal axis. That this constitutes Pompadour's back entry is confirmed by its proximity to the Petit Escalier du Roi (King's Little Staircase), used for the king's convenient, semi-private access to and from the ground floor.[30] Pompadour's suite thus incorporates distinct axes for public reception and the exclusive reception of her reserved king.

The Petit Escalier leads from both Pompadour's apartment and the Cour de Marbre to the Petits Appartements (Little Appartments), the first-floor king's suite adjacent to his state rooms. Though under Louis XIV this apartment is

29. In the former location of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan's Appartement des Bains. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 138.

30. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 127.

open to the public during the day, displaying his art and jewel collections, Louis XV closes it to the public permanently,[31] making the suite gradually more comfortable for living and working. While the Salon Ovale still exists (it will soon be modified, and eventually disappears entirely), the *enfilade* along the Marble Court is altered to accommodate a well-lit, private *cabinet* on the corner, the Cabinet d'Angle (Corner Study), where, generally alone, the king quietly sorts through his administrative work and correspondence. Near the Chambre du Conseil there is also a new bedroom where Louis XV sleeps, appearing in his predecessor's golden bedroom only for the evening *coucher* and morning *lever* ceremonies. This move is prompted in part by the notorious cold of Louis XIV's bedroom (in spite of the recent addition of a second fireplace), but the new bedroom also offers improved privacy with its deep alcove; it is undoubtedly an escape from the demanding memory of the Sun King.

While the Petit Escalier communicates between the ground and first floors, there is on the west side of the Cour des Cerfs a small half-circular stair that we can imagine is also used for private communication between Pompadour and Louis XV.[32] This stair additionally leads up to the second-floor Petits Cabinets (Little Cabinets), the king's very secretive enclave where he hides just over his courtiers' heads. Here are variously found his ivory-carving lathe, small libraries, the laboratory, dormer-windowed galleries, bathrooms, and a dining suite. Only the king's good friends—Pompadour, of course, and his hunting companions—are permitted up here, often for the king's late-night dinners, which in spite of their informality involve a complex ritual of invitation. Hopeful invitees gather at the door of the Chambre du Conseil after the daily afternoon hunt for the usher to read a list of accepted guests written by the king and partly determined by Pompadour. Having past this trial, the duc de Croÿ describes the rest of his first, anxiously-awaited dinner with the king at Versailles:

> We entered by way of the Little Stair and mounted up to the Petits Cabinets. … Having arrived, we waited in the small salon, His Majesty arriving only in time to sit with the ladies at table. The dining room was charming, and the dinner even more cheerful, without discomfort. We were served by only two or three valets of the Wardrobe, who retired after having helped each guest to what was needed before him. The freedom and propriety struck me as well-accorded.

4-28 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Petits Cabinets of Louis XV, Versailles (second floor), ca. 1750.

1. Private stair
2. Antechambre
3. Stair to lathe
4. *Cabinet*
5. Small gallery
6. Stair to roof
7. Corner *cabinet*
8. Antechambre
9. Stair from first floor
10. Buffet antechambre
11. Dining room
12. Map library
13. Service stair
14. Library

31. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 133.

32. Nevertheless, one anecdote claims that around 1755, Pompadour shows a priest that the secret staircase between her suite and Louis XV's has been blocked, proving they are no longer having relations (Bernier, *Louis the Beloved*, 170). Was there yet another hidden stair connecting Louis XV to Pompadour?

4-29 Nicolas Lancret, *Déjeuner de Jambon*, **1735.**

4-30 Jean François de Troy, *Déjeuner d'Huîtres*, **1735.**

> The sovereign was in good spirits, at ease, but still with a majesty so that one could not forget who he was; he did not appear at all timid, but completely himself, speaking well a great deal, and knowing how to enjoy himself. He did not hide his love for madame de Pompadour, unconstrained in this respect [*sic*], having cast off all shame, and showing how much he had fallen for her, head-over-heels or otherwise … He was well-versed in the smallest subjects and the merest details, without being bothered by any of them, but he never committed himself over serious affairs. He maintained the highest discretion; meanwhile, many believed that in private he shared everything with his mistress …
>
> We were at the table for two hours in complete freedom and without a single excess. Then, His Majesty passed into the small salon, heated and poured his coffee; not one servant appeared there, and each served himself. … as madame de Pompadour was urging him [the king] to retire to bed, at a certain moment he stood up and said to her in a low voice and, it seemed to me, genially, "Let's go, let's go to bed!" The ladies curtsied and left, and the king bowed and retreated to his back rooms; as for the rest of us, we descended by madame de Pompadour's little staircase which lead to a door, and we arrived through his apartments to the *coucher du Roi*, public as always, which took place immediately …[33]

It is obvious that the Petits Cabinets are Louis XV's retreat from his demands and responsibilities. That he should indulge it with so few servants—even making the coffee himself!—is remarkable. To use Blondel's categories, the Petits Cabinets surely consist of *commodité* space, fully concealed from formal exposure, but at the dinners at least there is also the suspension of rank and convivial equality of *société* space. The servants' relative absence (reminding us of Trémicour's *petite maison*; see Chapter Three) not only frees the conversation, but also relieves the room of many distinctions that are so painfully important in the Grands Appartements below.

Though the half-circular staircase connects madame de Pompadour's apartment with Louis XV's Petits Appartements and Petits Cabinets, the 1750 plans also show the king's two suites connected by a tiny circular staircase adjacent to the Petit Escalier. Another hidden stair, accessed from the Petit Cabinet's gallery, leads to a rooftop dining pavilion. Thus the vertical circulation starting from the semi-private Petit Escalier is broken and labyrinthine, isolating each floor; meanwhile, we see in the fascinating rooftop pavilion Louis XV's attempt to fully elevate himself above the *enfilades* of the palace. From his youth, the king is known to regularly stroll or run along Versailles's rooftop walkways at eveningtime, even visiting his friends through their dormer windows; [35]

33. Croÿ, Emmanuel, duc de. *Mémoires*. Quoted in Bordonove, *Louis XV*, 176–77, and Dunlop, *Versailles*, 122. My translation.

34. Bernier, *Louis The Beloved*, 94; Bordonove, *Louis XV*, 131.

it is as though Louis XV, mounting his concealed stairs to ever higher levels of privacy, seeks above all else the release of the roof's wide panorama and big sky (*4-31*). This shy sovereign is in his unfortunate way a characteristic king for an era of discreet freedoms that strain against duty; we could almost say that he is the shell-like king for a shell-like age, but he yearns after something lighter than libertinism's sublime pleasure of constraint. Versaille's interior decoration style at this time, the Louis XV Style—directed a great deal by Pompadour's urban tastes—is a close sibling to the Rococo, but more dilute, graceful, less absorbed in fervent detail, and even calm where the most extreme Rococo is ennervated and noisy. In the same way, Louis XV is not interested in the eighteenth century's strain against unbreachable limits, but desires instead freedom from the tensions of which he is the centre. The king's upper-floor suites are like clouds, just hovering above his courtiers, his ministers, and the constant memory of Louis XIV; close to the sky, there is the possibility to float away. This desire to be released from the gravity of his inherited duty also goes some lengths to explain his boredom and indecisiveness, for how often can the heavy imperfection of things and people meet such lofty expectations? How disappointed Louis XV must be that he is constantly pulled back down to the reality of his court.

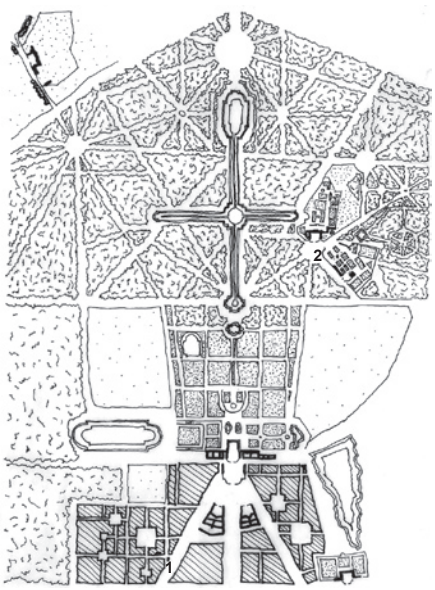
If the roof is where Louis XV's freedom comes closest to realization, then it is no coincidence that Madame de Pompadour, who mediates between the king and the outside world, lives on the ground floor. Although Pompadour no longer holds meetings in her *toilette*—inspired by a new pious modesty[36]—she still has political influence, and Louis XV relies on her for much of his knowledge of current trends in art and architecture. Pompadour also, along with Louis XV's staff, establishes and maintains the Parc-aux-Cerfs (Stag Park), the small house where the king's young mistresses are kept (*4-32*).

The Parc-aux-Cerfs has become notorious in history as the reputed *seraglio* for a perverted king who emprisons several young girls at any one time. It is located in the town of Versailles where many courtiers maintain residences, in a neighbourhood named after the deer park earlier established here in the time of Louis XIII.[37] We know that the king quietly purchases a small, two-storey house at No. 4 rue de Saint-Médéric (*4-33*),[38] though there may have been several houses in succession, perhaps to avoid scrutiny.[39] It is likely that only one or two young women, with a "governess" and a

4-31 Versailles's rooftops.

4-32 The Parc-aux-Cerfs.

35. Bernier, *Louis the Beloved*, 170.
36. Barry, *Passions and Politics*, 223.
37. Ibid.
38. Decaux, *Les Grandes heures de Versailles*, 164–65.
39. Bernier, *Louis the Beloved*, 167-68.



4-33 Versailles, ca. 1765.
1. Parc-aux-Cerfs
2. Petit Trianon

few other servants, live here at any one time; after a few years here—often when they first become pregnant—they are generally married off to decent husbands and provided with comfortable pensions. They are procured by the king's valet or Pompadour herself, and the Parc-aux-Cerfs is the latter's way of satisfying the king while preventing any competition for royal favourite. It is also yet another example of the king's escapism; one of the Parc-aux-Cerf's first residents, for example, is told that her master is a Polish noble, surely gratifying the king's fantasy as much as his anonymity. We might think of the Parc-aux-Cerfs as a superlative *petite maison*, except for its town setting; while a *petite maison* bears a certain conspicuousness in its garden, a conspicuousness increased with the pavilion's erotic associations (see Chapter Three), the Parc-aux-Cerfs conceals its dubious programme by placing itself in plain urban view, hiding amidst normality.

Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour do build many other *petites maisons* set more conventionally in gardens, however, such as the "hermitages" on the grounds of the royal *châteaux* of Compiègne and Fontainebleau. These are only some of the several projects of Pompadour's architectural patronage, a voracious parallel to her artistic purchases. Drawing great public criticism, royal money is used to buy and lavishly furnish Pompadour's country houses at Crécy and Bellevue, where in the latter house Carle Vanloo paints harem scenes for her *chambre à turque*, and François Boucher decorates her bathroom with *The Toilet of Venus*.[40] She later amasses additional country houses in Champs and Saint-Ouen, and (incidentally) obtains as her Paris residence the very Hôtel d'Évreux built by the titular count in his flight from the Crozats. At Versailles, the king and his favourite take up the use of the Trianon de Marbre, in time adding to the northeast a small formal garden and, further away, the king's botanical garden. In the new formal garden they build the Pavillon Français, a small four-armed building holding a salon, and nearby a six-room hermitage, ten by sixteen metres in size, in 1748–49. Of this Trianon annex, Pompadour writes to a friend; "I'm alone here with the King and little company; so I'm happy here."[41] Eventually larger ambitions are realized at Trianon; under the encouragement of Pompadour, work begins in 1762 on a more substantial pavilion, the Petit Trianon, a beautifully-proportioned cube of cream-coloured stone, the younger relative to the Trianon de Marbre (or Grand Trianon, now given to Maria Leszczynska).[42] Perhaps ironically, the Petit Trianon is famous

40. Jones, *Madame de Pompadour*, 89–90.

41. Quoted in Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 3:551. My translation.

42. Nolhac, *Versailles and the Trianons*, 274.

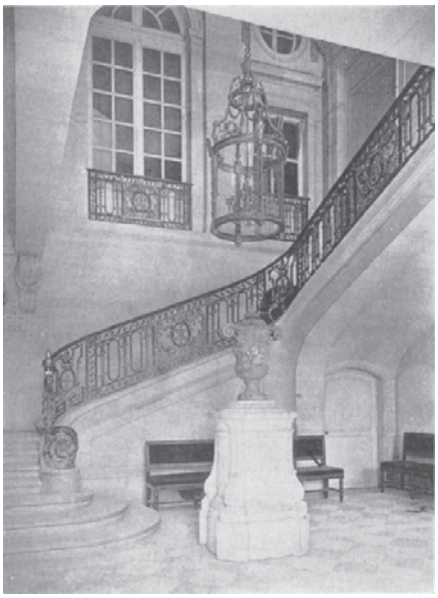
4-34 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Petit Trianon, Versailles, 1762--68. Garden (west) elevation.

as one of the masterpieces of French Neoclassicism, the new style in art and architecture that emerges following (and alongside) Rococo. Neoclassicism's spirit of formal clarity, faithfulness to historical models, and moral truth matches a growing mood of dissatisfaction and wish for renewal, inspired in no small way by unhappiness with the king. The weakness exposed by the confession at Metz and the culture of criticism fueled by the *poissonades* has by the 1760s led to widespread disdain for Louis XV; complaints are raised in the streets and on paper of his increasing aloofness from Paris, his apparent self-indulgence while high taxes are imposed to pay for the War of the Austrian Succession, and the disastrous Seven Years' War resulting in further financial hardships and loss of territory for France—a conflict said to have been strongly supported by Pompadour who, to make matters worse, also finds herself at odds with the popular Paris Parlement.[43] The Petit Trianon speaks of change and lucidity, but in spite of this, its two embattled patrons use it as their final escapist fabrication.

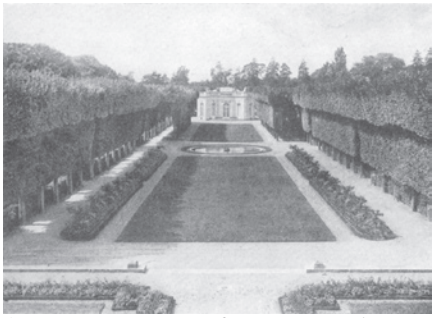
4-35 Petit Trianon. Entrance (south) elevation.

43. Bernier, *Louis the Beloved*, 190, 197.

4-36 Petit Trianon. Gradient section.

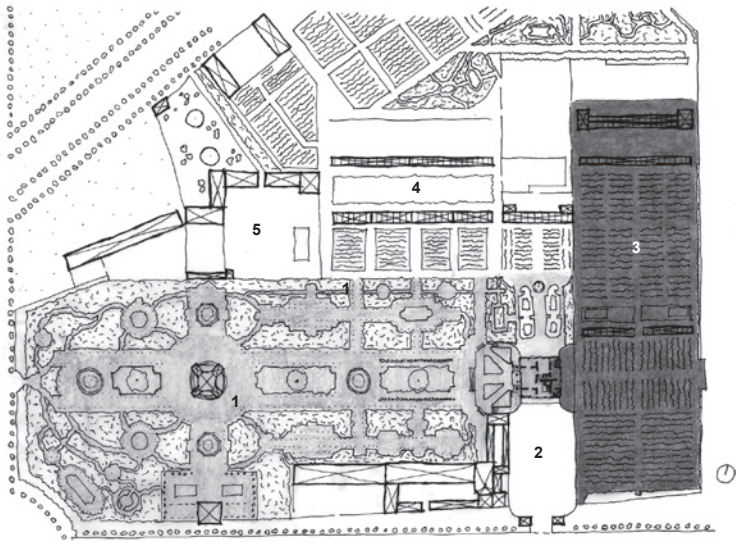


4-37 Petit Trianon. Main stair.



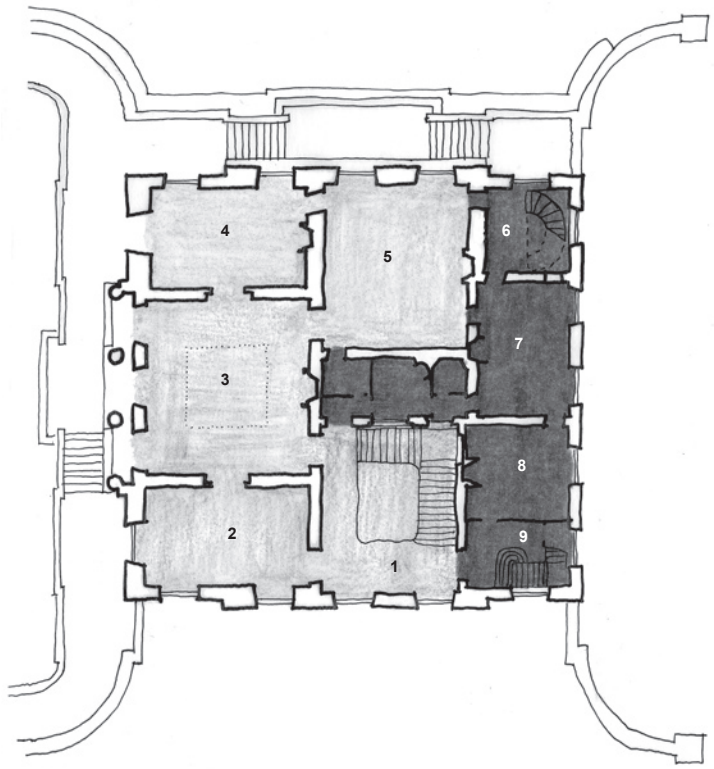
4-38 Petit Trianon. View from portico to the Pavillon de France.

In opposition to the Grand Trianon's assertive garden voids in the building plan, the Petit Trianon is an object in space,[44] its elevations each variations on the same symmetrical five-bay scheme (*4-34–4-35*); the primary elevation's disengaged Corinthian columns face the formal garden, which is isolated from the larger Versailles gardens by the carefully-clipped surrounding trees (*4-38, 4-39*), while the other side of the house looks on to the botanical gardens' orderly, functional rows of greenhouses and exotic specimens. In spite of a certain seriality, the elevations nevertheless imply Palladian symmetry organized around central interior axes, but the plan in fact betrays a contradictory *massé* arrangement with rotational circulation, the main stair offset from the ground-floor entrance, the first floor moving centrifugally around a small core of *commodité* programme (*4-40*). This centifugal movement has the benefit of constantly launching our view out to the gardens, and the first floor's reception rooms seem to be raised on one continuous, rarified level related to the surrounding—albeit contained—landscape. The first floor's panoramic quality is reinforced by the sectional division locating service rooms and kitchens on the ground floor/basement and housing for the gentlemen of the king's suite on the second floor/attic, as though sectional zoning resolves differing levels of privacy better than all the intricacies of eighteenth-century planning (*4-36*). Even the dining room is originally intended to be served by a flying table from

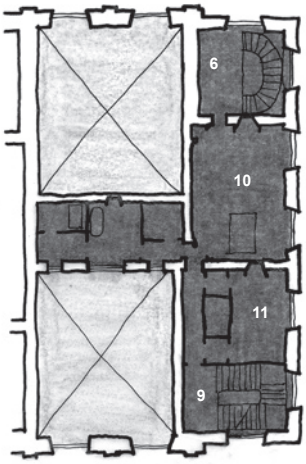


4-39 Petit Trianon. Site plan.
1. Pavillon de France (music pavilion)
2. Entrance Court
3. Botanical gardens with greenhouses
4. Kitchen garden with greenhouses
5. Dairy, barns, etc.

44. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 136.

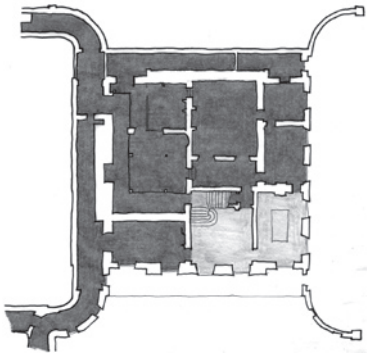


4-40 Petit Trianon. First floor plan.

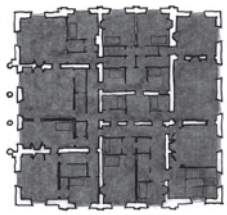


4-41 Petit Trianon. *Entresol* plan.

1. Stair landing
2. Antechambre
3. Dining Room (with flying table)
4. Small Lounge
5. Lounge
6. Hidden stair
7. *Cabinet*
8. Library
9. Service stair
10. Bedroom
11. Dressing room



4-42 Petit Trianon. Basement plan.



4-43 Petit Trianon. Attic plan.

the basement, like in *The Little House*, obviating the need for servants.[45] Like most *petites maisons*, the Petit Trianon is used for social occasions with good friends, and the section upholds the egalitarian atmosphere of *société* space in the same way as the Petits Cabinets, by negating reminders of social distinctions—or at least, *appearing* to discard them.

The panorama of the first floor is nevertheless interrupted by yet another contradiction; the range along the east elevation is the king's personal suite, housing on the first floor a small library, *cabinet*, and a hidden stair connecting to an *entresol* with a bedroom and dressing room (*4-41*). This two-level *appartement de commodité* then becomes a screen interrupting

45. Tadgell, *Ange-Jacques Gabriel*, 126.

4-44 Petit Trianon. Lounge.

4-45 Petit Trianon. Detail.

the social datum of the reception rooms from encroaching on the king's privately-enjoyed botanical gardens. Thus the Petit Trianon—the outward-looking object set within a confined landscape, the building itself concealing dark spots in its plan—holds together opposing tendencies; the Neoclassical ideal of harmonized nature, culture, and people coexists here with a still-Rococo need for mediation between the social and the intimate that acknowledges ever-complex and imperfect realities. This dualism is even borne out by the building's details; the architectural and interior ornamentation, in contrast with the fantastical contortions of the Rococo, feature botanically accurate, realistically-shaped plants not only suited to the nearby botanical garden, but also with Neoclassicism's rigorous naturalism; the delicacy and overall effect, however, bear the unmistakable lightness of Rococo (*4-45, 4-44*). Accounting for this dualism, the Petit Trianon is of course a transitional work, conceived rather early in the French vogue for Neoclassicism (and in this regard speaking a great deal about Pompadour's up-to-date taste). Moreover, it is designed by the very talented Ange-Jacques Gabriel, who during his career as royal architect masters both Rococo and Neoclassical sensibilities and techniques. But Gabriel's talent also lies in his graceful resolution of composite demands, such as those of the Petit Trianon's two patrons, and we may find that this retreat's dualism in fact originates in indulging both Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour's contrasting desires.

If the house-as-retreat draws away from the outside world's conformist pressures, then it becomes the representation not of how others wish us to appear, but as we would like to be, how we see ourselves. For Louis XV, the Petit Trianon's fiction of equality, its Neoclassical legibility, continuity with the garden, and seeming dedication to fraternal socializing rejects court hierarchies, etiquette, and everything else he despises; at the same time, the pavilion's residually Rococo plan and sensibility also reject his royal obligations, giving the unwilling monarch what absolutism denies its sovereigns—personal solitude. For Pompadour, though, the Petit Trianon is a monument to her nobility, the grandeur of its porticoed garden elevation, its flawless taste and superb execution, its avant-garde statement balanced with the most sophisticated comfort, is all proof of her aristocratic worth held up against those who would still say she is little more than a Third Estate upstart—and just a woman at that. Thus the Petit Trianon represents to each of its owners their own particular version

of freedom. How ironic that the same house should bear the king's longing for the kind of privacy and independence enjoyed by commoners—though not, of course, the burden of poverty that most suffer—as well as bearing the mistress's longing for power and respect that brings her to conquer Versailles—though she surely finds at least some aspects of the courtly gaze tiresome.

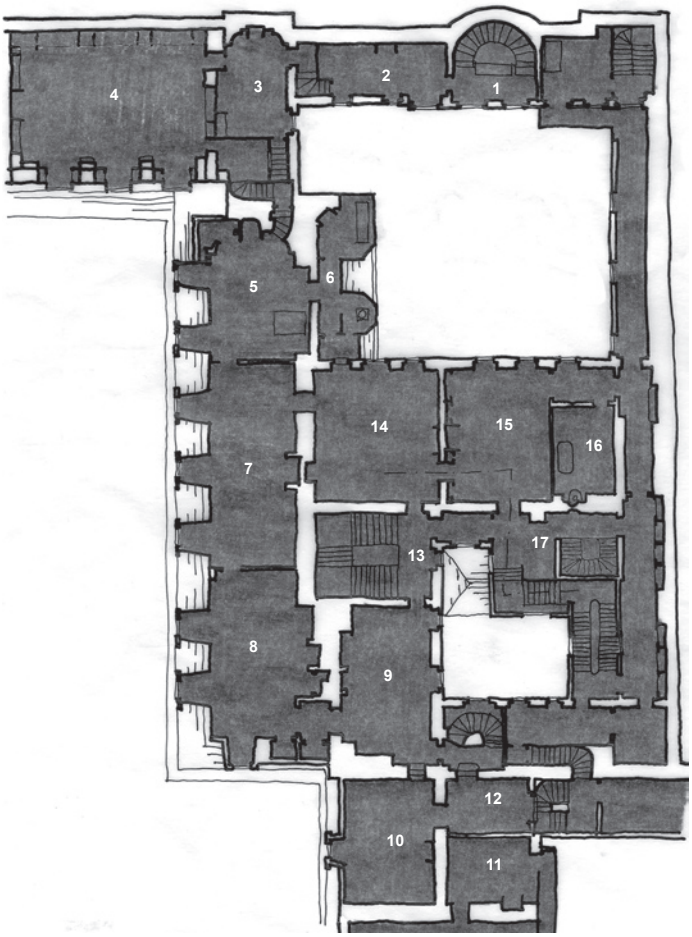
At the Petit Trianon, it could be said that the architecture is used as a veneer to hide the very corruption Neoclassical society rejects, that Neoclassical truths are themselves polluted with this house. Or, it could also be asked, as much as Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour are part of the court's contradictions, is the Neoclassical idealist dream, in some way, their dream too?

4-46 Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Jeanne Bécu de Cantigny, comtesse du Barry*, **1770s (?).**

Long suffering from poor health, the Marquise de Pompadour dies in 1764 before she can see the Petit Trianon completed. After his mourning (in private—by court protocol, the king is not even permitted to attend Pompadour's funeral), the king continues to use the Parc-aux-Cerfs until 1769, when he is introduced to Jeanne Bécu, a poor girl who has become a renowned prostitute and courtesan in Paris (*4-46*).[46] Before long, she is his new mistress; she quickly marries the provincial comte du Barry to obtain enough title for presentation at court, and the king sells the Parc-aux-Cerfs, having no more need for its young virgins. At first, the duc de Richelieu hopes to use this new favourite to yet again influence the king, but his plan is disappointed by the comtesse du Barry's general political apathy; du Barry is less interested in the power than in the wealth and prestige of her new situation. She is vivacious, energetic and good-humoured in company, renowned for her beauty and figure, as well as for her skills in the bedroom. She comes to occupy the Petit Trianon a great deal, and at the palace of Versailles she is housed in the Petits Cabinets (*4-47, 4-48*), now seldom used for the king's social gatherings. From the Petits Appartements below, the Petit Escalier du Roi is extended up to du Barry's suite as a paradoxically grand "hidden" stair; this permits the king to visit his mistress out of sight of his spinster daughters, who make no secret of their dislike for du Barry. As ever, Louis XV guards his privacy; the Petit Escalier is only used by the king and favourite, du Barry's other callers making use of a different flight of stairs.

46. Bernier, *Louis the Beloved*, 227.

4-47 Du Barry's bathroom, Versailles.



4-48 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, du Barry's Apartment (second floor), Versailles, 1762--68. Gradient plan.

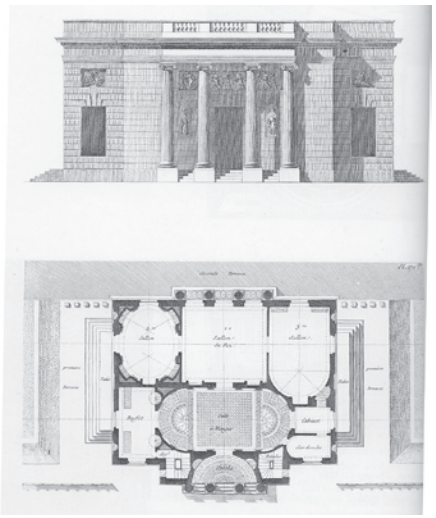
1. Private stair
2. Wardrobe
3. *Cabinet*
4. Library
5. Bedroom
6. Wardrobe and latrine
7. Grand *cabinet*
8. Study
9. Interior room
10. Library
11. King's bathroom
12. Library study
13. Petit Escalier
14. Antechambre
15. Antechambre
16. Bathroom
17. Public Stair

There is some evidence that du Barry feels she has to compete with the memory of her predecessor, Madame de Pompadour (similar to how Louis XV feels the pressure of Louis XIV), as well, no doubt, sensing much of the same barely-contained public disapproval. She attempts to control her image as did Pompadour, comissioning portraits showing her as graceful and fashionable, an impression that fails to convince some, like the Marquise de Créquy; "Her toilette was outside fashion, pretending to lead or to advance it, which is always a sign of bad taste."[48] Among her extravagances, she outbids an empress's ambassador at an art auction, and is known for her unbelievably expensive parties.[49] In 1769, Louis XV transfers the estate of Louveciennes to du Barry, where

48. Créquy, marquise de, *Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy de 1710 à 1803*. Quoted in Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment*, 177.

49. Haslip, *Madame du Barry*, 91.

for her entertainments she builds a startlingly monumental dining pavilion designed by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, the most fashionable architect in Paris. Sited at the top of a slope with a prominent view over the Seine, the pavilion is entered via a half-cylindrical niche in the elevation, bringing one into a grand dining hall with coffered ceiling and apsoidal niches at either side (*4-49*). From here, the Sallon du Roi [*sic*] on axis opens to a balcony view over the river valley, with additional lounges on either side. The reception spaces are all on one floor; other than a wardrobe, the service spaces are, like at the Petit Trianon, confined to the basement (where during the grand first dinner here in 1771, one of the staff faints from the ill-ventilated heat, eliciting the king's concern), and musicians perform from *entresol* galleries.



4-49 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Pavillon de Louveciennes, 1770-71. Elevation and plan.

The *petite maison* normally incorporates both social and erotic programme in equal amounts; so how surprising it is that Madame du Barry, the last of Louis XV's mistresses, should not introduce any erotic or even sentimentally romantic allusions in this pavilion; after Jean-Honoré Fragonard produces for this pavilion a cycle of paintings depicting the

4-50 Grand opening dinner, Pavillon de Louveciennes.

4-51 Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Progress of Love: The Meeting*, **1773.**

4-52 Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Progress of Love: The Pursuit*, **1773.**

4-53 Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Progress of Love: The Lover Crowned*, **1771--73. These are three of the paintings rejected for the Pavillon de Louveciennes.**

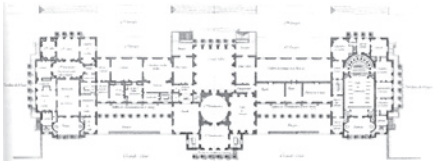
pursuit of love (*4-51–4-53*), they are rejected, and Joseph-Marie Vien's allegorical depictions of love eventually placed here are deemed more suitable.[50] Admittedly, Louveciennes is no private *petite maison*; it is a dining pavilion meant to entertain various guests. But if Louveciennes does not offer *commodité* spaces for its mistress's pleasure, it comes very close to surpassing its *société* function and take on a *parade* agenda. After all, if the pavilion is sited for its view, does that not also give it a decided prominence?; and does the rejection of Fragonard's rather decorative paintings for Vien's allegories, as well as the conspicuously-named Sallon du Roi, not show a degree of iconographic concern better suited to ceremonial rather than informal spaces? Even the closeness of the typical *petite maison* to the garden is here replaced by a more arm's-length relationship between architecture and landscape; the window-to-wall area ratio is at Louveciennes smaller than in a Rococo house, and the balcony from the Sallon du Roi does not step down to grade, restricting our

50. Vidler, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux*, 54.

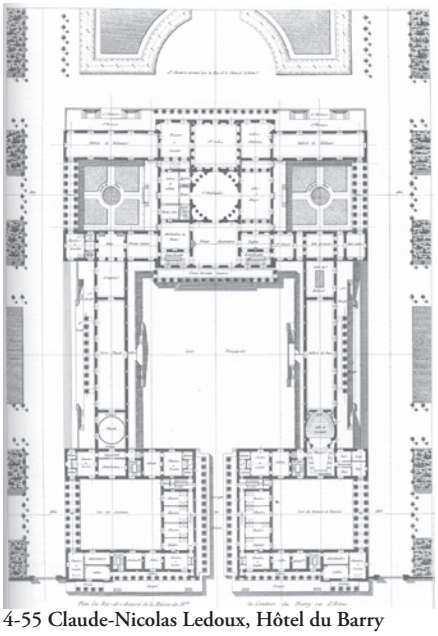
contact with the landscape to an elevated view. The pavilion's severity is a more blatant and extreme screen of its owner's character than even the Petit Trianon, attempting as it does to pass off Madame du Barry as a sophisticated courtier, and not a lucky prostitute; enjoying the fare prepared by Salanave, one of France's best chefs,[51] encased in the internal dining room under the Roman insistence of its coffered ceiling (*4-50*), guests may just be distracted enough to accept their hostess's sanitized self-narrative. Or at least they will clearly understand what she wishes them to *appear* to believe.

Satisfied with her architect, du Barry commissions from him a project to build a vast *château* at Louveciennes incorporating the pavilion as only one small part (*4-54*). Though the left-hand wing of the plan of the *château* depicts several smaller spaces better-suited to private use (and perhaps to Louis XV's more informal tastes), the whole assembly is notable for its generous provision of large rooms; the central Grand Salon is almost as large as the entire original dining pavilion. Much the same can be said for Ledoux's unbuilt project for the Hôtel du Barry in Paris (*4-55*), where every imaginable type of amenity and ceremonial room used during the two-hundred-year tradition of the *hôtel* is included, as though the favourite intends to build the penultimate *hôtel* and solidify her rank.[52] The pomposity of these designs leads us to question Ledoux's seriousness, especially given his involvement in the current theories over architecture's need to reflect the occupant's character;[53] if it is impossible to believe that the architect misreads his client that much, could his work not be an ironic gesture pointing us, in its overindulgence, to the inescapable truth?

But perhaps I am too harsh. In Madame du Barry's defence, she is said to be well-liked by the locals at Louveciennes, pretensions aside,[54] and we can assume that she is far from the only courtier with intermittently questionable taste. Moreover, it is hard to match the Marquise de Pompadour's exceptional patronage. We must also allow that du Barry's origins and the manner of her rise to court may unduly colour our perspective. This is the same problem of reputation faced in their own lifetimes by Pompadour, Louis XV, and almost all of the characters in this thesis; so much of how we regard them is based not on some abstract truth, but what we think we know, extrapolating and exaggerating the few or the most fascinating available details in the attempt to fill in the picture. Temptations to gossip accompany secrecy,[55] and practices of formal display as refined as in eighteenth-



4-54 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Château de Louveciennes (project), 1773. Plan.



4-55 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Hôtel du Barry (project), 1773.

51. Haslip, *Madame du Barry*, 91.

52. As an example of its excess, the Hôtel du Barry is provided with not one but *two* galleries, which is all the stranger given that painting galleries have already been out of fashion for decades (Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 3:197.). I am further perplexed since galleries traditionally hold ancestors' portraits and paintings of historical events (usually military) involving the owner's forefathers; with her own humble origins, what conquests would du Barry illustrate in her *hôtel*?

53. Vidler, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux*, 19-21.

54. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 148.

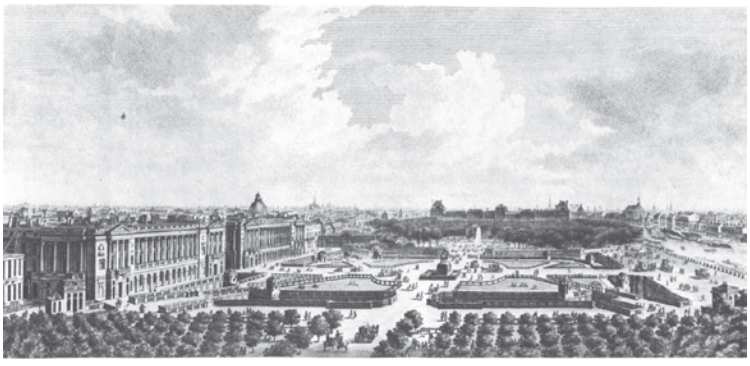
55. Bok, *Secrets*, 72.

4-56 François-Hubert Drouais, *Madame du Barry as a Muse*, 1771.

4-57 Louis-Jacques Cathelin after Jean-Michel Moreau, *The Equestrian Statue of Louis XV*, ca. 1763.

century France create a demand to see behind the mask and verify the truth; when this is combined with politically-driven slander campaigns and the upper-class culture of esoteric ethics (See Chapter Three), frequently malicious conjectures begin to describe the individual to us as much as public persona and private self. We must remain mindful that my discourse is not only about who these individuals are, but how they are seen—maybe two very different things, though with our distanced and historical perspective, we will never know for sure how well we are telling them apart.

To judge the extent of damage to Louis XV's reputation, we need look no further than the Place de Louis XV in Paris. It originates as a competition in 1748, during Louis XV's height of popularity, to design a large urban square dedicated to the monarch, though mostly paid for by the municipality.[56] Gabriel is eventually asked to synthesize some of the competitors' schemes into a suitable design for a muddy, undeveloped field between the Tuileries Gardens and the Champs-Elysée. Gabriel's response is a large, paved space subtly defined, but not visually confined, by a surrounding moat (*4-58*). This square is faced on the north side by twin Neoclassical buildings, and to the south faces the Seine (and, to the opposite bank, the Palais Bourbon). The Place de Louis XV is a handsome urban platform, a node along the Tuileries-Champs-Elysée axis that organizes traffic to flow around the titular sovereign's equestrian statue placed in the very centre (*4-57*). Erected in 1763 (the square's construction is drawn out over decades), the statue's base is supported by female figures: Virtue; Prudence; Peace; and Justice. Unfortunately, this statue is inagurated following the unpopular end to the Seven Years' War, and the statue's depiction of the king as a soldierly Roman emperor—when he is reputed to have spent the war hunting or in Pompadour's arms—is to many all the more absurd.[57] Graffitti soon adorns the statue's base:



4-58 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Place Louis XV, Paris, 1753–63. View towards the east.

56. Dennis, *Court & Garden,* 128.

57. Jones, *Madame de Pompadour*, 140–41.

> Grotesque monument, infamous pedestal
> The Virtues are on foot, and Vice in the saddle.

And:

> He's the same here as at Versailles:
> No heart, no guts.[58]

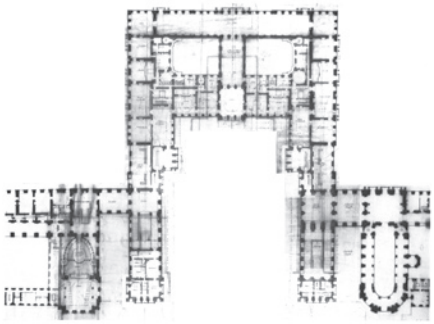
The statue is also wryly said to be held up by four whores: Mailly, Vintimille, Châteauroux, and Pompadour.[59]

Louis XV's ambivalent legacy, already bound to be overshadowed by his predecessor, is all the less impressive when set against his mistresses' assertiveness. In addition to Pompadour's widespread private construction, she is also credited as one of the forces behind the École Militaire, along with her financier friend Joseph Pâris-Duverney, leaving the king little more than to assent to their initative.[60] Paris's Place de Louis XV is one of a series of similarly-named squares built mid-century throughout France, whose characters are overwhelmingly infrastructural and civic; were it not for the squares' names and royal statues,[61] the object of their honour would be obscure. Of course, Louis XIV's strong personal impression at Versailles unfortunately leaves Louis XV little to add to. Under Louis XV, the Salon d'Hercule is finally completed as perhaps the last example of the *grand goût*, and the Versailles Opéra is also built (*4-59*, *4-60*), another overdue project, its imitation marble walls a luxurious setting for the court's entertainments; but these accomplishments are either too small compared to the rest of the palace, or too indistinguishable from what already exists. Louis XV and Gabriel certainly have much more ambitious plans for the palace, whose amenities are meagre by eighteenth-century standards of comfort, and whose central block, the last remnant of Louis XIII's quaint red-brick *château*, remains a compromised, underwhelming entrance. The several renovation plans that are drawn up all call for a re-organization of the king's and queen's Grand Appartements, and notably, in each instance Louis XIV's bedroom is replaced by a large council chambre (*4-61*). In these imagined new palaces, the state meeting table replaces the royal bed; the sovereign's body is supplanted by state business.

Royal finances proves to be too poor to carry out this reconstruction, meaning that Louis XV's best-known impact on Versailles's central block is in fact a loss; due to irreparable structural damage resulting from the leaking glazed roof,

4-59 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Opéra, Versailles, 1765–70. Interior looking towards entrance and the royal box above.

4-60 Opéra, Versaille. King's private booth beneath the royal box. Characteristically, Louis XV prefers to watch performances from the privacy of this dark little room.



4-61 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, *Grand projet* for reconstruction, Versailles, ca. 1743. First floor plan with new Council Chambre flanked by mirrored king's and queen's apartments.

58. Jones, *Madame de Pompadour*, 140.

59. Ibid, 141.

60. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 3:557; Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the 18th Century*, 149.

61. Both of which are dispensable; Paris's Place de Louis XV is eventually renamed Place de la Révolution and later Place de la Concorde, and the equestrian statue is replaced at first with the guillotine and then with today's Egyptian obelisk.

the Ambassadors' Staircase—along with its density of marble and outstanding *trompe l'oeil* paintings by Le Brun—is demolished in 1752 and nowhere rebuilt. This leaves the king of France without an impressive imperial staircase, a component crucial to Baroque political ritual that even petty German princes own. But Louis XV continues to renovate his private suites and his royal *châteaux*, while his mistresses continue to build with him and for themselves, leaving the impression of a publicly impotent, privately indulgent king to persist, and fears that the throne is corrupted by pleasure to grow.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE LOCKSMITH'S WIFE

"I would not hold up the status of queen for the happiest person: on my life I never would have wanted to be one myself. They submit to a greater constraint than any one else. They have no power, they are like idols; they must endure everything while remaining content."

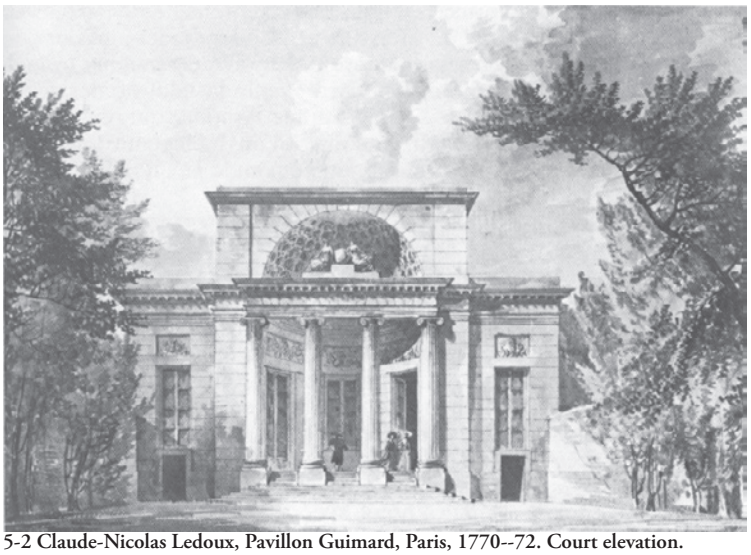
—Liselotte von der Pfaltz,
the Princess Palatine and
duchesse d'Orléans,
sister-in-law of
Louis XIV[1]

Marie-Madeleine Guimard is perhaps the most popular dancer in late eighteenth-century Paris (*5-1*), first rising to fame at the Comédie-Française, and continuing her career at the Paris Opéra. She cannot be called a great beauty, nor, based on contemporary accounts, does her dancing talent seem to rest on any special technique or innovation, but audiences are instead drawn to her extraordinarily graceful movements and powerful stage presence.[2] Nor are Guimard's attractions limited to the stage, for she becomes just as famous as a courtesan to very wealthy and powerful male protectors, including the financier Jean-Benjamin de La Borde, the Prince of the Blood the maréchal de Soubise, and even the Bishop of Orléans. She is also a popular socialite, counting among her acquaintances Claude-Nicolas Ledoux; and in 1769, when she decides to move from the Paris suburbs to a new house (paid for by her protectors) in the city's fashionable neighbourhood along the chemin d'Antin, Ledoux receives the commission.

This house, the Pavillon Guimard, flirts with its visitors. To the left of the carriage way entrance along the street, a small door leads to an equally nondescript stair bringing Guimard's guests to a 500-seat theatre hidden above the stables and porter's lodge (*5-5, 5-6, 5-8*). Hugged by an Ionic colonnade recalling Palladio's Teatro Olimpico, guests watch the erotic ballets and publicly-banned plays produced by their hostess; the little theatre is well-regarded in its time for its intimacy between audience and performers,[3] and its concealed location above stables right against the street would seem to play with conventions of *parade* and *commodité* space. Through the carriage way below is the square entrance court faced by the *corps de logis* (*5-2*); the Pavillon Guimard is

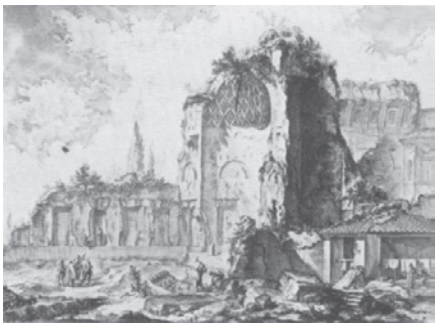
1. Quoted in Thomas, *La Reine scélérate*, 25. My translation.
2. Gallet, *Ledoux*, 84.
3. Vidler, *Claude-Nicholas Ledoux*, 54.

5-1 Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *Marie-Madeleine Guimard*, **1769.**



5-2 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Pavillon Guimard, Paris, 1770--72. Court elevation.

5-3 Félix Lecomte, Sculpted frieze for the Pavillon Guimard.



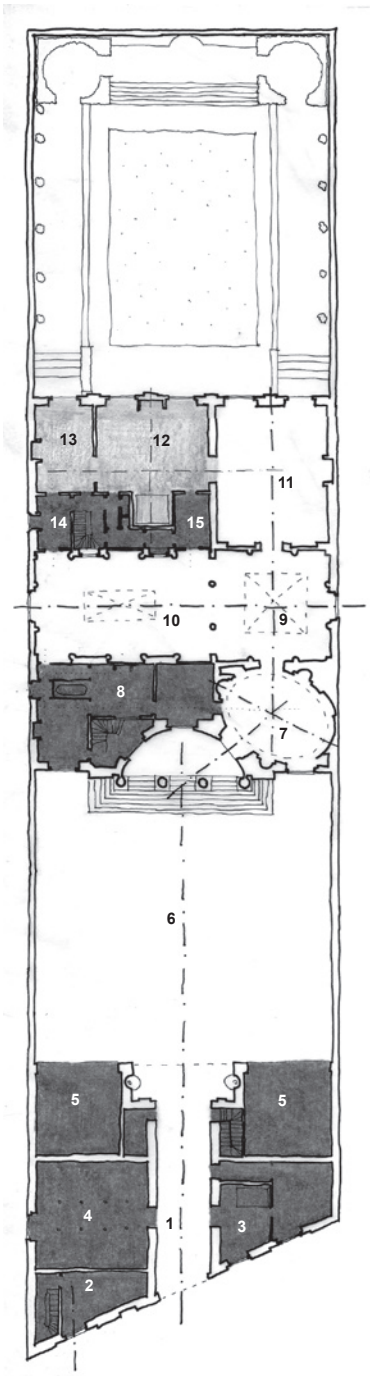
5-4 Giambattista Piranesi, *View of Roman Forum with Temple of Venus and Rome*, **1759.**

a cross between the *hôtel* type and a *petite maison*, or rather, it is a small *hôtel* behaving as a garden temple. The elevation's tall central bay features an apsoidal niche with a coffered half-dome, suggesting the courtyard's penetration into the house, or an interior room cut in section and open to the courtyard. The Pavillon Guimard is contemporaneous with the comtesse du Barry's pavilion at Louveciennes, and both use a similar niche; the Pavillon Guimard's half-dome, in particular, recalls the exposed apse of the ruined Temple of Venus and Rome (*5-4*).[4] Also like Louveciennes, Ledoux teasingly stretches across the niche an Ionic portico, deliberately failing to cover the opening. Atop the portico's entablature is a life-sized sculpture of Terpsicore, the Muse of dance, Guimard's genius (or quite likely, Guimard herself), crowned as she leans against a globe; meanwhile, the niche wall displays a relief panel showing Terpsicore in triumphant procession with bacchantes, cherubim, Music, the Graces, and lustful fauns trailing behind (*5-3*).[5]

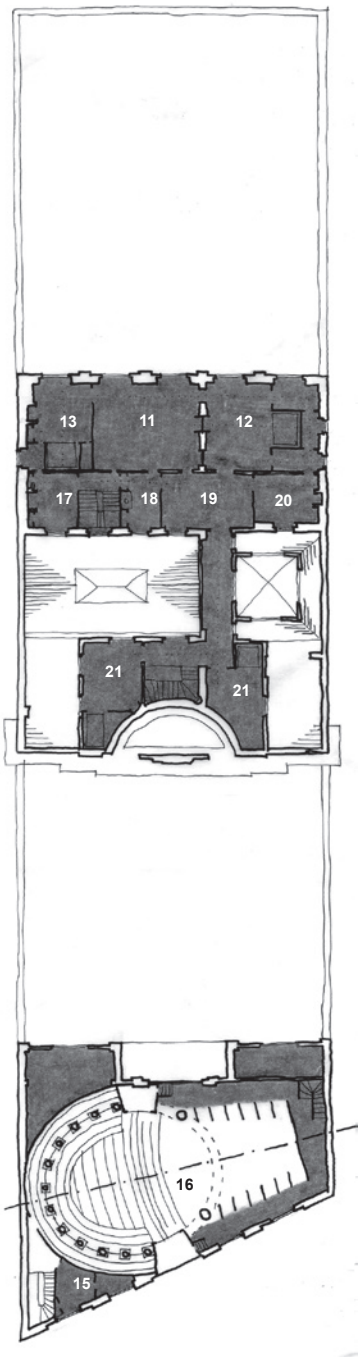
Terpsicore in her chariot falls on the centre line of the house's symmetrical facade, but the opening beneath her is not, as we would expect, the house's front door; it is instead the window of the bath suite's antechambre. Like the Petit Trianon, the Pavillon Guimard's elevations mask a different interior order, so that the main door is in fact on the right of the niche (and below the first figures in Terpsicore's

4. Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment*, 175.

5. Gallet, *Ledoux*, 86.

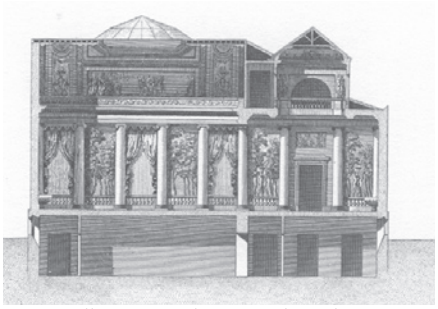


5-5 Pavillon Guimard. Ground floor gradient plan.

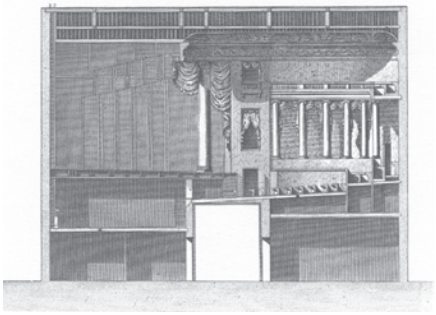


5-6 Pavillon Guimard. First floor gradient plan.

1. Carriageway
2. Theatre entrance
3. Porter
4. Stables
5. Carriages
6. Courtyard
7. First Antechambre
8. Bath apartment
9. Second Antechambre
10. Dining Room/Winter Garden
11. Lounge
12.Bedroom
13. *Boudoir*
14. Library
15. Wardrobe
16. Theatre
17. *Cabinet*
18. Lavatory
19. Antechambre
20. *Cabinet de toilette*
21. Servant



5-67 Pavillon Guimard. Section through winter garden and antechambre.



5-8 Pavillon Guimard. Section through theatre.

procession, who seemingly lead the way inside), and visitors immediately enter an oval antechambre. This room gives access to the aforementioned bath suite—which seems to have been accessible to many of the house's visitors, given that its decoration of lampas wall covering is praised by Jacques-François Blondel as "in a style unique in all of ornamental tastes"[6]—but the oval primarily re-orients visitors to the reception *enfilade* down the right side of the house. Thus sufficiently, pleasantly disoriented, the visitor encounters on cross-axis to this sequence the famous dining room/winter garden(*5-7*), with a skylight inserted into its vaulted ceiling, its walls lined with mirrors painted with trees (again recalling Mme de T———'s boudoir), the whole surrounded by (yet another) Ionic colonnade. The lounge, its ceiling painted by a young Jacques-Louis David,[7] completes the reception sequence and leads (off axis) out to the garden, as well as to the bedroom apartment whose *enfilade* culminates in the dancer's boudoir.

Thus the Pavillon Guimard's public spaces disengage the private apartments,[8] or rather, the private spaces inhabit most of the perimeter behind the cloak of elevations, notwithstanding the insinuation of devices like the penetrating entrance niche; moreover, the whole is screened, so to speak, by Guimard's day job as represented by the street-side theatre (itself nevertheless concealed and placed above functional outbuildings). But beyond this disingenuous modesty is the seductive fantasy—the theatricality—of Guimard's house. I have mentioned the resemblance of the *corps de logis* to a garden temple, an overturning of expectations worlds away from the business of city life and evoking the pleasures of the countryside. These bucolic pleasures not only surround the house front and back with its court and garden (and even on the sides, where the house abuts its neighbours' tree-lined driveways), but are internalized with the winter garden: the *petite maison* in the garden, the garden in the *petite maison*. The mild disorientation, too, plays a role in the house's effect; the contrived "disovery" of the theatre at the top of the hidden stair and the internalized, top lit, contradictorily buried winter garden pull visitors out of the conventional world into a compelling dance, the hostess's magic. The twists and turns in the circulatory sequence are especially critical to the house's seductiveness; steady *enfilades* are suddenly interrupted, and visitors are forced to find their way to the next axis, the house establishing and re-establishing order at will, leaving visitors delightfully unsure.

6. Hautecœur, *Histoire de L'Architecture classique en France.* 3:281. My translation.

7. Gallet, *Ledoux*, 86. Panels by Fragonard and other artists are found elsewhere in the house.

8. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 157.

As Trémicour, the valiant seducer of *The Little House*, has demonstrated, seduction is a game of disruption, the seducer introducing new elements to the target's life in a controlled fashion such that the only remaining constant is the seducer's presence. This can be achieved through any combination of unanticipated attention, mystery, temptation, appeal to a deep longing, isolation, contrasts of distance and closeness, and of course, transgression (among many other techniques. See Greene, *The Art of Seduction*.). There can be no better architectural analog for seductive technique than the *petite maison*'s rotating *massé* plan and escapist appeal, which Ledoux amplifies at the Pavillon Guimard with contrasting classical, serious elements, foregrounding the house's very coquettish intent. If the courtesan is a publicly (though not formally) recognized career, then the Pavillon Guimard similarly monumentalizes feminine allure with a series of architectural winks and *double-entendres*. Much as one would attend an opera performance to watch Guimard, many foreigners delight in visiting her pavilion.[9]

The house suggests Guimard's sure orchestrating hand, a degree of power uncommon to French women of her time. Seduction is the means to the courtesan's independence, and indeed in the eighteenth century, seduction is understood as one of the only negotiating tools available to any woman. The boudoir (that room that, in the Pavillon Guimard, terminates the ground floor's axes) has been earlier defined as a small cabinet with a small bed; but the name itself is derived from *bouder*, "to sulk", so that the *boudoir* is literally a pouting room.[10] It says a great deal that sexual warfare is considered so universal as to need its own domestic space; in the ambivalently adversarial relationships too often assumed as the norm between men and women, it is the woman's duty to be resentfully hurt—or at least to feign emotional injury, for one of her only means to manipulate is exaggerating her feminine weakness and alternatively annoying and ingratiating her male "opponent." The other female trump card is, of course, physical affection, which she can offer or withhold to great advantage, often in the same boudoir. Thus the boudoir is simultaneously the locus for female weakness and female power, at least insofar as its is conceived in patriarchal France, as well as libertine culture's tendency to reduce human behaviour to the crafty, selfish fulfillment of physical desire. At the same time, it could be said that libertinism's erotic reductivisms thereby offer avenues to power for women[11]—wherever traditional limitations on chastity and fidelity are

5-9 Nicolas Delauny after Pierre-Antoine Baudoin, *The Exhausted Quiver*, 1775.

9. Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment*, 174.

10. Girouard, *Life in the French Country House*, 153.

11. That is to say, women of certain inclinations.

absent, so too are gendered conventions of power. While many libertine seducers are men, characters like Mme de T——— even seem to steal the art of seduction from men and use it against them. French erotic culture emerges as a mainly upper-class male means of regaining lost power and independence, but becomes for risk-taking women a means to gain previously unknown power and freedom.

Dangerous Liaisons' Marquise de Merteuil is such a woman. Cunning and self-indulgent, she nevertheless clearly understands that even in the bedroom, men still have greater freedom, a situation requiring even more vigilance on the part of women;

> For you men, defeat means only one victory less. In this unequal contest we are lucky not to lose, whereas you are unlucky when you do not win. Were I to grant you as many talents as we possess, how far we should still surpass you in their exercise by reason of the continual necessity of putting them to use![12]

Nevertheless, she sees in her society's sexual underworld possibilities for her exercise of power, and single-mindedly pursues this opening. She is self-possessed and deliberately impassive when need be, controlling her facial expressions in all situations, while cultivating a virtuous reputation in public.[13] In private to her friend the vicomte de Valmont, she reveals herself to be outrightly hard-headed and -hearted; "… love, which we praise as the source of our pleasures, is nothing more than an excuse for them."[14] This is not cynicism, but for Merteuil it is clear-headed realism, allowing her to set aside distracting pre-conceptions in the pursuit of other agendas;

> I felt the need of coquetry to reconcile me once more to love; not in order to feel it, of course, but in order to inspire it and to pretend inspiration … I had already observed that to do so one had only to combine an actor's talents with a writer's wit. I cultivated both, and not without success; but instead of courting the vain applause of the theatre, I decided to use for happiness what so many others sacrificed to vanity.[15]

Of course, when she refers to pleasures and happiness, she means the physical, but Merteuil's primary seductive enjoyment is the way she can manipulate her lovers through their very anticipation, such as she does during the convoluted evening with the chevalier at her *petite maison*, and Prévan's tragic visit to her boudoir, both described in Chapter Three.

12. Laclos, "Dangerous Liaisons," in *The Libertine Reader*, 1072.
13. Ibid., 1076–77.
14. Ibid., 1076.
15. Ibid., 1077.

Her control does not stop with her suitors, however, for Merteuil quickly realizes the power of anyone's secrets, and the use of her skills in taking advantage of them;

> I searched the depths of my heart for clues to the hearts of others. I observed that there is no one without a secret that it is in his interest never to reveal … A latter-day Delilah, I have always devoted all my powers, as she did, to springing the important secret.[16]

With this power, Merteuil achieves an autonomy made all the more threatening with its tone of vengeance, seeking cruel justice for the feebleness imposed on her sex.

In the end, Merteuil faces a different sort of cruel justice, her actions exposed, her beauty disfigured by disease, and her fortune lost. Merteuil's sort of power cannot be tolerated, and it is all the more unforgivable when belonging to a woman; after all, the author, Leclos, redeems Valmont when this character hands to Chevalier Danceny his candid correspondence with Merteuil (the marquise's mistake is in confiding to Valmont her own important secret), but Merteuil, objectively Valmont's equal, has descended too far for forgiveness. Though as stated earlier, women in libertine literature often embody the ideals of the work, the marquise de Merteuil would seem to be an index for the underlying unease with female sexual self-assertion. The boudoir is increasingly read as dangerous to the patriarchy, its feminine power coming at the expense of traditional masculine domination. Exploring this problem in her essay, "Commerce in the *Boudoir*," Jill H. Casid traces some not uncommon critical derision of publicly-exhibited erotic imagery, and recounts a satirical pamphlet published in 1773 describing a fictional tour of Paris given to foreign visitors. This sight-seeing begins in the Salon du Louvre but terminates at the Pavillon Guimard; the peak of French culture is now a courtesan's house, and the French guide admits the loss of public space and rise of the boudoir;

> I see clearly that one must give up everything which is a monument and a public thing: but that leaves me a point on which I am going to avenge myself. It is the distribution of our *hôtels*, of our *cabinets*, the bathing rooms, and the *boudoirs* (*sic*).[17]

The characters then return to the Louvre to contemplate France's earlier masculine order that will one day messianically return to demolish the boudoir. Casid argues that the boudoir is portrayed as dangerous because it is perceived as

16. Laclos, "Dangerous Liaisons," in *The Libertine Reader*, 1078.

17. *Dialogues sure la peinture*, Collection Deloynes, vol. 10, no. 147, 218. Quoted in Casid, "Commerce in the *Boudoir*", in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity* …, 101.

5-10 Antoine Watteau, *The Judgement of Paris*, **1710s (?).**

ambiguous, a space somewhere in-between the authoritative and honourable public space of men and the pious, functional, domestic space of women.[18]

Women like Mlle Guimard may not be anywhere near as malicious as the marquise de Merteuil, but courtesans are dangerous because they exploit men's sexual desire so expertly and openly for political and economic gain. It is difficult enough that many wives resent the existence of courtesans; though upper-class marriages still tend to be distant by the late eighteenth century, many women cannot be said to adopt libertine permissiveness, retaining the modest behaviour traditionally expected of them and, understandably, seeing courtesans as serious competition for their husbands' attention and economic support. But courtesans also imply the compulsiveness of male lust, the erotic culture of the eighteenth century having then made male virility into an unbecoming weakness, easily manipulated (*5-10*), leaving conventional hierarchies intolerably precarious. Critics might see the fauns behind Terpsicore's parade as the fate of the coquette's male victims, reduced to irresistibly following the lead of female charms; coronated Terpsicore leaning against the globe then becomes an ominous sign of unbalanced power far beyond the entrance niche's reference to the Temple of Rome and Venus's harmonious union of empire with love. The widely-held unsuitability of women for public responsibility is enough reason for many to fear the power of the boudoir; suppositions such as the marquise de Pompadour's supposed support for the Seven Years' War and spendthrift ways only offer proof of the enormous danger presented by female seductiveness.

And what of Guimard herself? While her house's theatre and reception sequence attract the most attention, I should note the provision of a generous apartment on the first floor with a salon, bedroom and boudoir directly above those of the ground floor, reached by a hidden stair adjacent to the tiny library. Is this second floor Guimard's own intimate retreat, away from the suggestive retreat set up for visitors below? Is the life of this *artiste bourgeoise* just as formal and display-bound as an aristocrat's, so that we might imagine her as busy a hostess as the marquise de Rambouillet, needing privacy as substantial as her publicity? Guimard's upstairs apartment would then be her pavilion's true *commodité* space, the real "home" secreted above the public (and publicized) intimacy of the ground floor's bath and bed suites.[19] That is, unless her upstairs apartment is actually the last of the

18. Casid, "Commerce in the *Boudoir*," in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity* …, 97.

19. The upper-floor suite further brings to mind the call girl Lynn Bracken, portrayed by Kim Basinger, in the Amercian neo-noir film *L.A. Confidential*. Bracken is a Veronica Lake look-alike set up in a suburban house screened by a lush front garden, whose living rooms are decorated as a glamourous Hollywood domestic interior including a movie projection screen and, in plain view like an erotic *lit de parade*, a large silk-sheet bed. Bracken is expected to uphold her Veronica Lake persona for every man who visits, but as her relationship with Russell Crowe's Bud White develops, she shows him her "real" bedroom, with her novels and homely pillow embroidered with a map of her home state, Arizona. The contrast between Bracken's front rooms and bedroom is clear, and White understands his privileged intimacy; as he tells her, "All they get is Veronica Lake; I get Lynn Margaret Bracken."

"Lynn's bedroom," *L.A. Confidential*, directed by Curtis Hanson.

house's alluring surprises, the hidden realm, architecturally "undressed" like many a libertine novel's boudoir, where Guimard brings her gentlemen to make them feel gratified and privileged (and thus, justifying their financial generosity). Do not forget that Guimard is a kept woman, and her house is bought and built by her lovers, so we must always wonder whose purpose it really serves. Or yet again, the very fact of her multiple, simultaneous lovers may mandate two *commodité* suites; as comical as it would be to us if Guimard hides one lover upstairs while another calls on her downstairs, something like this may have been a very real concern. In the end, though, we simply do not know enough to say how Guimard uses this upstairs suite; if it is where she secrets away her own personal life away from her dancer and courtesan persona, then the fact that we know so little is evidence of her success; if on the other hand it is pressed into the use of her illicit, precarious occupation, then her self-determination is ambiguous regardless of the reputation of libertine women, dependent as she is on her constant exchange with men of means. The 1786 bankruptcy of one of her supporters, forcing her to sell her house, would seem to confirm her delicate situation—but then again, she sells the house through an entrepreneurial lottery,[20] evidence of her talent in exploiting a situation to the very end.

Ledoux builds the contemporaneous Pavillons Guimard and Louveciennes at the peak of his success as Paris's favourite of its many Neoclassical architects. These designers benefit from another building boom unleashed in the healthy economy following the Seven Years' War, coincident with an expanding urban population in France.[21] In spite of the budding social idealism touched on earlier, battles of status are as fierce as ever during this time: the political tug-of-war between the monarchy and the aristocracy intensifies at the same time that the aristocracy re-establish a degree of pre-eminence over the ever-expanding upper bourgeoisie—to the extent of restricting the latter's access to aristocratic titles.[22] The bourgeoisie, understandably, are disappointed, and some increasingly criticize the contemporary aristocracy, longing for the days when Louis XIV's rewards were supposedly based on merit.[23] Among the upper classes, everyone is out to prove their legitimacy, and in this competitive context the Neoclassical *hôtel* becomes a vehicle for the promotion of the occupant's character.[24] The resultingly strong theoretical interest in architectural character, historian Anthony Vidler

20. Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment*, 173.

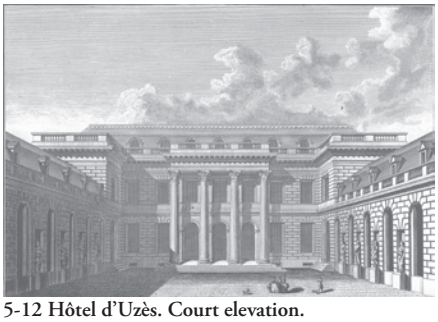
21. Pérouse de Montclos, *Histoire de l'architecture française,* 437.

22. Roberts, *Morality and Social Class* …, 108.

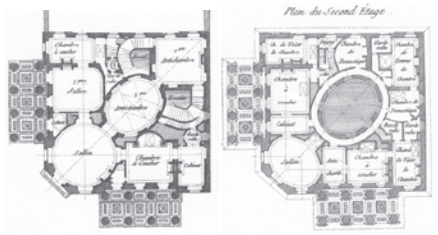
23. Ibid., 103, 111.

24. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 152.

5-11 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Hôtel d'Uzès, Paris, 1764--69. Street door.

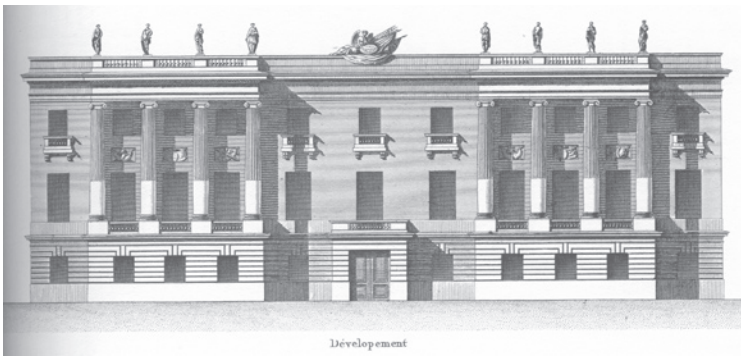


5-12 Hôtel d'Uzès. Court elevation.



5-13 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Hôtel de Montmorency, Paris, 1769--70. First floor plan (left) and second floor plan (right).

explains, is driven not only by an interest in conveying the building's function—in a way, making the inside evident on the outside—but also by an agenda to represent and reinforce social hierarchies using æsthetic ones, the building rhetorically speaking with carefully-chosen detail and overall disposition to convey the status (and even personality) of its owner.[25] Thus, if the fantastic garden-temple-in-the-city that is the Pavillon Guimard, using as it does the graceful Ionic order and light-hearted ornamentation and painting throughout, is an appropriate house for an opera dancer, socialite, and courtesan, then the Hôtel du Barry's severe colonnades and bombastic scale would respond to a high-ranking courtier who intends very much to be taken seriously. And so there is a profusion of publicly-expressed uniqueness throughout Paris, as it were; coats-of-arms appear with great articulation around plain Doric columns flanking the entrance gate to Ledoux's Hôtel d'Uzès (*5-11*), the house of a military officer, whose *corps de logis* entrance (*5-12*) features a giant order of Corinthian columns recalling (and even competing with) the École Militaire;[26] meanwhile, the same architect's Hôtel de Montmorency takes advantage of its corner site to arrange the two equivalent suites of husband and wife (both from different branches of the same ancient family) on perpendicular axes, both facing their respective streets with identical elevations (*5-13, 5-14*). According to historian Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos, this competitiveness even erodes the intimacy of the *hôtel*; for instance, Étienne-Louis Boullée's much-admired *hôtel* for the marquise de Brunoy dramatically reveals its rear elevation to the Champs-Elysée, appearing like an antique temple skillfully framed by its verdant terraces (*5-15*);[27] the *grande commodité* of the garden is sacrificed for impressive public effects. On the other hand, Pierre Rousseau's Hôtel de Salm (in large part influenced by Marie-Joseph Peyre's unbuilt Hôtel de Condé) separates the



5-14 Hôtel de Montmorency. Street elevations.

25. Vidler, *Ledoux*, 19.
26. Ibid., 28.
27. Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century,* 192.

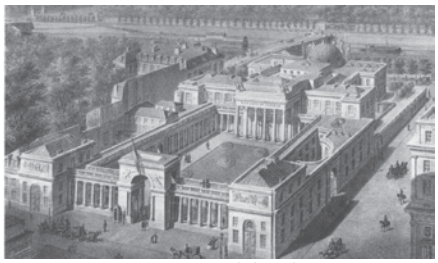
entrance court from the street by a mere fenced peristyle (*5-16*),[28] eliminating the visual barrier of the walls and service wings of traditional *hôtels*, implying some continuity between the noble's courtyard territory and the civic space beyond.

Jacques-François Blondel, ever the conservative who prefers a clear separation of public and private, is particularly critical of the transparent peristyle court screen:

> They expose to the avid gaze of the curious that which occurs inside our palaces, our *hôtels* and particularly in the homes of our ministers and magistrates. Moreover, what signifies multiple arcades closed by railings with that of the middle by a wooden door, all divided by piers?[29]

5-15 Étienne-Louis Boullée, Hôtel de Brunoy, Paris, 1775. View of house and garden from the Champs-Elysée.

Indeed, what does this language signify, its sharply-delineated columns and entrance gates, its new transparency? There is a figural emphasis in mature Neoclassicism's composition of neat elements. Proud and upright columns are so fetishized[30] that they even make their way back into house interiors (*5-18*), while outside walls are either smooth (all the better to show relief panels and other details),[31] incised by deep masonry joints, or rusticated with strongly-contrasting textures. Improvements in glass manufacture produce larger plates, reducing shadow-casting mullions and thus the need for very large windows;[32] consequently, as noted with the Pavillon de Louveciennes, wall openings become smaller compared with Rococo houses, and architects' drawings delight in the opposition between these deep dark rectangles and blank white walls. Interior decoration retains a lightness of tone—the late-eighteenth century return to formal classicism does not go so far as to recover seventeenth-century dourness—but figures are surrounded by more space and are more distinctly coloured, and while arabesque lines still coil together, they almost barely touch, retaining their individuality (*5-17*); similarly, although Neoclassical furniture remains as comfortable as earlier in the century, supports and surfaces are articulated separately, without the blurred connections of *rocaille* waves. There is no more of Rococo's orgiastic melding.



5-16 Pierre Rousseau, Hôtel de Salm, Paris, 1783. Ærial view.

Plans, too, become figural. Even more than in the first half of the eighteenth century, differently geometric shapes crowd together, such as in the Hôtel de Montmorency or Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart's Pavillon d'Orléans (*5-20*), a garden folly with a theatre for the widowed duc d'Orléans to be near his second wife, the (also widowed) marquise de Montesson,[33] its weird plan cramming various shapes within

28. A similar device is used by Gabriel with his renovation of the royal *château* of Compiègne in 1752–56.

29. Blondel, *Cours d'Architecture*, 4:142. My translation.

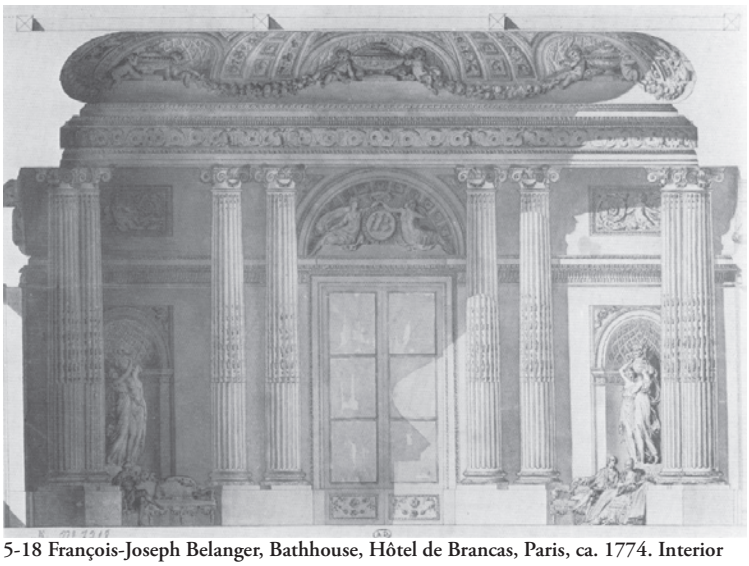
30. Theorist Marc-Antoine Laugier urges a reduction of walls, as though to fully emancipate his much-loved columns; (Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century,* 134.). Is Laugier's system, based on what Hautecœur summarizes as a rational use of elements (Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 4:52.), not then implicitly elemental?

31. Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century,* 211.

32. Pérouse de Montclos, *Histoire de l'architecture française,* 435.

33. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 4:111.

5-17 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Hôtel d'Uzès, Paris, interior, 1769.

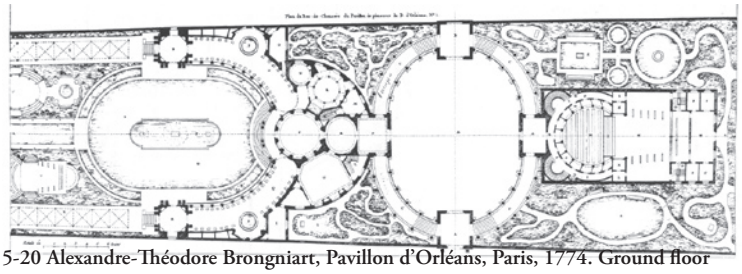


5-18 François-Joseph Belanger, Bathhouse, Hôtel de Brancas, Paris, ca. 1774. Interior elevation.

This pavilion is built for the comte de Lauraguais, an eccentric sometimes even known to dress as a peasant. In keeping with the new interest in Greek and Roman architecture, this garden temple is significant in reviving grotesque decoration and formal classicism to Paris interiors, even for sensuous and private spaces. Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment*, 221–22.

5-19 Jean-François de Neufforge, Maison de Plaisance (project), 1757. Elevation.

circular geometries. Often these differentiated volumes are arranged in sequence along central axes, obviating the recentred front and back ranges of earlier *hôtels*,[34] to subject the house interior to the fashionable transparency. Notably, contrasts of scale diminish as rooms grow smaller, improving comfort[35] and functional specificity, so that in many upper-bourgeois houses in particular, boudoirs are not only closer to the reception spaces, but also closer in size to them. The juxtaposition of similiarly-sized rooms by shape and function, typical of Neoclassicism,[36] highlights their individual characters; and even Jean-François de Neufforge, whose theoretical designs demonstrate the seemingly opposite impulse of "striking disproportionality"[37] in both plan and elevation (*5-19*), nevertheless shares an interest in contrast and the definition of parts. Architecture in this new sensibility is not, after all, to be evaluated against an impersonal standard of beauty, but



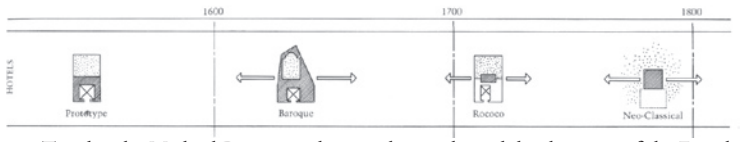
5-20 Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, Pavillon d'Orléans, Paris, 1774. Ground floor plan.

34. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 157.

35. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 4:379.

36. Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, 147.

37. Ibid., 152.



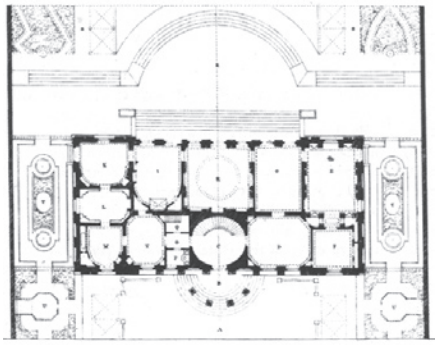
5-21 Timeline by Michael Dennis explaining the typological development of the French *hôtel*.

by the degree to which it reveals its character,[38] and how else to do this than through relative distinctions, contrasting one thing with another?

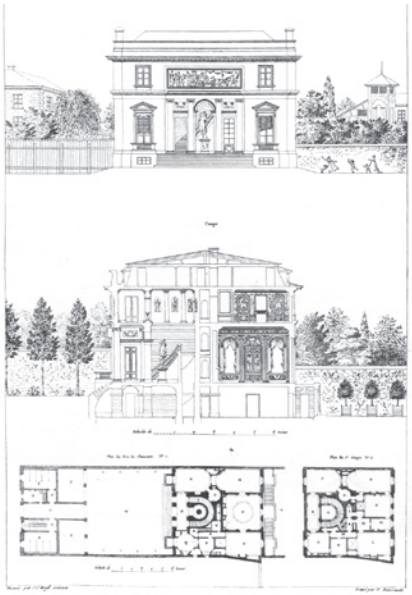
Perhaps the best evidence of this figural tendency is explored by Michael Dennis in *Court & Garden*, where he traces the evolution of the Parisian *hôtel* type from a mass enclosing the space of the courtyard in the seventeenth century, to the Rococo *corps de logis* (with extending service wings) between courtyard and garden, and finally to the fully detached Neoclassical house surrounded by gardens, a figure in a landscape,[39] the emancipated object in space (*5-21*). Though this last type does not account for all late-eighteenth century *hôtels*, the garden pavilion is a widespread aspiration, ranging from Brongniart's fully freestanding Hôtel de Monaco (built for the mistress of the prince de Condé; *5-22, 5-23*) to the more compromised, but just as bucolically evocative house built by architect Pierre d'Orliane for himself (*5-24*), pressing as it does against its party walls like the similarly-conceived Pavillon Guimard, employing a tight *massé* plan, its service spaces separate from the main house or sectionally segregated within it,[40] all to maintain the exterior's compact volume. Compromised plans like Brogniart's Hôtel de Ste.-Foix (*5-29*) are essentially pavilions with barely-attached side wings. Even very large houses become grand garden pavilions, the most startling example being Ledoux's Hôtel de

5-25 Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Hôtel de Thélusson, Paris, 1778--83. View from street.

5-22 Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, Hôtel de Monaco, Paris, 1774--77. Court elevation (top) and garden elevation (above).

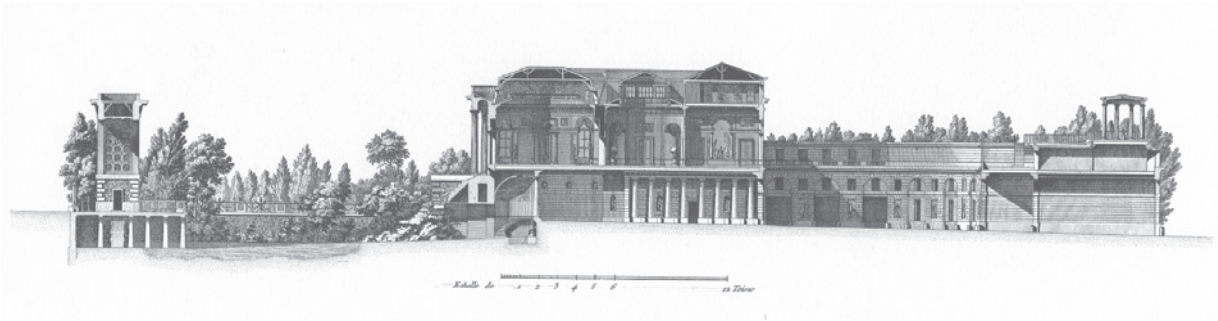


5-23 Hôtel de Monaco. Ground floor plan.
In spite of its classical clarity, this plan still diverts the primary circulation, keeping the garden somewhat private from the courtyard and forcing the visitor to constantly turn and re-adjust.

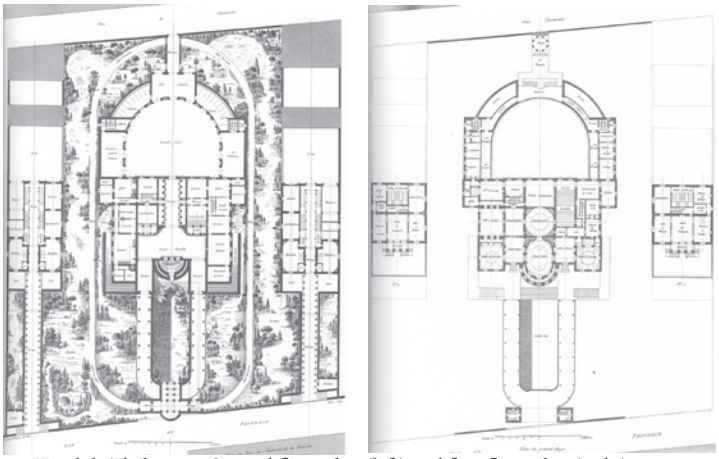


5-24 Pierre d'Orliane, Hôtel d'Orliane, Paris, 1789. Ekevation, section, and plans.

38. Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, 141.
39. Dennis, *Court & Garden*, 5.



5-26 Hôtel de Thélusson. Section.



5-27 Hôtel de Thélusson. Ground floor plan (left) and first floor plan (right).

Thélusson built for the very wealthy widow of a Protestant Genevan banker on the northern outskirts of Paris (*5-25–5-27*). Like the Hôtel de Brunoy, the Hôtel de Thélusson turns its garden side to the most public thoroughfare, the striated elevation with its monumental semi-circular Corinthian portico (the projecting *grand salon*) set in the neutral ground of its picturesque garden, the whole scenographically framed by the huge gateway built to resemble a half-buried triumphal arch. The Neoclassical *hôtel* is far from shy.

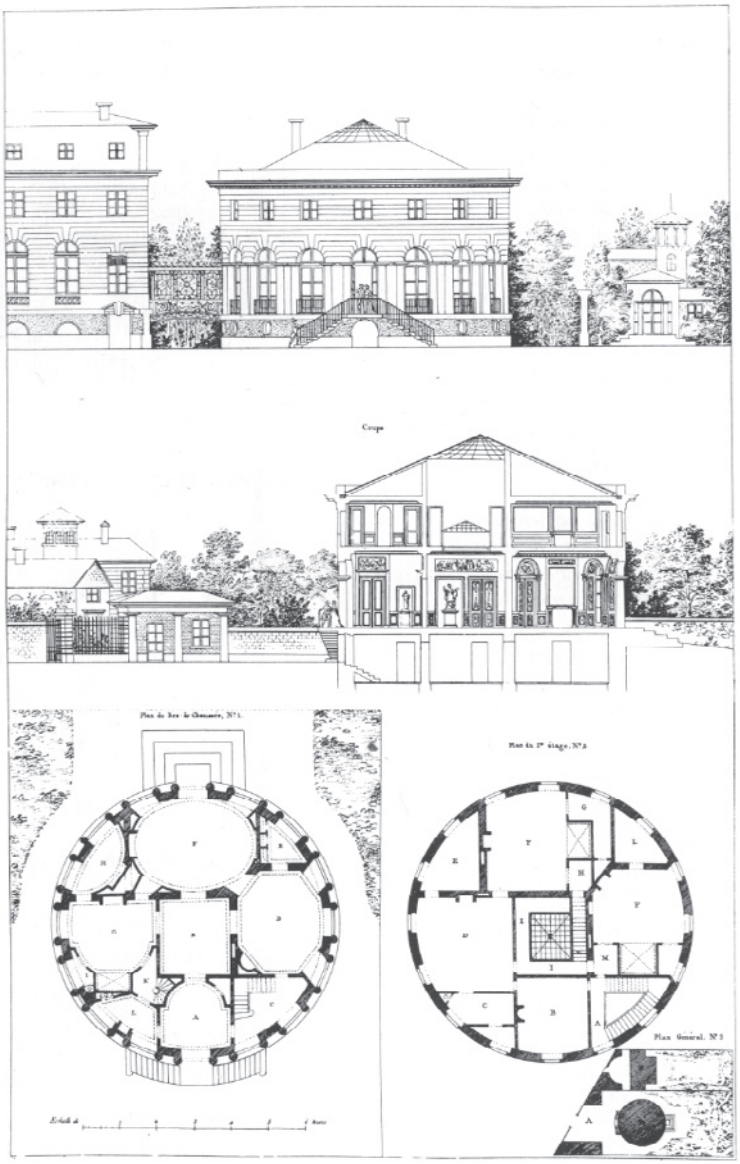
The Hôtel Vassale is the final statement of the emancipation of the *corps de logis* (*5-28*). The plan is, not quite comfortably, made to fit into a classical cylinder, if only to unequivocally express the house as an object.[41] It is the isolated individual, declaratively open on all sides to the glare of the Enlightenment;[42] it is much as philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *Confessions*, opening with this impassioned manifesto:

> I have entered upon a performance which is without example, whose accomplishment will have no imitator. I mean to present my fellow-mortals with a man in all the integrity of nature; and this man shall be myself.

40. Separate services and *massé* plans are also common in Neoclassical planning. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 4:369.

41. Although this house cannot yet resist screening the site with a street-front service pavilion, the wide entrance gate not withstanding.

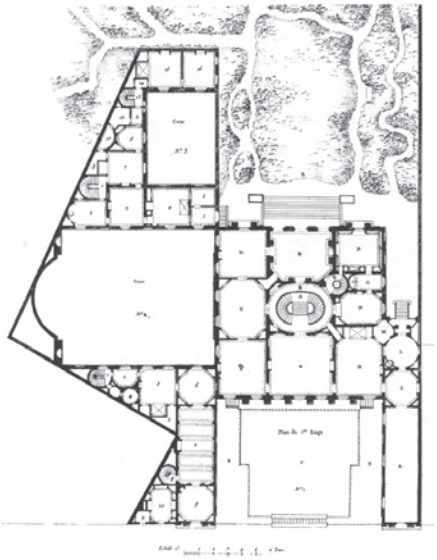
42. How incredibly ironic, then, that this house's architect is so mysterious to us, known only by the name of Henry. Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment*, 233.



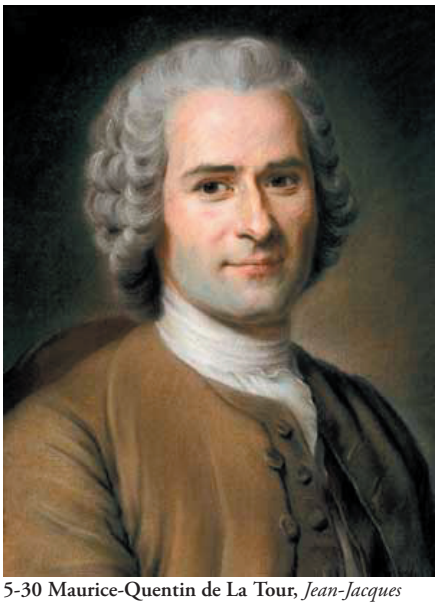
5-28 Henry, Hôtel Vassale, Paris, 1788. Elevation, section, and plans.

Ground floor:
A. Vestibule
B. Antechambre
C. Stair
D. Dining room
E. Buffet
F. Lounge
G. Bedroom
H. *Boudoir*
I. Lavatory
K. Private stair
L. Dressing room

First floor:
A. Stair
B. Antechambre
C. *Cabinet*
D. Lounge
E. *Cabinet*
F. Bedroom
G. Dressing room
H. Wardrobe
I. Corridor
K. Toilet
L. *Cabinet*
M. *Dégagement*
N. Stair



5-29 Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, Hôtel de Ste.-Foix, Paris, 1775. Ground floor plan.



5-30 Maurice-Quentin de La Tour, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, **1753.**

> I know my heart, and have studied mankind; I am not made like any one I have been acquainted with, perhaps like no one in existence; if not better, I at least claim originality, and whether Nature did wisely in breaking the mould with which she formed me, can only be determined after having read this work.
>
> Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the sovereign judge with this book [the *Confessions*] in my hand, and loudly proclaim, thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I. With equal freedom and veracity have I related what was laudable or wicked, I have concealed no crimes, added no virtues; and if I have sometimes introduced superfluous ornament, it was merely to occupy a void occasioned by defect of memory: I may have supposed that certain, which I only knew to be probable, but have never asserted as truth, a conscious falsehood. Such as I was, I have declared myself; sometimes vile and despicable, at others, virtuous, generous and sublime; even as thou hast read my inmost soul: Power eternal! assemble round thy throne an innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals, let them listen to my confessions, let them blush at my depravity, let them tremble at my sufferings; let each in his turn expose with equal sincerity the failings, the wanderings of his heart, and, if he dare, aver, I was better than that man.[43]

With the same ambition to honesty,[44] the Neoclassical house represents its unaffected, unconcealed individuality to the world, true to its soul and its nature, unique and earnest. Historian Louis Hautecœur explains that formal staircases become less important towards the end of the eighteenth century;[45] the decline of the grand stair (remembering that it is one of the most important settings for political ceremony) and its replacement by the unbroken central axis can be read as the repudiation of formalism for a more genuine transparency, the house's soul made bare.

Indeed, Neoclassicism reacts strongly against Rococo; in advertising their clients' characters for the benefit of social advantage, Enlightenment architects reject late Baroque intrigues and dualities. No more *honnêteté*, now seen as so empty and corrupt, but Rousseau's refreshing honesty instead, enjoyed in the sociable climate that replaces hyperbolic protocol. This is in part an ethical argument, Rococo's permissiveness at last having allowed too much, duplicity having become untenable; but perhaps it is also the result of urges long pent up in tiny *commodité* apartments, and it is sensed that at long last, the time to hide one's true self behind heavy social masks might be over. Baroque theatricality is on the wane, and an obsession with the authentic, integral individual—a very Modern obsession—is on the rise; it is a new era for a new sort of person, who, like Rousseau,

43. Rousseau, *Confessions*, 8–9.

44. And, dare I say, narcissism?

45. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 4:379.

conceals no crime, and challenges his fellow mortals to do the same. Transparent sociability is reciprocal; those who insist on revealing their authentic selves demand it of others. In the Enlightenment's thirst for objective knowledge, then, there is almost as much shame in concealing a sin as there is in committing it; the tyranny of the court mask makes way for the tyranny of confession.

Of course privacy and secrecy does not disappear entirely; we still have tucked-away *cabinets* and *entresols*, *petite maisons* continue to enliven gardens, and servants move as invisibly as before through *dégagements* and hidden stairs; historic transitions are gradual, and some might say that Neoclassical clarity is just as much costumery as before. Mlle Guimard herself plays these ambiguities well, many of her house's pleasures lying in gestures that promise to reveal but which are constantly veiled anew, calling themselves into question and encouraging the visitor, never entirely satisfied, to press further, the answer always just out of reach. Guimard, and her architect, know full well that seduction will always require the use of mystery; perhaps she also knows that most people in the end cannot resist an enigma, and they will always find the tension between what they do and do not know to be infinitely engaging, no matter how simple (or simplistic) the philosophy of clarity they claim to espouse.

Such notions of transparency are simplistic because they are impossible, subjecting human beings as they do to unreachable standards; as Sissela Bok reminds us, "Human beings can be subjected to every scrutiny, and reveal much about themselves; but they can never be entirely understood, simultaneously exposed from every perspective, completely transparent either to themselves or to other persons. They are not only unique but unfathomable."[46] Guimard exploits the curiosity to know persons who are nonetheless unfathomable, teasing and sustaining the attention of her various audiences. Those not as clever as her, however, might find this incessant curiosity less of a personal opportunity than a personal invasion.

One evening in April of 1774, Louis XV falls ill at the Petit Trianon. So extreme is his sickness that he is moved back to Versailles; the doctors quickly realize that he has an especially dire case of smallpox. This king, who survives the same disease as a child as well as the mysterious illness at Metz and even the attempted assassination by one Robert Damiens in 1757, is now close to death. As at Metz, the royal

46. Bok, *Secrets*, 21.

mistress, du Barry, is dismissed; also as at Metz, the clergy once again require a public confession, where Louis XV asks forgiveness for the poor example his actions have set for his people, and declares that if he survives, he will amongst other things devote himself to relieving the suffering of his subjects.[47] But this confession and his recent attempts at fiscal reform fail to lift his abysmal popularity, and, adding insult to injury, when he at last succumbs to the smallpox, fears of his infectious corpse are so great that he does not even receive a proper funeral. Louis XV's death is even less regretted than Louis XIV's.

The demised king's twenty-year-old grandson, Louis Auguste, ascends the throne as Louis XVI (*5-31*). He is a shy and awkward man, extremely near-sighted with a lumbering gait,[48] but is initially greeted by many as offering the throne its long-wanted renewal.[49] As a matter of fact, Louis XVI takes on a trade as a locksmith, and as though wishing to relieve the court of its intrigues, he is sometimes spotted picking door locks throughout Versailles.[50] Perhaps the young king himself grows up to be exhausted of the court's machinations, not only from the example set by his grandfather, but also by his aunts, the Grandes Madames, to whom he is quite close but whose incessant gossip grows tiresome before long; opening the doors of Versailles might seem to be the way for him to clear out such intrigues and whisperings (though the conspiracies during the exceptionally transparent reign of Louis XIV proves otherwise).

5-31 Joseph-Siffred Duplessis, *Louis XVI*, 1770s (?).

5-32 Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Louis XVI's Library, Versailles, 1775 (?).

Perhaps the most notable doors that Louis XVI unlocks are those to the Petits Appartements, which, in reversal of his predecessor's policy, the new king opens to the public during the day.[51] Here, visitors not only discover Louis XV's hiding place at long last, but also see Louis XVI's addition to this suite: a personal library, its handsomely restrained design Gabriel's last royal work, showing with its well-stocked shelves the current king's studious reading (in contrast to his grandfather), evidence of a well-educated, methodical intelligence. The new king is not nearly as public as Louis XIV; he sleeps in the Petits Appartements and uses the King's Bedroom only for the *lever* and *coucher*, and he too enjoys walking on Versailles's roofs,[52] but nevertheless he is content to spend most of his time at the royal palace, dutifully submitting to the *couvert*, the French rulers' tradition of eating the midday dinner in front of public onlookers. That the library, a new wardrobe, and the installation of a workshop are the only personal changes made at Versailles for Louis

47. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 87.
48. Ibid., 94–95.
49. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 215.
50. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 168.
51. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 133.
52. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 167.

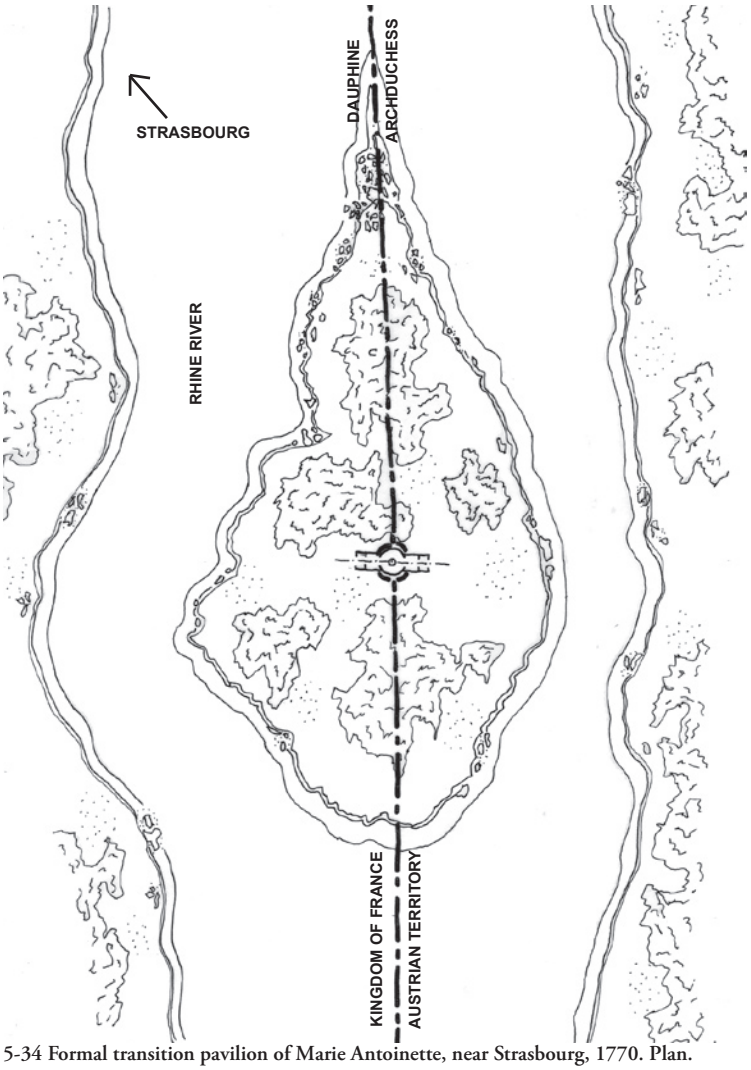
XVI[53]—and such modest changes at that—would further imply that a new age of conscientious royal government has begun. This impression is, unfortunately, not to last for long.

Louis XVI also brings with him to the throne Maria Antonia of Austria, or Marie Antoinette, a Viennese Habsburg princess whose personality is in many ways a good deal less modest—but at the same time, a good deal more private—than her husband's. Daughter of the often stern empress Maria Theresa, one of the eighteenth century's most formidable rulers, Marie Antoinette is betrothed to Louis Auguste, sealing Austria's newish alliance with France, before the empress discovers that her youngest daughter is inadequately educated for this destiny. Quickly pressed to learn French within a year, the princess is at last married by proxy to her far-off husband just before she leaves Schönbrunn Palace at fourteen years of age.[54] At the border near Strasbourg, meanwhile, a pavilion is built on an island in the Rhine for Marie Antoinette's transformation from Austrian archduchess to French dauphine (*5-34*). Perfectly symmetrical, two antechambres face Austrian-ruled Breisgau and another two face France in the opposite direction, while a hall in the middle straddles the border, as though the frontier is stretched open to create a neutral space of transformation. The pavilion's simple construction is concealed by (borrowed) fabrics and furniture, including a tapestry of the myth of Jason, Medea, and Creusa, the story of doomed marriage that a young Johann Wolfgang Goethe, on a tour of the pavilion before the ceremony, finds especially inappropriate for the young couple. In this building, Marie Antoinette first encounters the intensity of French political ceremony, as well its concept of bodily sovereignty; the girl must not only leave behind her Austrian entourage, friends, and possessions, but even her Austrian clothing, a symbolic repudiation of her former title and claim. Thus in the curtained second Austrian antechambre, Marie Antoinette, fresh from her long coach journey, is stripped completely naked. After this humiliating, if ruthlessly logical formality, she is re-clad in French-made attire; understandably, the teenaged princess breaks into tears. Marie Antoinette is then escorted into the central hall where she is handed off to the French delegation; in carefully-choreographed steps, her Austrian companions noiselessly recede out of the hall—and out of the girl's life—back into their own country, as the French group just as noiselessly envelop their new dauphine. Marie Antoinette, desperate

5-33 Franz Xaver Wagenschon, *MarieAntoinette*, **1769-70.**

53. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 4:80.

54. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 8.



5-34 Formal transition pavilion of Marie Antoinette, near Strasbourg, 1770. Plan.

for affection at this point, embraces her new governess, the comtesse de Noailles, unaware as of yet how much of a stickler this woman is for the protocol that the hug violates in spirit. The girl is then escorted to the French river bank, where a glass chariot waits to exhibit her for the anxious crowds of Strasbourg.[55]

At first the French people are enthusiastic about the young dauphine, with her large blue eyes, light complexion, and sometimes unaffected behaviour; she even develops a higher profile than her husband.[56] After decades of Louis XV's mistresses, a young future queen offers yet further hope for a renewed monarchy. However, rumours quickly circulate that her marriage to the fifteen-year-old dauphin is unconsummated—one rumour that turns out to be true. Historians still debate exactly why this is; stories of Louis Auguste/Louis XVI's phimosis have long circulated,[57] while

55. Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 12–16.
56. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 193.
57. Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 24.

others have argued that a mixture of youthful ignorance, timidity, prudery and even the husband's laziness are what delay intimacy for seven years.[58] In the mean time, Marie Antoinette faces pressure from all sides; Louis Auguste's brother, the comte d'Artois, fathers sons who, in the absence of an infant royal heir, are in line to the throne; Maria Theresa, already having little success in directing her daughter to advance Vienna's agenda at Versailles, lays the blame for the marital difficulties squarely on Marie Antoinette in letter after letter; and in the corridors of Versailles as well as the streets beyond, people ask not only about the locksmith's virility, but also where his wife may be finding her pleasures in his stead.

What pleasures she is satiating herself with are not, as a matter of fact, sexual. She becomes good friends with a young widow, the extremely sensitive princesse de Lamballe (who once, famously, faints at the sight of a bouquet of violets!), and the light-spirited comtesse Yolande de Polignac, who introduces Marie Antoinette to her circle of cousins and friends. Particularly after her coronation, Marie Antoinette becomes known for her enjoyment of parties and gambling (to which she loses large sums, in spite of her husband's disapproval), and will take off for all-night visits to Paris, where she develops a love of opera. She also spends a great deal on her wardrobe and hair, becoming something of a trendsetter (*5-35*).[59] Even more than Louis XV, Marie Antoinette is prone to *ennui*, somewhat attributable to her poorly-supervised childhood education;[60] she too reads little, is desperately restless when ceremony demands her composure, and openly bored during any kind of serious conversation—a trait that especially frustrates the ambassador of Austria, comte de Mercy-Argenteau, who attempts to inspire the young queen to involve herself with state affairs (or even espionage)[61] when Maria Theresa's letters aren't doing the same. Nevertheless, and in spite of her occasional flirtatiousness, the young queen remains loyal to her lackluster husband (with one important exception, explored later), even rejecting the overtures of prospective lovers.[62] This does not, however, prevent comment over her carefree behaviour and air of irresponsibility.

In the hopes that giving the king more privacy when visiting his wife will alleviate his shyness, an *entresol* passage is built between the king and queen's bedrooms beneath the Salon de l'Œil de Bœuf,[63] but no conjugal progress is made. At last, in 1777, Marie Antoinette's forthright brother,

5-35 Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Queen Marie Antoinette of France*, **1778.**

58. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 274.
59. Ibid., 260.
60. Ibid., 75.
61. Ibid., 185.
62. Ibid., 250, 252.
Some might even call Marie Antoinette's attitude, which likely stems from her conservative mother, prudish (Thomas, *La Reine scélérate*, 22.); for instance, she haughtily resists associating with madame du Barry during Louis XV's reign. In her memoirs, the queen's lady-in-waiting, Madame Campan, also calls attention to Marie Antoinette's modesty (Campan, *Mémoires*, 78–79.).
63. Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 4:81.

emperor Joseph II, visits France, during which he has private conversations with both king and queen about their fruitless marriage. Whether it is surgery that is required, or simply more assertiveness, the royal marriage is at last consummated a few months after his advice, and the next year the queen delivers the couple's first child. It is an especially difficult delivery for her; not only is she perhaps injured,[64] but according to tradition, the birth is a completely public event; the doors to her bedroom are thrown open and courtiers flood the room. The gawking crowd and stuffy air are as bad as any mortification the queen has experienced at court thus far; after the birth, the queen faints, prompting Louis XVI to open a window. Although the child is, somewhat disappointingly, a girl, the nation celebrates her birth, and France is even more delighted (and relieved) a few years later when a dauphin is at last born.

Although during this second delivery the bedroom doors are kept shut and only a small number of courtiers are allowed in, the world from now on increasingly shuts in around Marie Antoinette; once the jubilation over the boy's birth subsides, attacks against the queen increase sharply,[65] and much as with Madame de Pompadour, commissioned pamphlets and bawdy songs circulate the country. These attacks have various sources: Louis XVI's spinster aunts, the Mesdames, who are brushed aside by the queen; the vocal and increasingly dissatisfied middle class; Princes of the Blood, and even the king's own brothers, alarmed that with the birth of a boy, the king and queen's legacy is assured.[66] The queen at first ignores these slanders and libels, even when the songs and publications make their way into Versailles, though they doubtlessly repel her. An innocent early-morning outing with some friends to watch the sunrise becomes the basis for a wild orgy; her male friends' Platonic chivalry when she is sick with the measles is further misinterpreted;[67] a story of her carriage crushing a peasant child becomes proof of her selfish cruelty (in reality, the carriage just misses the boy, and the queen takes special care of him after the incident); allusions are made to lesbian dalliances with her friends; and even the dauphin's paternity is questioned.

The pamphlets portray her as spending much of her time in her boudoirs. In 1779's *Les Amours de Charlot et Toinette* (*The Affairs of Charlie and Toinette*), the queen, in need of affection but ignored by her "August" husband (in reference to Louis Auguste), is rescued by the gallant Charles, duc d'Artois, and we are invited to imagine,

64. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 293.

65. Thomas, *La Reine scélérate*, 59.

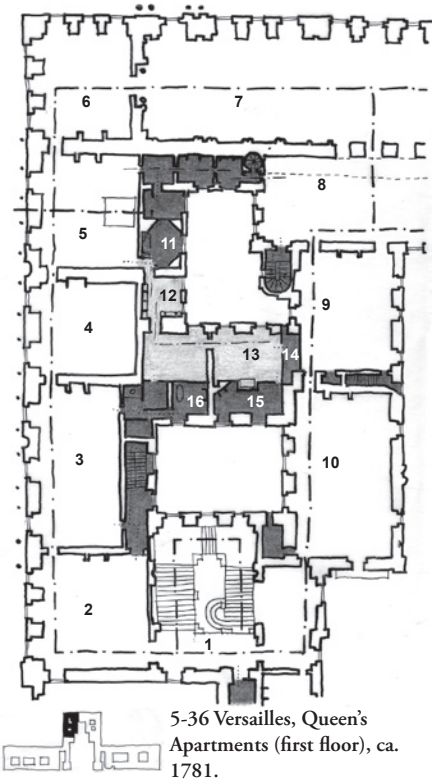
66. Ibid., 59; Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 181–189.

67. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 296–97.

An alcove fine and golden, its beauty a delight,
Neither lost in darkness, nor awash in light;
On a calfskin sofa with velvet's added grace,
The charming August woman, her lover will embrace.[68]

Much of this image is prompted by Marie Antoinette's attempts at withdrawal from court life into a small circle of close friends,[69] inadvertently insulting those she excludes, and leaving her private life open to speculation. Her desire for privacy and retreat is new for a French queen, who is traditionally among the most public personages at Versailles. Even the queens' living quarters are a testament to their publicity; the queen's apartments have always incorporated less private space than the king's, its *commodité* rooms confined to two sides of the Cour du Dauphin (*5-36*); and with the loss of the Ambassador's Staircase, the queen's Grand Appartement is more than ever the first reception spaces of Versailles, unfolding as they do at the top of the Queen's Staircase. Marie Antoinette nevertheless retreats to her network of little *cabinets* often; she renovates Maria Leszczynska's private lounge into the Salon Doré (*5-38*), all white and gold with a mirrored sofa niche (and perhaps the inspiration for *The Affairs of Charlie and Toinette*); the tiny Méridienne is also white and gold (*5-37*), with exquisite blue upholstery, the lightness of the whole relieving what could otherwise be the claustrophobia of this octagonal space. A *méridienne* is a species of boudoir intended for escape

5-38 Richard Mique, Salon Doré, Versailles, 1770s (?).



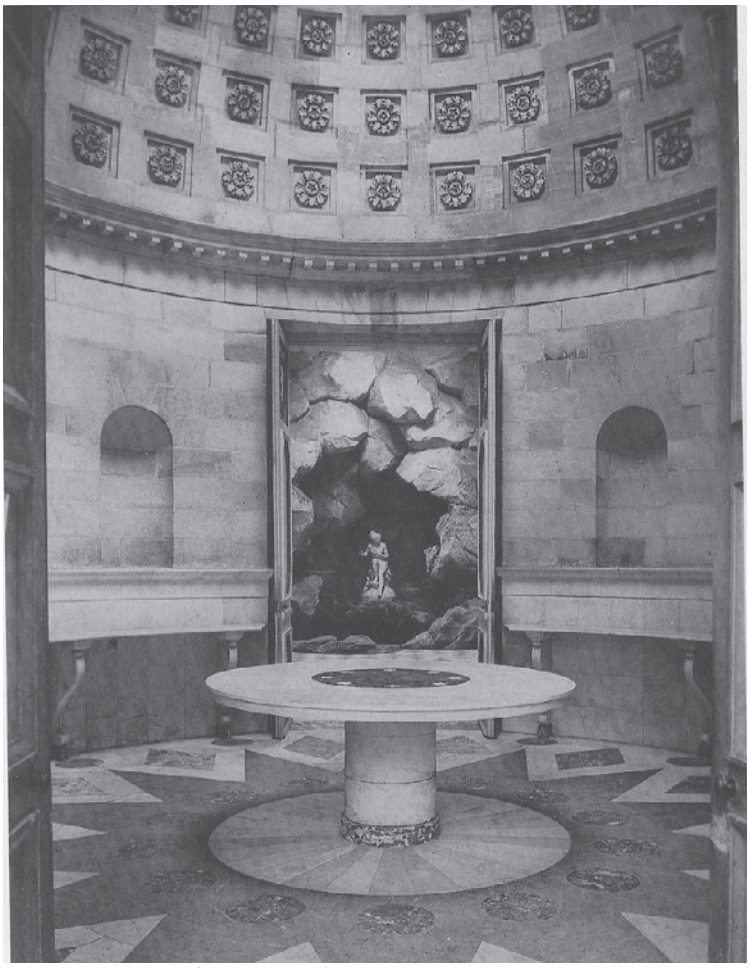
5-36 Versailles, Queen's Apartments (first floor), ca. 1781.
1. Queen's Marble Staircase
2. Queen's guard room
3. Grand Courvert
4. Grand Cabinet
5. Queen's Bedroom
6. Salon de la Paix (Hall of Peace)
7. Gallerie des Glaces (Hall of Mirrors)
8. Salon de l'Œil de Bœuf (Bull's-Eye Room), with *entresol* passage beneath
9. King's First Antechambre
10. King's guard room
11. Méridienne
12. Library
13. Salon Doré (Gold Room)
14. Wardrobe
15. *Boudoir*
16. Bathroom

5-37 Richard Mique and the Rousseau brothers, Méridienne, Versailles, 1781.

68. *Les Amours de Charlot et Toinette: Pièce dérobée à V.....* , 1779. Quoted in Thomas, *La Reine scélérate*, 170. My translation.

5-39 The Rousseau brothers, La Chaumière, Rambouillet, ca. 1775.

5-40 Jacques-Jean Thévenin, Laiterie, Rambouillet, 1785--88. Elevation.



5-41 Laiterie. Interior from entrance door.

from the midday heat;[70] Marie Antoinette's Méridienne is a gift from the king after the birth of the dauphin (hence the room's ornamental dolphin motifs), but could it also be compensation for her ever-worsening reputation, the place for her to escape not the hot sun, but the resentment of the court and public, its small scale ensuring a space of personal, individual control?

Garden pavilions have similar appeal for Marie Antoinette. At the royal *château* of Rambouillet, the Chaumière, or thatched cottage,[71] features a cabinet that nearly buries its occupant in a dense and exotic decorative scheme of polychrome shells (*5-39*);[72] elsewhere on this estate, an extraordinary Laiterie (Dairy) is also built (*5-40, 5-41*). This latter pavilion is a cubic classical temple on the outside, its doors openning to reveal a cool, cylindrical, top-lit rotunda with fresh milk (for drinking and fashionably recreational butter- and cheese-making) displayed on benches all around. Another door on axis with the first gives onto an intimate grotto; the Laiterie

69. Her Polignac friends even build a wooden lounge attached to the Aile du Midi, the southern wing of Versailles, overlooking the Orangerie, to stay out of the court's direct view. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 192.

Even Mercy warns Marie Antoinette of the effects of her social life, to no avail. Ibid., 176.

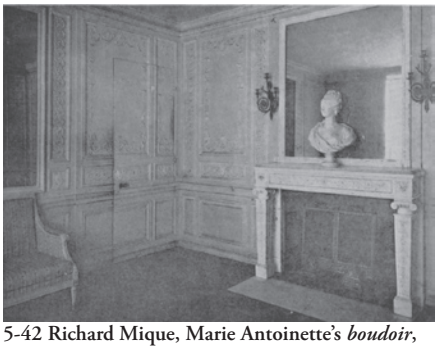
70. Roubo, *l'Art du Menuisier*, 1:197. Quoted in Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, 4:379-80.

71. Where, for a time, the princesse de Lamballe lives. Arthaud, *Dream Palaces*, 190.

72. Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century*, 265.

pulls deep into its interior another garden space whose nude ruggedness is surprising against the Pantheon-like serenity of the rotunda.

But perhaps Marie Antoinette's favourite *petite maison* is the Petit Trianon, presented to her by the king after their coronation. The queen comes to spend much time at the Petit Trianon, even overnight as often as possible; like Louis XV, she entertains informally here, seldom using the house for state functions, and the privilege of staying overnight is limited to her closest friends. These guests use the attic-level warren of bedroom suites, while Louis XV's *entresol* is usually reserved for the princesse de Lamballe.[73] Consequently, the hidden staircase connecting the first-floor private suite to the *entresol* is demolished, the only architectural transformation Marie Antoinette makes here, though this space remains no less secretive. It is transformed into the queen's remarkably hermetic boudoir, its doors cut directly out of the wall panelling (*5-42*). Though characteristic of the boudoir's mistress, who like madame de Maintenon, associates privacy with independence, these invisible thresholds are common eighteenth-century devices; it is the windows that betray the queen's extraordinary lengths for control over her own solitude. These windows are fitted with panels that mechanically rise out of built-in pockets to completely cover the apertures, replacing the view out with reflected views in (*5-43–5-45*). If Louis XV originally establishes this *commodité* zone screening the rest of the Petit Trianon from his personal interests, then Marie Antoinette takes it one step further to cocoon herself. Her boudoir offers a self-determined freedom exercised and controlled from within;[74] here, she can exclude the surrounding world at will, much as when she closes her bedroom door during childbirth. On a visit to the comtesse de Polignac, Marie Antoinette exclaims, "Now, I am no longer the queen, I am myself!,"[75] but we can imagine that she in fact comes closest to fully being herself in tiny cabinets like this boudoir, perhaps even when she is by herself; after all, the Petit Trianon boudoir attains complete escape from the ideology of the *enfilade* by folding itself into a self-referential space, the mirrors replicating the room and its besieged mistress, she alone keeping herself company away from the viciousness of courtiers and pamphlets, she alone who knows who she really is. Louis XVI, the locksmith, opens doors, only for his wife to close them again.



5-42 Richard Mique, Marie Antoinette's *boudoir*, Petit Trianon, Versaillles, 1770s. Corner showing door cut into wall panel.

5-43, 5-44, 5-45 Marie Antoinette's *boudoir*, Petit Trianon. Hidden sliding window mirrors.

73. Arnott and Wilson, *The Petit Trianon Versailles*.

74. Marie Antoinette has a fondness for transformable, mechanical furniture (Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 379–80.), not only satisfying her desire for novelty,

5-46 Richard Mique, Hameau, Versailles, 1783--85.

When the windows of her Petit Trianon boudoir are not covered, they overlook the Picturesque "English style" landscape that replaces Louis XV's botanical garden. Its rolling hills and clumps of trees are created at great expense, and quite obviously refute the linear geometries of Versailles (*5-53*), even those of the Petit Trianon's contained garden. The meandering paths lead visitors to such incidents as the Temple d'Amour (Temple of Love) and naturalistic ponds. It is around the largest of these ponds in the 1780s that the royal architect, Richard Mique, builds with painter Hubert Robert a mock peasant hamlet, or *hameau*, the most notorious of all the private constructions undertaken for the queen (*5-46, 5-47*). Based on a Norman village and influenced by similar follies built elsewhere (Versailles's Hameau is said to be inspired by that of the prince de Condé), the twelve cottages are overlooked by the rustic Tour de Marlborough (Tower of Marlborough; there is a fashionable interest in this English commander who defeats the French army),

5-47 Hameau. View across pond.

but also her need to control her own environment in opposition to the court's imposed behaviour.

75. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 192. My translation.

its Picturesque cracked plaster and spotted thatched roof the work of theatre set designers. To complete the effect, a real peasant couple is hired to live here, maintaining the vegetable gardens and dairy cows for Marie Antoinette to wander around and show to friends before enjoying the model farm's fresh produce. The Hameau is a Rousseauist fantasy, an image of natural, uncorrupted primitivity, a picturesque painting come to life (*5-48*) set around a pond that places in the centre of the landscape not the human being, but water and reflected sky, and which reflects the village back to itself and to observers, emphasizing the imprtance of the Picturesque compostion. It is as though, a century after the village of Trianon is flattened to make way for the king's pleasures, the village has been rebuilt to amuse the queen. To many, this project is infuriatingly absurd; of course people have come to question the Hameau's taste, finding the whole project ridiculously false, an "absurd dolls'-house country village" in the words of one historian;[76] others find it inappropriate for a queen to so openly indulge herself in this type of fantasy, given her exalted and public position; and still more are offended by the idea of a queen playing at a simple life, given the poverty still found all over France, most of whose peasants, in spite of the wealth and sophistication of the *élite*, exist at a fairly mediæval level of subsistence and ignorance (*5-49, 5-50*). But the commoners' reality is far from Marie Antoinette's experience; though not uncharitable, all she really knows about the world outside the court is that the slanders are growing ever louder, her reputation is ever plummeting, and she tires ever more of the endless rules of etiquette.[77] Marie Antoinette finds in the myth of sentimentality a welcome casualness and simplicity of taste that she increasingly enforces around her; in contrast to the formal dress required at Versailles, all guests of the Petit Trianon must be informally attired, men in flatteringly unostentatious red frock coats, women in the comfortable white muslin dresses (originally based on West Indian Creole dresses) that Marie Antoinette eventually wears even in the palace (*5-51*), at the same time renouncing heavy court makeup.[78] The Hameau may in fact be a labouriously-achieved simulacrum, with revealingly non-rustic building names like the Maison de la Reine (Queen's House) and Maison du Billard (Billiard House), and elegant interiors—one "barn" even houses a ballroom![79]—that exaggerate the eighteenth-century disconnect between exterior and interior, but the

5-48 Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The Farm*, 1750.

5-49 House in Gascony, 1763.

5-50 House in Brittany, 1770.

76. Hamlin, *Architecture through the Ages*, 499.

77. Of a Grand Couvert in 1788, the marquise de la Tour de Pin recalls: "The King ate with a hearty appetite, but the Queen did not remove her gloves nor use her serviette, which was a great error." Marquise de la Tour de Pin, *Memoirs*. Quoted in Van der Kemp, *Versailles*, 97.

78. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 195; Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 304–05.

79. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 195; Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century*, 221.

5-51 Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie Antoinette*, **1783.**

5-52 The Rousseau brothers, Cabinet de Toilette, Queen's Apartment, Fontainebleau, 1785.

queen finds solace in the idyllic theme represented by the Hameau, feeling that she has created a piece of the outside world innocent of the tyrannies of royal life.

This desire for innocence is consistent with the escapist themes of the other two Trianon houses, for they all have in common a retreat into some kind of origin. As already explored, the youthfulness desired by the Sun King lightens the Trianon de Marbre; meanwhile, the Petit Trianon's appeals to history and botanical science represent a preference for reason, the faculty that, in the French Cartesian tradition, does away with all the errors of convention and sensation to find the underlying truth. The Hameau's bucolic sentimentality is the latest version of this, searching as it is for that paradox: natural culture. In each instance, the monarch tries to find a way out of court obligations by finding a way back to a moment earlier than all the hardships and complexities of civilization, an Eden before the Fall, a primitive hut. For Louis XIV's Trianon de Marbre, it is a very personal origin, perhaps vaguely-sensed and represented largely through mood; but under Louis XV and, especially, Marie Antoinette, the idea of an origin (with Marie Antoinette, does it already become nostalgia?) is much more situated within broader—and notably, Modern—cultural discourses.

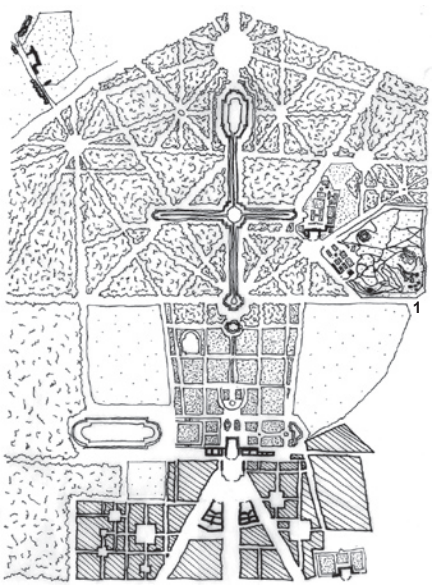
It can be said that while Marie Antoinette escapes at times into thematic fantasy, like the Hameau's rural fiction, material fantasies also fascinate her. After all, the colours, smells, and tastes of the Hameau's gardens, the texture of its faux-cracked plaster, and the grain of its exposed wood have immediate, sensible appeal. So too do the contrasting surfaces of the Rambouillet Laiterie, the Chaumière's callused walls, and the Méridienne's delicate colours elicit affective responses. This all is the more masterfully brought together in the queen's Cabinet de Toilette at Fontainebleau (*5-52*). Its Pompeian-style grotesques portray Turkish figures and themes, calling to mind the intense Ottoman siege and conquest of Vienna ultimately repelled by Marie Antoinette's Habsburg ancestors, a story likely to encourage the queen in her current predicaments. But it is the gorgeous, opalescent mother-of-pearl applied to the room's walls and furniture that is by far its most striking quality, giving off a strange, milky sheen—like yet another shell, this one for the queen.

When Marie Antoinette is first presented the Petit Trianon, one story has it that Louis XVI reminds her that the house is originally built for the king's favourite.[80] This unintentional

80. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 265.

conflation of queen and mistress directs us to the very trap that Marie Antoinette finds herself in, for the worst thing that could happen to Marie Antoinette is that her husband—first among Bourbon kings—does *not* take a favourite, even after his improved virility. For the past century, the French have been accustomed to reserved queens[81] and extraverted mistresses; Maria Teresa of Spain and Maria Leszczynska both are pious, politically unambitious, and rather meek in the face of their husbands, and we have already seen the power (or potential for it) possessed by La Vallière, Montespan, Maintenon, Châteauroux, Pompadour, and du Barry. But the mistresses' power is at least theoretically checked by their precarious, morally unapproved situation at court, and of course by the ultimate limits their society places on women. Queens, too, have little power compared with their husbands—especially before they produce a male heir[82]—and yet their official position sanctions at least the possibility of enormous influence, all the more reason to prefer a humble queen who will maintain the expected feminine passivity. But the lack of a mistress leaves a gap at court,[83] and Marie Antoinette, pretty, breezy, and difficult to control, is no shirking consort. As if this situation were not difficult enough, with ideas of family morality changing, the royal family is now also expected to live within the values of wholesome, virtually bourgeois domestic propriety.[84]

Marie Antoinette is seen as enacting the worst threats of both queen and mistress, as though a century's worth of dominant court women has come together in a single figure; moreover, she has to satisfy the demands of absolutist transparency at court while facing the Enlightenment's relentless curiosity to know, a new form of transparency. That she is a daughter of powerful Austria—and that the last Austrian Habsburg queen of France, Louis XIV's widely disliked mother Anne, also happens to be the last political queen, her regency still blamed for the Fronde—hardly helps. With no other woman to blame for court intrigue and unofficial influence, it all falls on Marie Antoinette, for who else has power at court when Louis XVI's develops an increasingly ineffectual reputation? Moreover, Chantal Thomas, studying propaganda against Marie Antoinette, argues that the queen's supposed lesbianism as spread by the pamphlets means that the court favourites are no longer the king's but now the queen's, who otherwise uses men perversely;[85] it is not difficult to then translate supposed sexual aggression to the political sphere.



5-53 Versailles, ca. 1785.
1. English Garden and Hameau

Each monarch builds further away from the palace and their predecessor, so that Marie Antoinette's Hameau approaches the borders of the estate—clearly each pleasure house is attempting even harder than the last to escape the pressures represented by the palace.

At the same time, however, the speculation should be made that, when travelling to the Trianons or the Hameau by way of the long paths cut through the gardens' woods, visitors must actually feel, curiously enough, that they are penetrating further *into* the estate, discovering something deep within the huge site, away from the exposure of the central axes.

81. The queen's traditional virtues, as portrayed in the iconography of the Grand Appartement de la Reine, are fidelity, charity, prudence, and generosity. Nolhac, *Versailles and the Trianons*, 41.

82. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 224.

83. Ibid., 316–17, 778.

84. Ibid., 216.

85. Thomas, *La Reine scélérate*, 123–25.

While Marie Antoinette builds her Hameau fantasy, the rest of the nation honours her less and less as their queen. No matter that Marie Antoinette in reality has hardly a finger on government machinations (her nomination for chief minister, for instance, is rejected),[86] or that satisfying all of the nation's conflicting expectations would be a herculean challenge for anyone, let alone someone whom Stefan Zweig characterizes as, in the end, an average woman.[87] That so little is known about her—and that so many interests can take advantage of this obscurity—is enough for fiction to be taken as fact; whereas a figure like Marie-Madeleine Guimard exploits her age's incessant curiosity, it is used by others against the queen, who, unable to control it, is caught in a cycle drawing ever more invasive attention whenever she tries to escape it.

Undoubtedly, the queen does face warranted criticism, though it is easily manipulated; for example, her large purchases and construction projects during near state bankruptcy earns her the nickname of Madame Déficit, as though it is all her doing. At the same time, simply speaking of the *Autrichienne* (literally, Austrian Woman, though the termination *chienne* alone is also the word "bitch") is enough to know that one is speaking of Marie Antoinette; the absolutist queen is increasingly foreign, her body, so to speak, less bound with the state, with the result that any harm to befall her may not necessarily harm France.

To the north of the Petit Trianon's formal garden, Marie Antoinette also adds a small theatre where the queen, a skillful dancer and musician, performs in amateur theatre especially to the enjoyment of Louis XVI—likely relieved that theatrics replace gambling as the queen's favoured activity. It is here that Marie Antoinette dresses as milkmaids and shepherdesses (and not at the Hameau, as many in our own day still believe),[88] which are her favourite roles; thus while it may be astonishing that the queen and her friends mount in 1785 *The Barber of Seville*—penned by pamphleteer Beaumarchais who weaves subversive criticism of the corrupt nobility into his popular comedies—it is less surprising that Marie Antoinette should reserve the part of the young Rosaline for herself.[89] During one of the rehearsals for this production, the queen is informed that court jeweller Bœhmer is asking after the final payments for a diamond necklace. She at first dismisses this request, not having made such a purchase. Within the next few days, however, a signed contract is produced by the

86. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 221.
87. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, x.
88. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette,* 355.
89. Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 195–99.

jeweller, invoicing the queen for well over a million livres. The queen is shocked and confused, insisting that she knows nothing of this matter, protests that will fail to save her in the end.

Unbeknownst to her, the queen has been drawn into a massive swindle.[90] "Comte" Nicolas de Lamotte and his wife, the "comtesse" Jeanne de Lamotte-Valois, frauds who hover around the edges of the nobility, set their sights on the wealth of the vain, debauched, and gullible Louis Cardinal de Rohan (*5-54*), son of one of the *élite* Houses of the Blood, who also, as it happens, is one of Marie-Madeleine Guimard's sponsors.[91] Discovering that the queen snubs this rather unimpressive man, much to his frustration, the de Lamottes convince him that Marie Antoinette would like to finally open a friendship with him, though it must remain under cover at first lest her majesty appear too erratic to society. With the help of Marie Antoinette's corrupted private secretary, a series of letters with forged signatures and the most elaborate expressions of friendship (and intimations of a possible government appointment) follow, along with complaints of the ever-tightening royal purse. To subsidize her notorious spending habits, the "queen" begins requesting financial assistance from the cardinal, to be conveyed through their mutual friends, the discreet de Lamottes. Rohan acquiesces; and when he eventually wants to meet his new friend in person, the de Lamottes arrange a late-night meeting in a corner of the Versailles gardens between the cardinal and queen—or rather, between the cardinal and a somewhat confused Paris streetwalker dressed in an expensive gown, who in the darkness of the grove and brevity of their encounter, Rohan, his eyes submissively downcast for most of the meeting, easily takes for Marie Antoinette.

5-54 Cardinal de Rohan.

The de Lamottes then hear of an extravagant diamond necklace made by Bœhmer, which for years he has attempted to sell to the queen. Though she is perhaps interested, its enormous price (1,600,000 livres, today approximately Can$13,500,000)[92] is prohibitive for the nearly bankrupt royal household, and Marie Antoinette ultimately declines the purchase. The de Lamottes convince the cardinal that Marie Antoinette has changed her mind on the necklace, but needs help in negotiating its purchase, and Rohan agrees to represent her; for by now, the "queen" has admitted to Rohan in her letters that her friendship for him has blossomed into love, and the smitten cardinal is willing to please his new mistress with any request. Bœhmer, anxious to be liquidated of this

90. For the following account of the Necklace Affair, I rely on Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 195–250.

91. Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment*, 173.

92. "Bank of Canada Daily Currency Converter;" "Eighteenth-Century Currency and Exchange Rates;" "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1264 to 2006."

costly investment that has been shown no other interest, eagerly agrees to future payments in four installments. The necklace is transferred to Rohan, who in turn transfers it to de Lamotte-Valois and the accomplice secretary—and all 1.6-million livres' worth of it disappear.

The necklace is broken up and its diamonds are sold in London, the de Lamottes lavishly spending their ill-obtained profit. Meanwhile, they attempt to delay the first payment by conveying a request from the "queen" for a rebate of 200,000 livres. Bœhmer agrees, replying by letter to the queen—the *real* queen—who, not understanding the business referred to in this short note's tactful language, destroys it immediately, characteristically forgetting to ask the jeweller about it later. Eventually Bœhmer sees no first payment, bringing him to discuss matters with her directly at her private theatre.

Hearing Bœhmer's side of the story, the king and queen are enraged, and without warning, Cardinal de Rohan is arrested at Versailles just before he is to deliver special mass on the Feast of the Assumption, an amazingly public humiliation that immediately attracts all of Europe's attention. Jeanne de Lamotte-Valois is arrested too—her husband, fortunately for him, is still safely in England—along with the crooked secretary, and the royal couple insist on a very public trial in front the Paris Parlement,[93] to clear the queen's name in this scandal that already has cast suspicious glances on the queen. However, this public trial proves to be a mistake, and not only because of growing tensions between the Paris Parlement and the monarchy; although all defendants and lawyers are careful not to point fingers at the queen, their respectfulness only fuels speculation that the queen really is somehow involved in the fascinating tale that unfolds of expensive jewellery, phony nobles, private letters, and moonlit meetings. Few sympathize with the de Lamottes, but the sense that the Cardinal de Rohan is a rather innocent victim—and harshly treated by the sovereigns at that—grows to where it is even circulated on the streets that he is in fact selflessly covering for the queen.

When the Parlement announces its eagerly-awaited verdict, the false comte and comtesse receive the harshest sentences, the latter of the two to be flogged, branded, and imprisoned for life. The other accomplices receive lighter sentences, and the cardinal, significantly, is completely acquitted. The high nobles making up the Parlement recognize in their ruling that Rohan is the victim of flimflam artists, but in so far as they do not reprimand the cardinal for believing that the

93. *Parlements* in France are akin to supreme courts, presided over by many of the local nobility's highest members; while several provincial cities have their own *parlements*, the one of Paris is one of the most venerated insitutions in the kingdom, even achieving popular respect.

queen would resort to covert behaviour, the censure turns on Marie Antoinette. Implicitly, yet officially, her reputation is now confirmed. The queen may be innocent in this Necklace Affair, but can the Parlement's nobles really blame the cardinal, one of their own, for believing that Marie Antoinette would resort to secret friendships, midnight meetings, and mediated purchases? The nobility take more than just a small vengeance on the queen; as Zweig explains, this ruling is a major blow to absolutism, evidence that the power Louis XIV so carefully centralizes on himself has slipped out of the hands of his descendants.

Marie Antoinette is devastated; if she ignores the rumours and pamphlets before, it is impossible to do so after the Necklace Affair; her reputation is completely destroyed, and the court and public are ever more prepared to believe anything about her. All the worse, then, when de Lamotte-Valois "escapes" from prison (likely with the help of the queen's enemies) to England; many come to think that this liberation is in fact de Lamotte-Valois's reward from Marie Antoinette for refusing to testify against the queen in court; and we can imagine the reaction to de Lamotte-Valois's quickly-published account of the scandal, which firmly implicates Marie Antoinette and even alleges a lesbian affair between the two women. Four years after the Necklace Affair, when the crisis of the state finances and virtual deadlock between the king and the newly-confident Parlement prompt the first summoning of the Estates General in a century-and-a-half, deputies from the Estates General visiting the Petit Trianon ask to see a Cabinet des Diamants (Diamond Cabinet), as though the queen has an entire boudoir encrusted with diamonds, in the way the Chaumière's boudoir is encrusted with shells. In fact, there is no such room; a set for one of Marie Antoinette's amateur performances a few years earlier, impressively covered with *fake* diamonds, is the origin of this widely-believed fiction.[94] Marie Antoinette is not able to shake her extravagant characterization from the Necklace Affair, for it is all the people know about her.

94. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 191.

CHAPTER SIX:

Mirror

"No-one will use an ounce of poison against me … calumny is a far better way to kill; and that is how I shall perish."

—Marie Antoinette[1]

THE MOTHER will prescribe this reading to her daughter."[2] This is the instruction that precedes *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* (*Philosophy in the Boudoir*), a fictional, pornographic dialogue on sex, education, and political freedom published by the marquis de Sade in 1797. It describes the libertine education of teen-aged Eugénie, sent by her father to the boudoir of the promiscuous Madame de Saint-Ange, who will host an orgy for Eugénie's benefit with her brother (and incestuous lover) the young chevalier de Mirvel and his good friend Dolmancé, whose handsome exterior nevertheless possesses, according to the chevalier, a cruel streak.[3] Eugénie's education is primarily corrective; not only is she to lose her virginity, but the moral upbringing from her prudish mother is to be undone. Once the guests arrive and disrobe, the story procedes from one bout of exhaustive sexual activity to another. The reader reads through detailed dirty language while, much to the eager Eugénie's delight, a great variety of partner combinations and positions are achieved; the sex is largely directed by Dolmancé, the orgy participants often linking up to form continuous chains of bodies, and Eugénie already experiences several forms of gratification before and after she loses her virginity to Mirvel. In-between these spates of physical experimentation, the characters discuss the reasons and implications of their tastes, during which they unfold a radical libertine philosophy.

At the core of this system is nature and its law, namely, that the pleasures we are drawn toward are natural, and thus to oppose them is offensive; as Mirvel asks, "is man the master of his own tastes?"[4] Nothing should stand in the way of our pleasures; sex acts ranging from masturbation and homosexuality to incest and pederasty should not be

1. Quoted in Madame Campan, *Mémoires*, 254. My translation.
2. Sade, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, 9. My translation.
3. Ibid., 13.
4. Ibid., 15. My translation.

forbidden; monogamy and particularly marriage, which Dolmancé passionately characterizes as a form of captivity, especially for women, stands in the way of women's true calling to provide as much pleasure to as many as possible;[5] and the fear of unintended pregnancy is easily resolved with contraception, the practice of sodomy (a solution Dolmancé, an exclusive sodomite, fondly advocates), and when the need arises, abortion---or even outright, unapologetic infanticide.[6]

This brutality should not be shied away from, for, as Dolmancé explains to Eugénie, "Destruction being one of the first laws of nature, nothing that destroys could be a crime. How can an action that serves so well ever offend her?"[7] For instance, Dolmancé and Sainte-Ange contemplate the "fact" of sodomy's superior pleasurability over all other erotic acts. If human beings were to exclusively practice sodomy, however—in apparent harmony with what nature herself encourages—then we would eventually go extinct, thereby leading to the conclusion that this eventuality is nature's own preference. "Wars, disease, famines, murders would then be nothing but the necessary accidents of nature's laws; human kind would thus be no more the criminal than the victim," concludes Madame de Sainte-Ange.[8] Perhaps such speculations only represent the mood of their time; Dolmancé later theorizes that the cruel pleasures are very common in his own day and age, originating in the ever-growing desire to be moved, leading people (especially women, particularly, according to him, drawn to cruel pleasures) to now seek out violent shock that may even affect one's nerves more than conventional enjoyment.[9] Dolmancé assures us that cruelty is our first sentiment, being the egoists that we are, but cruelty is not so dangerous in nature because there it keeps itself in check, and only oppresses the weak, those meant to be oppressed anyway.[10]

Continuing this topsy-turvy logic and morality, Dolmancé shows to his friends a philosophical pamphlet titled *Frenchmen: Press On Further if you Wish to be Republicans*, which he comes across earlier that day. This literature seems to agree with, and even advances, many of his own views. In keeping with the contemporary revolutionary mood, a complete overhaul of all conventions is advocated; the pamphlet's author, for instance, decides that religion in a republic should be replaced by social education, since "cults", whether old or new, are inherently antithetical to liberty.[11] The end of capital punishment is called for, not only because it contradictorily penalizes murder with murder, but also because the law's

5. Sade, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, 65.
6. Ibid., 114–118.
7. Ibid., 97. My translation.
8. Ibid., 85–86. My translation.
9. Ibid., 121, 127--28.
10. Ibid., 122–25.
11. Ibid., 193, 207.

cold impartiality can never account for the passions that lead some to kill.[12] Indeed, the libertine republic described is vitually anarchistic, so minimal are the laws. Libel is actually seen as a great social corrective, unless the libeled proves that the allegations are false. The concept of indecency is roundly dismissed, since prudery (ie. modesty) is used by women to conceal and control their coquettery, prolonging desire to their advantage—"and so prudery, far from a virtue, was nothing more than one of the first effects of corruption."[13] Sexual desire must be unleashed, if anything because it can be one of the most despotic passions, and since the exclusive possession of one woman by one man contradicts freedom, the publication advocates *temporary* ownership—universal prostitution, with no woman permitted to refuse the requests of any man (that men are under the same obligation to women makes the arrangement at least somewhat equitable).[14]

The pamphlet's views on theft are even more creative: since it is the rich who in fact incite the poor to steal, it is only fair if punishment for theft fall not on the thieves, but on those who allow themselves to be stolen from![15] Meanwhile, murder is rationalized in several ways: We are firstly creatures of nature; hence, our deaths are not tragic, but all part of nature's cycles, and additionally all our actions are natural, so that murder can never displease nature; murder can not be a political crime, since history offers all too many examples of the political use of murder; and in the end, the pamphlet concludes that all free and virile societies not only permit, but employ murder: "Everywhere in the end people reasonably believe that the murderer, that is to say the man who stifles his own sensitivity to the point of killing his equal and defying public or private vengeance, everywhere, I say, people believe that such a man could be nothing but very dangerous, and by consequence very precious in a warrior or republican government."[16] That murder will also keep a republican society at a sustainable and prosperous population only adds to its necessity.[17]

This outlined libertine republic is a violent kind of meritocracy, the friction of its openly self-interested citizenry at the heart of the nation's life. The pamphlet's author (clearly the marquis de Sade's own voice), and the characters reading it, are no egalitarian idealists; after all, when the pamphlet is about to be read, Sainte-Ange orders Augustin, the comely gardener commanded earlier to join the orgy, out of the boudoir, such elevated discussions not meant for him.[18] After the reading, moreover, the chevalier de Mirvel disagrees

12. Sade, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, 219–21.
13. Ibid., 230. My translation.
14. Ibid., 223–37.
15. Ibid., 227–28.
16. Ibid., 266. My translation.
17. Ibid., 268–70.
18. Ibid., 193.

with parts of the manifesto, urging sympathy for the poor, but Dolmancé dismisses this preaching as youthful *naïveté*, ignorant of the how little good there really is in his fellow men and women.[19] Once again, we are all essentially cruel, justified in this simply by virtue of the uncompromising selfishness of pleasure;

> What do we desire when we enjoy pleasure? That everything around us is occupied only with us, only thinks of us, only takes care of us … It is therefore false that there is any pleasure to be given to others; for that is really to serve them, and the hard man is far from the desire to be of use to others. In doing harm, on the contrary, he experiences all the charms barely touched by those too nervous to make use of their strengths; he then dominates, he is a *tyrant*.[20]

The freedom that Sade presents in *Philosophy in the Boudoir* is taken to a literal extreme, embracing egoism and, frequently, anti-altruism.[21] It is difficult to know how ironic, if at all, Sade is being here, though. Knowing what we know of the author, many of the sexual tastes and philosophical musings may indeed be close to him; but then again (and in spite of Sade's frankly unexceptional talents as writer and thinker), the whole dialogue is so hyperbolic, and the philosophy outlined so seemingly resolved—rationalized, even—that it might at some point have rubbed against Sade's iconoclastic sense of independence. The philosophy presented here may be too eccentric to be the summation of libertinism as a whole (in as much as libertinism ever constitutes a coherent "movement"), but Sade's sensibility nevertheless shares with other libertinisms the sense of erotic constraint that is so vividly evoked in the sadomasochistic sexuality that is partly named after him. However, as much as Sade is willing to create moments of erotic constraint—and subject others to it, if only in his imagination—his French aristocrat's yearning for freedom is completely *un*constrained. Warren Roberts, in his study of French morality and society in eighteenth-century literature, argues that in the end, the erotic works of the period demand a deep reform of society by depicting its boredom and corruption; erotic literature may superficially celebrate duplicity, but the cruel behaviour of manipulative aristocrats may even fulfill a wish to destroy the very society that restricts their freedom.[22] By the end of the century, the marquis de Sade fully embraces libertinism's implied rebellion, at the same time critical of the libertinism that precedes him. Unlike those who are happy to uphold their public *honnêteté*

19. Sade, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, 276–78.

20. Ibid., 283–84. My translation; original italics.

21. Some of this brings to mind the objectivism of Ayn Rand, who also, interestingly, has rough sexual tastes.

22. Roberts, *Morality and Social Class* …, 58, 144–45.

and exert their lattitude in private, Sade is as disgusted with duplicity and hypocrisy as he is enraged with any morality that dares to censor his desires. His need for liberty goes far beyond a noble's sense of circumscribed power; it is generalized until it becomes a principled individualism.

Thus Sade will have nothing of the coy *double-entendres* and enticing obscurities that we see in other libertine works. Even more than the most startling Neoclassical architecture, this marquis banishes mediation, describing his cravings explicitly and literally, though not artfully. In spite of his noble background, Sade is as enthusiastic a supporter of the Revolution as any;[23] it is no co-incidence that *Philosophy in the Boudoir*, one of the last works of eighteenth-century pornography to muse philosophically, features a call-to-action for republican societies. In 1797, during the republican Directory that follows the Reign of Terror, he perhaps still sees the possibility to create a France liberated enough even to tolerate him. Or perhaps he does not see this possibility any more, and he writes this entire dialogue cognicent of its futility, its attacks and suggested reforms so unbridled because they will never face the responsibility of materialization. Sade may be satirizing all idealistic politics, showing his contemporaries (rather sadistically) a vision of ultimate freedom they will never have the courage to pursue, forcing them to admit that there is only so much even the most open-minded people will tolerate, and that some liberties cannot be granted. All the while, Sade may be enjoying the fruitlessness of his efforts—a characteristically masochistic enterprise, one more exploitation of the limit's positive value.

Libertinism is not likely to succeed in the French Revolution, to thoroughly participate in the creation of a new society. It is too closely associated with the nobility the Revolution overthrows, and libertinism largely exists in reaction to current circumstances, seldom articulating a comprehensive vision beyond issues of sexuality (the work of Sade aside). Most important, eroticism is an inherently unstable force, too frightening to found a society upon. The world libertinism depicts is as shifting and uncertain as Vivant Denon's "No Tomorrow," full of allegiance and deception, even if only of a mild kind. Plus, its avoidance of consequences is untenable at a large scale; pregnancy is still too hard to control, and still too encumbered with economic and moral imperatives, to be ignored, and the absence of the very mention of disease from almost all libertine

23. Feher, *The Libertine Reader*, 1322.

works (with one exception that will soon be seen), in spite of a serious syphilis epidemic, demonstrates the degree to which libertine tales are more fantasy than achievable ideal. The Revolution is a complex event with many causes; the eruption of long-standing class tensions and anger; a poor and inefficient government; the pressures of an increasingly urban population; recent food shortages; critical new ideas of the rights and relationships of human beings to each-other; and certainly the negative impression of the aristocracy promoted by libertine culture.[24] Few revolutionary supporters are as willing as the marquis de Sade to replace this old, unhappy order with a fluid, amoral world; they do not see in the corrupt Ancien Régime evidence of a universal anarchy, but instead they have an intense wish for a new, more secure era.

Along with Enlightenment reason that the Revolution aspires to in many ways, sentimentality is also more amenable to this need for security. Sentimental culture—to which Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings and Marie Antoinette's Hameau belong—re-inforces its adherents' faith in the constancy of emotional love, as opposed to libertinism's fascination with physical pleasure, and offers a soothing vision of harmonious individuals, families, and societies. Interestingly, the sentimental novel and the erotic novel[25] emerge at the same time in late seventeenth-century France;[26] it is as though they are siblings of what Norbert Elias calls courtly counter-movements that "emancipate 'feeling.'"[27] Sentimentality and eroticism sometimes overlap, but their fundamental differences can also lead to antagonism. The criticism of libertinism in *Dangerous Liaisons*, for instance, is in good part sentimental, cleverly orchestrated so that the reader can enjoy the thrill of the vicomte de Valmont and marquise de Merteuil's adventures, while in the end agree with the justice they experience for the suffering they cause. At the same time, this novel also critiques traditional practices for being nearly as harmful, such as the arranged marriage that Cécile Volanges dreads which, along with Valmont's harshly-initiated affair with her, stands in the way of her true love for Dancény. Not needing the veil of court behaviour to conceal its moral uprightness, sentimentality can contribute to revolutionary myths and expectations, while libertinism will be swept away with the old order to which it is so uneasily tied.

Make no mistake that this Revolution will—and must—be violent, as *Philosophy in the Boudoir* shows. Along with everything else he advocates, Dolmancé is an outspoken

24. Roberts, *Morality and Social Class* ..., 36.

25. Indeed, these two genres are responsible for many of the first novels.

26. Roberts, *Morality and Social Class* …, xii.

27. In fact, emancipating the courtier from social pressure. Elias, *The Court Society*, 112.

atheist. He even curses God (or the idea of God) viciously when masturbating, and pronounces "sacrilegious fantasy" as one of the pillars of libertine taste.[28] Shortly after Dolmancé explains his hatred of God, Eugénie expresses the same for her mother, the woman who attempts to shelter the young libertine from the enjoyment that is her right. Restraining another from pleasure is the most serious (and perhaps only remaining) crime according to the amoral culture that Eugénie has been sent here to learn, and her mother will pay the price for it. At the end of the orgy, the mother, Madame de Mistival, comes to rescue her daughter, but finds she has arrived too late; instead, she is overpowered by the five of them[29] and stripped naked. What ensues is a bizarre and brutal rape; Madame de Mistival is repeatedly beaten and penetrated, most energetically by her own daughter with a dildo.[30] After fainting from the abuse, the mother is revived with a flogging, in plenty of time for the final violation: Dolmancé's valet, Lapierre—"unfortunately ravaged by one of the most terrible poxes the world has yet seen"—is brought in to rape madame de Mistival in both front and back, and afterwards the cruel libertines sew her vagina and anus shut, "so that the virulent humour, more concentrated, less subject to evaporation, will calcify [her] bones more promptly," in the evil words of Madame de Sainte-Ange.[31]

Sade demonstrates that a revolution cannot be content to simply replace the old order with the new, no matter how assured the revolution's success; it is not enough for Eugénie to defy her mother. Revolutions are also opportunities for vengeance to be enacted upon the previous establishment, punishing them for the extraordinary oppressions that have led to such an extraordinary revolt. That Madame de Mistival's rape is necessary to protect Eugénie's newly-learned libertinism—all revolutionaries evoke self-defence against their enemies—is belied by the joy derived from this assault, which is the grand climax to the dialogue's orgy.

Though *Philosophy in the Boudoir*'s title suggests its setting, the only direct reference to architecture in this closet drama is a mirrored *ottomane* niche, where every angle of the sex acts within can be simultaneously observed in pornography's plain, graceless exhibitionism. As Sainte-Ange, the boudoir's owner, explains,

28. Along with sodomy and cruel pleasures. Sade, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, 103, 113.

29. After the political pamphlet's reading, Augustin, the gardener, is invited back in.

30. Sade, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, 305.

31. Ibid., 310–314. My translation. This mutilation can also, of course, be understood as a wry comment on the mother's prudery.

> [The mirrors] are so that, reflecting the positions in a thousand different ways, they infinitely multiply the same pleasures to the eyes of those who are tasting them on the *ottomane*. By this means, no part of any body can be hidden: everything must be on view; as much of the groups gathered around those enchained in love, as much of the imitators of their pleasures, as much of the delicious scenes, intoxicated by their voyeurism and who will soon enough complete it themselves.[32]

But this alcove does more than just multiply erotic tableaux. For one, it turns the boudoir, a place of concealment, into a place of exhibition. And if Mme de T———'s mirrored cabinet expands a confined space, and Mlle Guimard's dining room is seductively displacing, then Mme de Sainte-Ange's alcove is a revolutionary space, replicating the individuals within, as though expanding their crusade. Of course these are subtle understandings, and characters like Sainte-Ange usually appreciate the mirrored space for its ability to replicate the pleasures enjoyed within. And so it is that Marie Antoinette's own love of mirrors—which she exploits to define and expand protected private spaces, as seen earlier—are associated in the public's mind with the queen's debauchery as soon as her promiscuous reputation is established.[33] While the public snickers over bawdy pamphlets, the Third Estate breaks off from the Estates General to form the National Constituent Assembly, the Bastille is stormed, and peasants begin to revolt against the provincial nobililty; it is apparent that France is on the threshold of a new age. And where is Marie Antoinette at this time? Surely the people imagine her in her mirrored, gilded sofa alcove with some of her many lustful friends. The mirrors of which she is so fond, after all, are also the emblems of feminine vanity.[34]

But instead, we might picture her in the little Grotto secreted in the Picturesque garden behind the Petit Trianon, underneath the *Montagne de l'Escargot* (Snail Mountain, another reminder of shells; *6-1*). The comte d'Hézecques describes this cave:

> The grotto is reached by following a meandering stream. Its opening was so dark that my eyes needed time to become accustomed to the dark and begin to see objects ... A bed of moss stretched out invitingly ... a crack in the wall over the bed of moss opened onto a meadow and exposed in the distance anyone who would have liked to approach this mysterious retreat; a dark stairway led to the summit of the slope through a close thicket and screened from view any object which one might wish to hide.[35]

32. Sade, *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*, 36. My translation.

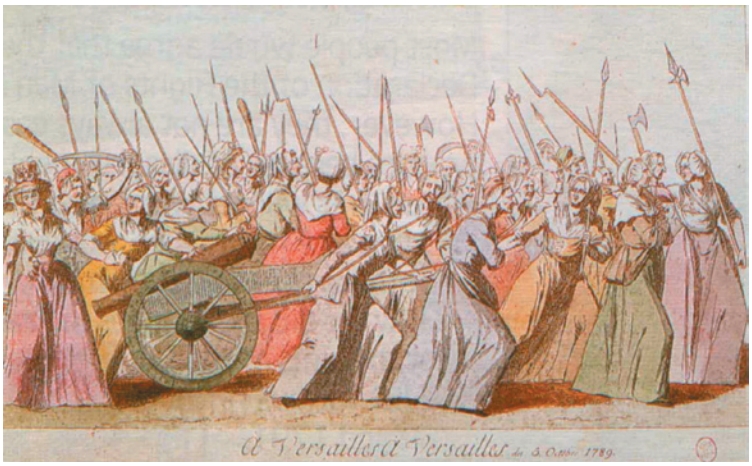
33. Thomas, *La Reine scélérate*, 128. Marie Antoinette's reputation even makes its way into *Philosophie in the Boudoir*, when madame de Sainte-Ange says that Eugénie will soon have "fucked like Antoinette." Sade, *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, 70. My translation.

34. Stewart, *Engraven Desire*, 82

35. Quoted in Arthaud, *Dream Palaces*, 248.

6-1 Richard Mique and Hubert Robert, Grotto (left) and Belvédère, English Garden, Versailles, 1778–79.

On October 5, 1789, the queen is alone here; the nobility and royal family members are starting to trickle out of France, sensing an impending catastrophe hinted at with the Third Estate's representatives declaring themselves France's legitimate legislature, as well as by the storming of the Bastille; among the *emigrés* is Yolande de Polignac, the queen's best friend. All the while, for the past few years, the strain of his perceived failures as king drives Louis XVI to meet Marie Antoinette in private nearly every day, where the depressed man breaks down in tears. And a few months ago, the frail dauphin succumbs to his poor health and dies, leaving his younger brother as heir to the throne. Burdened with this loss and uncertainty, Marie Antoinette is more alone than ever as queen, and she seeks shelter in the Grotto as much from her cares as from the day's cold rain.[36] This will be the last time she enjoys Trianon; imagine her observing through the crack in the wall the urgent approach of a page. Rather than let him disturb her valued solitude, she emerges to meet him,[37] and surrounded by the surging, contrived rolling hills, she receives the news that a large mob of poor, armed Paris women, desperate with a bread shortage and intent on grieving to their monarchs, is marching towards Versailles (*6-2*). The queen's lady-in-waiting, Madame Campan, watches the crowd enter the town of Versailles; "It was particularly against the queen that the insurrection was aimed; I still



6-2 The March on Versailles.

shudder to remember that the fishwives, more like Furies in white aprons, crying that they were destined to receive the entrails of Marie Antoinette."[38]

The queen returns to the palace, where the king and remaining members of the court decide to stay. The mob of fishwives (some of whom are men dressed as women),

36. Campan, *Mémoires*, 228.
37. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 319.
38. Campan, *Mémoires*, 230. My translation.

with escorting members of the National Guard, gather in the *Cour de Marbre* that evening; the king meets a delegation and promises to supply the people with bread, but the mob outside refuses to leave, intent on carrying the royals back with them to capital rather than accepting promises they do not trust.[39] Marie Antoinette uneasily retires with her children and laidies-in-waiting to bed. Early in the morning, however, a gunshot is fired in the crowd and their fear is ignited; before long they find their way into the the palace, fighting and killing the few Swiss Guards they encounter as they make their way up to the first floor via. the Queen's Staircase. They will move through the palace starting with the queen's Grand Appartement, following the route Versailles's *parade* sequence has taken ever since the demolition of the Ambassador's Staircase.

As the remaining guards hold off the mob in the antechambres preceding the queen's apartment, she is warned of the attack. Quickly, she leads her children and entourage to the king, passing through a door hidden in the wall hangings behind her bed to a series of tiny rooms and passageways connecting the queen's bedroom with the Salon de l'Œil de Bœuf; in this hall, as the gilded children dance overhead, Marie Antoinette knocks (not just scratches, presumably) on the locked door to the golden bedroom. The locksmith, however, happens not to be there; hearing of the attack, Louis XVI instead has taken to the *entresol* passageway to his wife's bedroom. Just as Marie Antoinette and the children frantically await their *entrée* to the Œil de Bœuf,[40] the king emerges from the hidden stair to find his wife's bedroom empty, except for a soldier attempting to keep the door shut from the mob just outside. The king immediately retreats back to his apartment, where he at last lets his family inside, and they all escape deep within the palace.

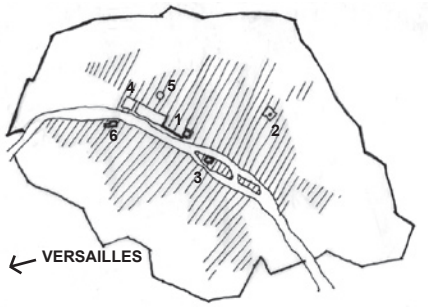
The crowd meanwhile attains the queen's bedroom, of course finding it unoccupied. At this point, some say the weapon-wielding mob rush to stab the empty bed repeatedly with their bayonets.[41] If this is true, perhaps they think the bed is still occupied; what a change from a century-and-a-half ago, when a different mob are stopped in their tracks at the sight of their sleeping boy-king Louis XIV, instantly transforming passionate violence into passionate fealty. But perhaps the sight of the queen in her *lit de parade* would have had the same effect—as despised as she is—and it is the emptiness of the bed that further enrages the crowd. Or possibly, as Madame Campan insists in her memoirs, no-one

39. Zwieg, *Marie Antoinette*, 323.
40. Dunlop, *Versailles*, 10.
41. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette,* 504–505.

stabs the bed at all, and the mob continues from here towards the Salon de la Paix[42] and the Hall of Mirrors. It is of little consequence whether or not the story is true, for even if just lengendary, the meaning is the same: it is the assassination of the queen, a symbolic regicide, the bed, in the most ancient feudal tradition, standing in for the monarch's physically absent but metaphysically omnipresent body.

The royal family are allowed their refuge in the palace once the National Guard's commander, the marquis de Lafayette, reigns in the attack, but the crowd outside demands that the queen show herself. She is forced to appear alone on a balcony, returning the mob's wordless gaze—and then, when Lafayette chivalrously bows and kisses the queen's hand, the crowd is given to cries of "*Vive la Reine!* Long live the Queen!"[43] The people are relieved to see their queen before them, neither fleeing nor fighting, trusting (if only apparently) in her subjects' respect and mercy. Marie Antoinette benefits from the same reversal of sentiment that saves Louis XIV in the Palais Royal bedroom; remarkably, she is resurrected so soon after her symbolic murder. The Revolution, premised on reason but in fact unfolding in chaos, sees many such irrational reversals of sentiment.

The king acquiesces to the people and moves to Paris, much to the fishwives' elation. No longer will the sovereigns remain aloof and isolated from their people at Versailles; the court that defines power between the aristocracy and monarchy is effectively dissolved. The new political relationship is between the sovereign and the people.



6-3 Paris during the French Revolution.
1. Louvre and Tuileries
2. Temple
3. Conciergerie
4. Place de la Révolution (Place Louis XV)
5. Place Vendôme
6. Palais Bourbon

Like trophies, the royal family's coaches are proudly escorted by the fishwives back to Paris (*6-3*) the next day. After the city's populist mayor, Jean-Sylvain Bailly, makes a gracious show of welcoming the royals back to the city,[44] they move to the Tuileries, the rather unusual palace stretched in a single, attenuated wing facing the public gardens that share its name (*6-4, 6-5*), the building punctuated by pavilions and tenuously connected by a very long gallery to the castle of the Louvre.[45] Last inhabited by Louis XIV during his occasional stays in Paris but neglected since the 1670s, the Tuileries is now lived in by artists, writers, and other tenants who add partition walls, stairs, and *entresols* within the apartments designed by Louis Le Vau.[46] The tenants are quickly evicted on October 6 to make way for the six-hundred or so people who must move from Versailles, so that by six in the evening the royal family find the palace deserted, if somewhat shabby. They

42. Hall of Peace, ironically enough. Campan, *Mémoires*, 231, 440.

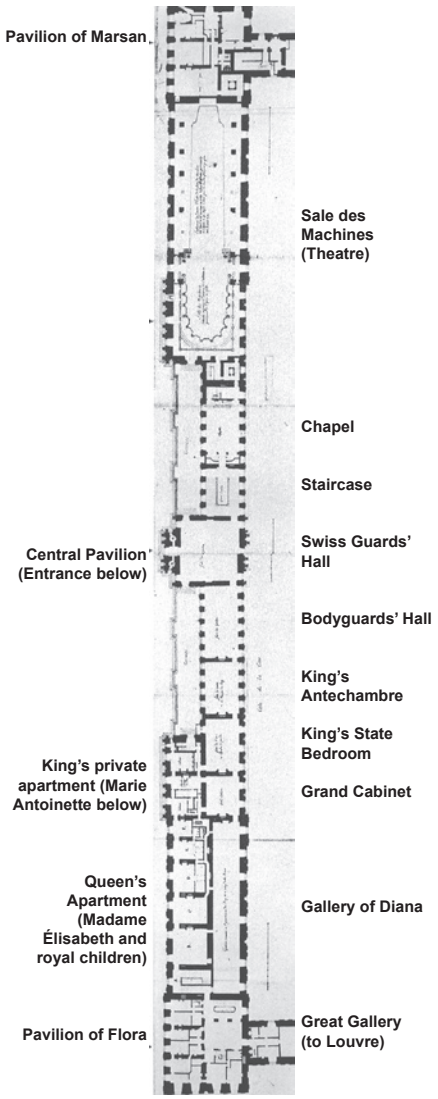
43. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 329.

44. "Heny IV reconquered his people; today, the people have reconquered their king," announces the mayor. Carmona, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries*, 207. My translation.

45. The Carrousel Quarter, the dense neighbourhood between the Tuileries and the Louvre that is demolished in the nineteenth century, is incidentally the location of the marquise de Rambouillet's seventheenth-century *hôtel* with her Chambre Bleue. Christ, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries*, 63.

46. Carmona, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries*, 207–08; Christ, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries*, 79.

6-4 Louis Le Vau, Tuileries, Paris, 1660s. View of west elevation, from the Tuileries Gardens.



6-5 Louis Le Vau, Tuileries, Paris, 1660s. First floor plan before the Revolution.

likely settle in the old royal apartments, facing the Tuileries Gardens; furniture is moved here from Versailles and renovations are quickly undertaken to make the old suites more comfortable. Louis XVI lives on the first floor with his bedroom and reception rooms, the bedroom of his sister, Madame Élisabeth, and those of the royal children, and a drawing room. Marie Antoinette meanwhile lives on the ground floor with her bedroom and boudoir, along with a reception room, billiard room, and dining room. The servants are crowded in wherever there is remaining space.[47] Once settled, life at the Tuileries is quiet and even domestic, most time spent in conversation, reading, letter-writing, and playing billiards; the family dine together and entertain visitors, but informally, there being little courtly ceremony any more.[48] The month after the royals move to the capital, the National Constituent Assembly also moves from Versailles to Paris, settling in the Salle du Manège (Riding School) on the north side of the Tuileries Gardens, diagonal to the royal family. Thus the two ruling powers, legislative and royal, and their respectively political and domestic spaces, settle in an uneasy balance.

It is the royal family's domestic situation, however, that remains the most ambiguous when in May 1791 the National Assembly passes a decree re-inforcing the nation's domain over the palace; "The Louvre and the Tuileries together shall be the national palace destined for the inhabitation of the king and to collect together all the monuments of science and art, the Constituent Assembly reserving to render this establishment dignified for its purpose."[49] Though little action is immediately taken in this direction, this is the first step towards creating the Louvre Museum; the culture of feudal display is now in decline, the formal and public ruling-class house already re-imagined as the enlightened popular institution. Under this arrangement, though, there would be nothing left for the kings but private space, occuring where it may.

Confined to her modest suite within the budding museum, surrounded by the Revolution's vortex, Marie Antoinette still makes something of this privacy. Stefan Zweig describes a small staircase built at this time connecting the queen's apartments with the king's and dauphin's, to which only she and the children's governess have keys.[50] For Zweig, this is the clearest evidence that the queen isolates herself from the rest of the royal family; she sleeps alone, and can receive outside visitors without their having to use the main palace

47. Carmona, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries*, 207--08; Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 338.

48. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 339–40.

49. Quoted in Carmona, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries*, 209. My translation.

50. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 338–39.

entrance. Even at the Tuileries, Marie Antoinette controls her private independence, retaining the freedom to live unseen from the rest of her family at will. And it is this apartment's private independence that many historians believe allows Marie Antoinette to receive her lover, Count Axel von Fersen (*6-6*).

6-6 Count Axel von Fersen.

Fersen is a Swedish soldier and diplomat, one of the highest-born nobles in his home country, who joins the French army early in Louis XVI's reign. Tall and handsome, he is known as a ladies' man. Much like the circumstances when Louis XV meets the future marquise de Pompadour, Fersen encounters Marie Antoinette for the first time at a masked ball in 1774, where disguises allow a drop in guarded behaviour. It is not clear how their relationship progresses, but it does not seem to advance very quickly, no doubt in part due to Fersen's firsthand participation in the American Revolution. Probably by 1783, though, Fersen and Marie Antoinette consumate their affair, which is, as far as anyone can tell, the queen's *only* extramarital romance. Beyond his charms, Fersen may appeal to Marie Antoinette by virtue of not being French, removing him from the culture of court and scandal, his liason with her offering him little to any political advantage.[51] His calm discretion—as useful a skill in romance as it is in international diplomacy—would also obviously be important to this very private woman. Indeed, Fersen does not seem to have divulged to any but his own diary the night-time visits he makes to the Tuileries, and even then rather tersely. Recording one of his last visits to the palace in February 1792, Fersen writes in his diary that he is received by Marie Antoinette alone, followed by the phrase "*resté là*" ("stayed there")[52]—a note that is heavily scrawled over by a censorious decendant of the count's, but its meaning clear enough. It is not that their relationship is a complete secret—it would seem that it was known of in contemporary well-connected circles,[53] though perhaps the conventionality, and even emotional closeness, of the affair, as well as its beginning long after Marie Antoinette already obtains a far more scandalous reputation, keeps Fersen's name largely out of the scandal sheets. Private autonomy shows more than ever its capacity to help bear enormous pressures, especially since Marie Antoinette is able to enjoy her affair at the Tuileries, where she lives closer than ever before with her family and staff, and while France seems to be collapsing all about her.

51. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette,* 314; Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 301.

52. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 432.

Likewise, Fersen probably does not divulge to Marie Antoinette on this night that, having travelled to Paris in disguise, he has been staying secretly at the house of *another* of his mistresses, hiding from her husband! Fraser, *Marie Antoinette,* 619-20.

53. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 301--02.

Truth be told, though, Fersen has more than one reason to visit the Tuileries, for throughout the French Revolution he works and advocates for the monarchy, encouraging foreign powers to intervene on the French king's behalf, bringing the royals secret correspondence and intelligence.[54] The royal family are not exactly prisoners at first—Marie Antoinette still makes outings to the theatre from time-to-time, and they are even permitted a summer visit to the royal *château* of Saint-Cloud in the summer of 1790—but surrounded as the Tuileries is by the National Guard, and with a volatile Assembly not far away, they feel the precariousness of their situation. The people are at first elated with the royals' move to Paris, but this gradually wanes as the royals demonstrate less than total enthusiasm for the documents they are compelled to recognize (such as the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen) and celebrations they must attend.[55] By April of 1791, facing puplic opposition to another stay at Saint-Cloud, the king announces that the family will remain in the Tuileries, and the next month the above-mentioned motion making the palace a museum that also merely happens to be the "inhabitation of the king" is passed. A cloud of distrust grows over the royals as the *emigré* nobles conspire to convince France's neighbours—especially Austria, ruled now by Marie Antoinette's second brother, Leopold II—to intervene, the paranoid pamphleteer Jean-Paul Marat warning of an immient royal flight.[56] Marat proves to be not far off; Fersen and Marie Antoinette at length convince the king to flee to the frontier fortress of Montmédy. On the night of the 20–21 June, plainly dressed, the family leaves the Tuileries through Marie Antoinette's small, unguarded door, hiding in the rather conspicuously large coach Fersen has built for the flight, and escape Paris. In spite of the length of their trip and their huge vehicle, they nearly make it to Montmédy, but word gets out of their flight near the village of Varennes, and the party is apprehended. They are forced back to Paris a few days later, facing the city's angry mob, and return to their Tuileries confinement.

Though allowed to remain in his palace, the reputation of Louis XVI is now almost as low and treasonous as his wife's. That fall, the king recognizes the new constitution making France a constitutional monarchy, the sovereign's absolute power reduced to nothing more than a legislative veto. Only a few months later, though, Louis XVI already uses his veto against the new Legislative Assembly's bill ordering the return of France's *emigrés*. Meanwhile,

54. This means he has not infrequent contact with the king, in spite of the affair. In the end, it may not be unreasonable that Louis XVI is aware of Fersen's relationship with his wife, being too broken in spirit by political events and too passive in temperment to deny her this affair.

55. Carmona, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries*, 209.

56. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 377.

Marie Antoinette privately writes to her friends and other European monarchs, at last attempting to play politics and urge a foreign invasion.[57] In any event, the revolutionaries' anger against the king rises after the veto, with republican forces growing, and by 20 June 1792, on the anniversary of both the seminal Tennis Court Oath and the king's flight to Varennes, the Jacobin club orchestrates a popular invasion of the Tuileries. An armed mob, unopposed by the National Guard, penetrates right into the royal family's apartments to make their grievances to the king. Louis XIV, cornered into a window, dons a red revolutionary's cap and toasts a glass of wine "to the health of the nation" (*6-7*); while the king makes this show of popular solidarity, the queen sits behind a large table that protects her from the crowd.[58]

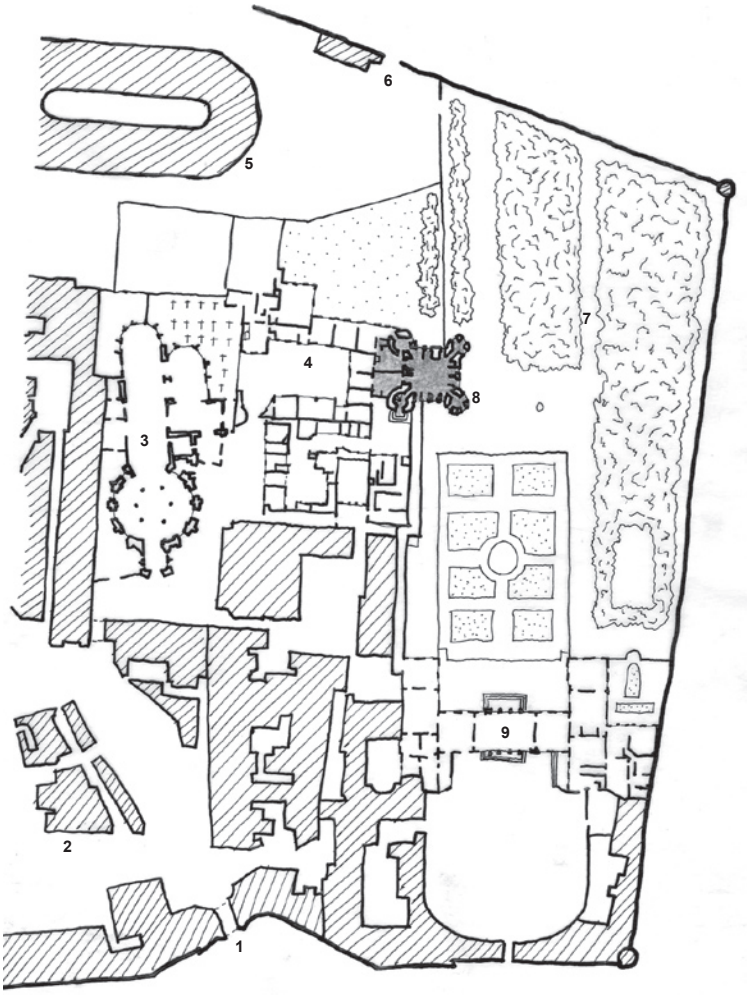
6-7 Louis XVI toasts "to the health of the nation" as the royal family look on.

Much more seriously, by August 10 the invasion of France by Prussia and Austria is imminent, and the Revolution is prepared to turn against the king and queen, whom the foreigners promise to protect. Rebels who have entered Paris from the provinces at last storm the Tuileries, the royal family escaping in time to find sanctuary in the Manège with the Legislative Assembly. Upon hearing that the monarchs have yet again fled them, the furious mob visciously invades the palace, sacking the interior, and massacring approximately six-hundred Swiss Guards stationed there a few days before, who are never the less ordered by the king *not* to fire on the crowd. As this hell unfolds in the Tuileries, the legislature openly debates the fate of the royals in front of them, placing them ostensibly for their protection in a tight and stuffy reporters' box from which they watch the procedings through bars.[59] Even as the few surviving injured Swiss mercenaries trickle into the assembly chambre, followed by the rebels with their loot who are heartily-welcomed by the assembly, the royals are once again safe in a tiny, besieged space, but only physically—for the monarchy in France is effectively over. A few days after the riot dies down, the Legislative Assembly votes to suspend Louis XVI and intern the royal family. France is now effectively a republic, and its former king and queen are state enemies, with no longer even the dignity to live on semi-display in the middle of a public museum. There are no more refuges left for them; from now on, the Revolution's rationality will have its way.

The royal family is moved to the Temple, a mediæval stone tower that looms over eastern Paris. It is originally built as a fortress of the Knights Templar by the thirteenth century,

57. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 412–422.
58. Carmona, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries*, 210–12; Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 441–443.
59. Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 460.

remaining their foothold in the city until King Philip IV's persecutions in the 1300s: In debt to the wealthy and well-organized Templars, Philip IV fabricates bizarre accusations against the order, including extreme sacrilege, gruesome idolatry, human sacrifice, and sexual rituals worthy of the marquis de Sade.[60] Painted as wolves in sheeps' clothing who perform their un-Christian ceremonies in secret while appearing as the white knights of the church in public, the Templars' leaders are tortured and eventually burned at the stake in spite of their protests of innocence, and the order is disbanded. Long after the Templars are purged, the walled Temple compound remains an independent domain, becoming by the eighteenth century a kind of small city within the larger one (*6-8*). The Temple tower itself is unoccupied

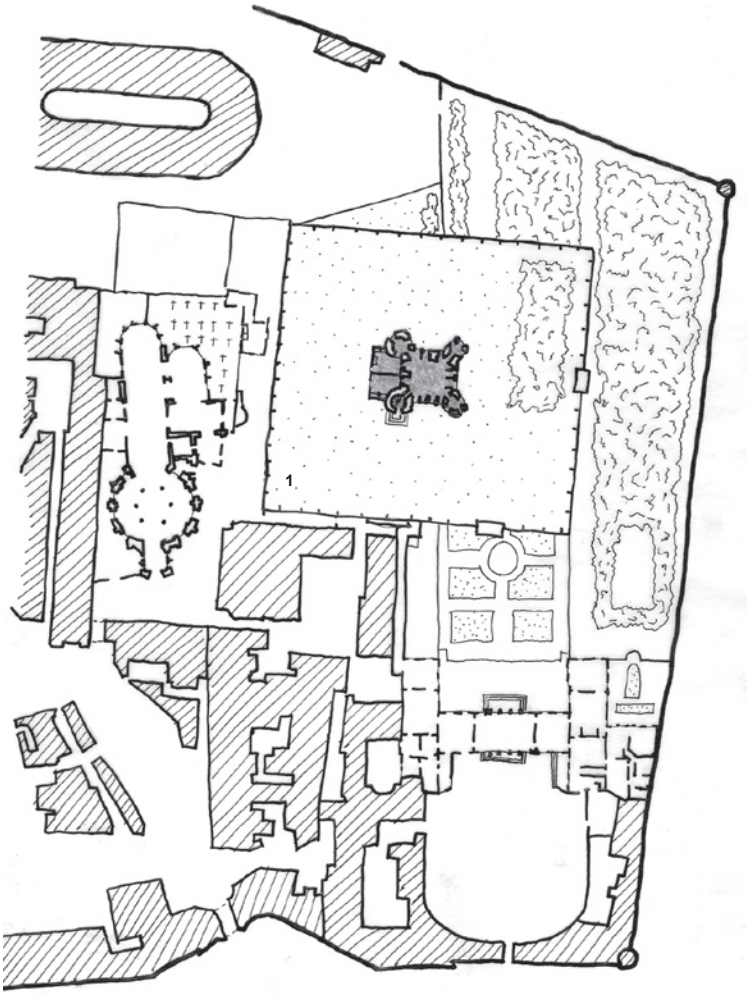


6-8 Temple precinct, Paris, August 1792.

1. Main precinct gate
2. Barracks
3. Church
4. Cloister and church outbuildings
5. Rotonde (market)
6. New gate
7. Public garden
8. Temple tower
9. Grand Almoner's *hôtel*/Hôtel d'Artois

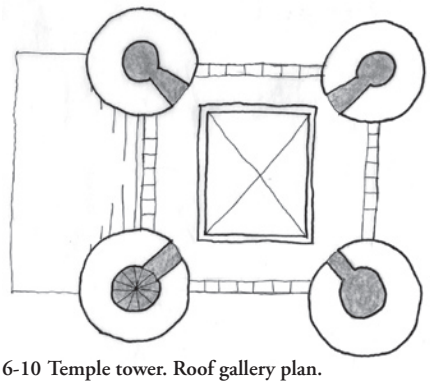
60. Addison, *The History of the Knights Templar*, 203–205, 216–220.

at this time, its base surrounded by cloisters and facilities for the Temple's church (a round Romanesque building recalling Jerusalem's Holy Sepulchre, with later Gothic wings);[61] also around the tower are outbuildings for the seventeenth-century *hôtel* of France's Grand Almoner, now the Hôtel d'Artois, the Paris residence of none other than Louis XVI's charming younger brother. The *hôtel* has a simple *corps de logis* with two side arms on cross axis, with an *appartement de commodité* and private garden squeezed between one of the side wings and the site wall; the house is tethered to the Temple tower by a narrow gallery, under which a passageway connects the church yard with a large public garden. As the Temple enclosure remains a separate jurisdiction under the control

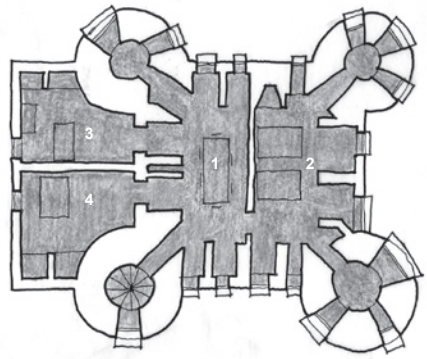


6-9 Temple precinct, Paris, January 1793.
1. New wall and jail yard.

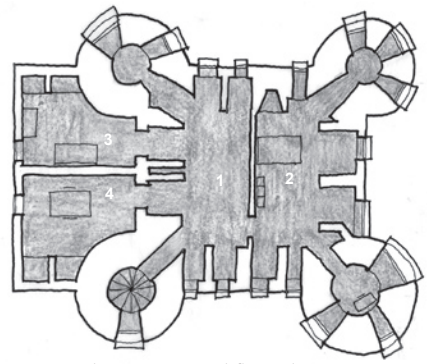
61. Lambert, *L'Architecture des Templiers*, 7–8, 65.



6-10 Temple tower. Roof gallery plan.



6-11 Temple tower. Third floor plan.
1. Dining
2. Marie Antoinette and royal children's bedroom
3. Madam Élisabeth
4. Monsieur and madame Tison



6-12 Temple tower. Second floor plan.
1. Commissary
2. Louis XVI's bedroom
3. Valet
4. Dining

of the comte d'Artois (in his office as Grand Almoner), it has its own Swiss Guards and barracks inside the main gate from the rue du Temple; but also because of this domain's immunity from outside authorities, a number of artisans set up here in the clusters of buildings and courtyards to escape from trade guilds and corporations.[62] Near the east side of the walled enclosure a market, the *Rotonde* (Rotunda) is built in the 1780s, while the northern corner of the compound is occupied by more *hôtels* and gardens, including the Hôtel de Boufflers's large English-style plot. By 1789, around 4,000 people live in the Temple domain's striking hodgepodge of the formal and the motley, official and illegal, all with the old tower at its heart, a vacant reminder of the site's history.

Already in 1792, however, much of the precinct is empty: The comte d'Artois has, of course, fled France, and the old church is also abandoned. When the royals are brought here after a long procession past Parisian onlookers, they pass through the Hôtel d'Artois, down the long gallery, and are set up in the 45-metre-high tower as its prisoners; the over two-metre thick fortress walls, once meant to repell attack, now protect the Revolution from the Bourbon threat.[63] Construction immediately begins around the tower, both to improve surveillance and isolate it from attack;[64] France is now at war with her neighbours, and the possibility of the royal family's rescue must be taken seriously. Within a few months, much of tower's base has been scraped clear of encumbrances and a new, high buttressed wall delineates an open yard (*6-9*). Thus another precinct is created within the Templars' original walls; the tower is both contained by the new walls and, now liberated, made figurally, observably isolated.

A tight, winding stairway with multiple heavily-locked doors, originally designed to slow invaders, separates each of the tower's floors. The deputy inhabits the ground floor, with sentries on the first floor above him; Louis XVI is holed up on the second floor (*6-12*), with a central room for the commissary leading on one side to the bedroom with its tiny round towers used as *cabinets*, and on the other side to two rooms used for dining and the king's valet; Marie Antoinette lives on the similarly-planned top floor, the central room for the surveillance guards and dining table, the queen's bedroom shared with her son and daughter, while the side rooms are given to Madame Élisabeth and Monsieur and Madame Tison, two fellow prisoners who are in fact revolutionary spies (*6-11*).[65]

62. Lenotre, *La Captivité et la mort de Marie Antoinette*, 33–39.
63. Ibid., 156–57.
64. Ibid., 40.
65. Ibid., 156–57; Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 489.

Life in the Temple is thus under heavy surveillance, worse than the royals have yet experienced. Sentries are forever present, sleeping in the main entrance rooms of the residential floors and shadowing each prisoner throughout their waking hours.[66] At every meal, the food is cut into, and guards check under dishes and tables for clandestine letters; the family's walks in the jail yard is also closely watched. As queen, Marie Antoinette is exasperated by how little privacy she has (or is supposed to have) at court; she must surely recognize the irony that, though no longer queen, she has far from gained any new solitude. The Temple is also claustrophobic; the windows are baffled to prevent views out, and even Marie Antoinette, with her past taste for self-determined hermeticism, must nevertheless be disappointed those few times she descends with her family to the yard to enjoy open space, only to be reminded that the wall also blocks her view (*6-13*). The Temple is far from the lovely garden prospect of the Tuileries apartments; everywhere in the Temple the prisoners are faced with their isolation, but it is an isolation outside of their control. It is only at the top of the tower that the family can see the rest of the city, from an observation gallery running just inside the stone parapet (*6-10*).

6-13 Sketch of royal family at the Temple by national guard Lenotre.

Back indoors, it should be noted that the space allocation of the king and queen are somewhat reversed compared with the Tuileries, so that Marie Antoinette now shares her lodging with the children, and Louis XVI enjoys more privacy. He makes good use of it, requesting and receiving a library to read during the tedium of his incarceration. The entire royal family must realize the fate that is assured for the deposed king, and he most of all, for in spite of their isolation the signs of change make their way here. Decorating their dining room is a large reprint of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, noticeably dated in year I of the Republican Era.[67] But a few weeks before the declaration of the French Republic in September, a far more frightening event approaches the Temple: terrified of the invading armies and paranoid of the many traitors supposedly among the Revolution's prisoners, the September Massacres see mindless crowds overwhelming Paris's prisons to horrendously rape, maim, and kill scores of inmates. Among the victims is Marie Antoinette's gentle friend, the princesse de Lamballe, who refuses to denounce the king and queen to an impromtu "tribunal;"[68] she is decapitated, her head and shockingly mutilated body carried by the despicable mob to the Temple,

66. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 471--2.
67. Ibid., 471.
68. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 662--63.

so that they may delight in watching Marie Antoinette give her supposed mistress one last kiss goodbye.[69] The Temple sentries are too small in number to prevent the mob from entering the tower, so an official from the Paris Commune convinces the crowd to parade Lamballe's body parts through the streets of Paris instead. When Louis XVI and his wife at last are told what the outside commotion is all about, Marie Antoinette unsuprisingly swoons in distress; while Marie Antoinette frequently relies on the steady attitude she cultivates not only to satisfy her courtly obligations but likely to endure them as well, her daughter later affirms that this moment is the only time she sees her mother lose her firm composure.[70]

In December, it is at last Louis XVI's turn. Renamed by the National Convention—the current legislature—as Louis Capet—his surname that of the first dynasty of French kings to whom the Bourbons are distantly related—he is to face trial. It is clear that it is the politicians' intentions to execute

69. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 476--77.
70. Ibid., 478.

6-14 Execution of Louis Capet/Louis XVI at the Place de la Révolution/Place Louis XV. Note that Louis XV's equestrian statue has been toppled.

the former king. Moreover, Louis XVI/Capet must live in isolation for the next month during the procedings, forbidden contact with his wife, children, and sister upstairs. They only see him again after the guilty verdict is determined, on the evening before his death sentence is carried out. Though sentries are presumably present, no record of this farewell exists,[71] offering the family some fitting privacy from the eye of history, which can also be invasive. The next morning, January 21, 1793, Louis XVI is beheaded in front of a huge and enthusiastic crowd in the Place de la Révolution, the erstwhile Place Louis XV, from which the dignified statue marred by spiteful grafitti has been removed (*6-14*). The king's symbolic body always precedes the real one, if the *lit de parade* and its anticipation of royal visits are to be taken seriously; so too does the death of the king's symbolic body, represented by the declaration of the Republic, precede his physical death.

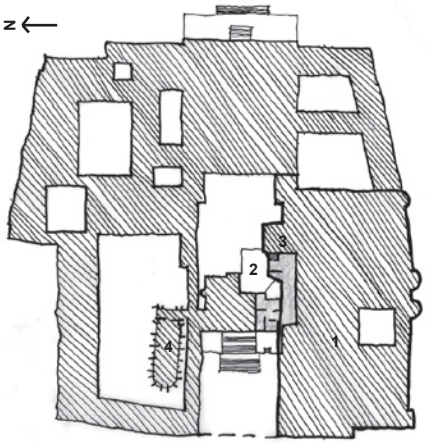
After the execution, Marie Antoinette and her family seldom descend to walk in the yard, refusing to pass Louis XVI's door.[72] For exercise, they now almost entirely use the rooftop gallery, perambulating around the tower's steep roof. Once neighbourhood locals see how regularly the remaining royals are up there, they gather wherever they have the best view of the tower to watch.[73] In spite of this exposure and their continued surveillance, the royals do encounter a few sympathetic sentries who bring news and secret correspondence to Marie Antoinette during her rooftop walks, in those moments when the roof places them out of view of the other guards.[74] One such soldier is in fact a nobleman, the indomitable baron de Batz, who uses disguise, strategic alliances, and a great deal of graft in a plan to whisk away the captives. Batz will take the family covertly away from the Temple to his *petite maison* outside Paris, where perhaps the biggest secret any such little house has ever held will be kept until an opportunity to escape the nation is found. The plan is ready to be carried out just before it is discovered and must be aborted, and Paris's governing Commune, to avoid embarrassment at nearly losing such important prisoners under their watch, suppresses charges against Marie Antoinette.[75]

Convinced of Marie Antoinette's counter-revolutionary activities, the Commune does decide a few days later to remove Dauphin Louis Charles from his mother, placing him in the care of good citizens in a separate part of the Temple compound, much to the queen's distress. The eight-

71. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 481–82.
72. Lenotre, *La Captivité et la mort de Marie Antoinette*, 148.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., 211–14.
75. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 496–502.

year-old boy stays in a room not too far from the tower, but his mother is forbidden from seeing him.[76] Marie Antoinette is very fond of her children, and if their upbringing at Versailles sometimes keeps them at a traditional aristocratic family's distance from her, then the recent closeness of their living arrangements have more than made up for that. Marie Antoinette discovers that a window in the winding stairwell just gives a glimpse to the courtyard where her son sometimes plays, and her jailers mercifully permit her to sit in this space and watch;[77] it is one of the last of the confined spaces where she finds solace. Observing her son's good health and high spirits is heartening, and hopefully compensates for the revolutionary songs she disturbingly hears him reciting, demonstrating how much the Revolution has even reached the son of the king it recently killed.

At the end of that summer, Marie Antoinette also must leave the Temple. To put pressure on Austria with whom France is still at war, the National Convention decides to move Marie Antoinette, their enemy's best-known daughter, to the Conciergerie; this is the Paris prison where the most dangerous political criminals are incarcerated, almost always to await execution.[78] She is moved with little advance warning, only quickly allowed to say goodbye to her daughter and sister-in-law. Renamed by the National Convention as the Widow Capet, Marie Antoinette leaves the Temple to face the world alone.



6-15 Palais de Justice (Palace of Justice) with the Conciergerie, Paris. Overall plan.
1. Conciergerie
2. Women's courtyard
3. Marie Antoinette's cell
4. Petite Chapelle

The Conciergerie stands on the Île de la Cité, part of what is originally the Palais de la Cité, the royal palace that Philip IV (the same persecutor of the Knights Templar) builds on the site of earlier residences of Roman governors and Capetian kings. Philip IV's successors decide not long after him to abandon the Palais de la Cité for the extra-urban castle of the Louvre (much as a later king abandons Paris for Versailles), eventually transforming the old palace into a prison. Thus, unintentionally, Marie Antoinette, having gone from Versailles, to the Tuileries, and now to the Conciergerie, has retracted back through the historic houses of the monarchy, passing through the place of one of the monarchy's most egregious sins (the Temple) on the way to the first house of the French sovereign.

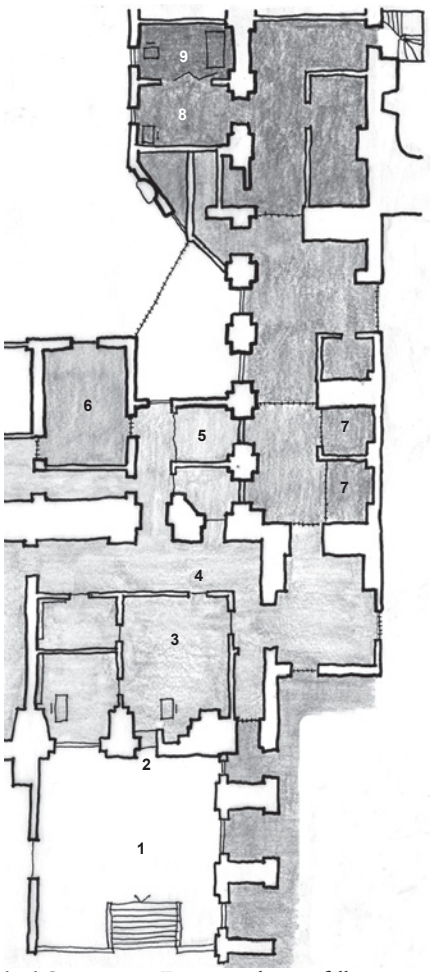
Unlike the Temple, the Conciergerie is well-used as a prison in the century before the Revolution. Consequently, its impregnability is well-considered; thick doors and rigid bars span between heavy walls and piers, carefully controlling

76. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 503–06.
77. Ibid., 507.
78. Ibid., 513–14.

security and observation, and movement through the prison is labyrinthine and marked by countless gates. Marie Antoinette is placed in the basement of the building (*6-15, 6-16*), and within a few weeks is permanently set up in a cell located deep in one sector. The cell is small and sparsely-furnished (*6-17*), though she does have a window located high up in the wall, letting in some light from the women's courtyard outside. In line with the Conciergerie's unvaryingly strict rules of surveillance and control, however, she is also always under watch here, even though she is now in contact with far fewer people with whom she could be conspiring. There is always a guard outside her window, as well as one in the room just in front of her cell; this second guard is only separated from her cell by a four-foot high wall.[79]

Marie Antoinette is certainly the Conciergerie's most famous inmate, but she is also just another prisoner.[80] The observation she knows at this prison, though, is completely different from what she has known most of her life, for she is at the very least no longer under endless evaluation. Zweig reports that many of the prison guards frequently bring Marie Antoinette flowers for her room,[81] while the warden's wife and the prison maid, Rosalie Lamorlière, both make some small efforts to improve her food and accommodation, to which Marie Antoinette shows appreciation. These people certainly know who she is (or was), but at least she is no longer under pressure to prove herself, no longer surrounded by those who are intent on her humiliation. The sensitivity shown her may be driven by pity—no-one can be unaware of how powerless she is now, and they may sense the nearby tragedy of her fate. Certainly there is some awe over her celebrity, too. And, taken from her family, simultaneously isolated while losing all of the privacy she so values, with her life and liberty squarely in the hands of revolutionary politicians, it can hardly be said that the Conciergerie is a relief for Marie Antoinette. But for what it's worth, this may be the first time in a long while that she is treated warmly.

It could also be said that Marie Antoinette has nothing left to prove here, for others have already decided what will happen to her. Vienna fails to be moved by the serious emprisonment of their former archduchess, frustrating French politicians. Meanwhile, the Reign of Terror has commenced its mass accusations and executions, and the Committee of Public Safety is seeking a way to bind itself with the army and other revolutionaries;[82] a major public sacrifice of a universally-hated figure is considered as one way to do



6-16 Conciergerie. Fragment plan, ca. fall 1793, of basement level.
1. Low entrance court
2. Wickets 1 & 2
3. Warden
4. Wicket 3
5. Guards
6. Prison cell
7. Cells for female prisoners condemned to death
8. Guard
9. Marie Antoinette's Cell

79. Lenotre, *La Captivité et la mort de Marie Antoinette*, 235–36, 240.
80. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 708.
81. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 521.
82. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette,* 723.

6-17 Conciergerie. View into Marie Antoinette's cell.
(The sitting mannequin is part of the current Conciergerie museum display.)

so, Marie Antoinette quickly emerging as the ideal candidate for the latest *régime*'s blood sacrifice.[83] The Affair of the Carnation adds to the propaganda against the Widow Capet: a visiting former courtier, the chevalier Rougeville, intitiates secret correspondence with Marie Antoinette by dropping a carnation hiding a note in her cell. The Commune eventually discovers the contact before it can procede, however. An inquiry is held (that is yet not able to get to the bottom of this plot, which remains mysterious to this day), and Marie Antoinette's surveillance is redoubled, at the same time that her enemies have more reason to accuse the former queen of insurgent activity.

Another, even larger card soon lands in the revolutionaries' laps. Citizen Simon, guardian of Marie Antoinette's son Louis Charles, catches the boy masturbating. Grilled about where he has learned such behaviour, the boy eventually claims that it is his own mother and aunt who teach him. Given the family's constant surveillance and the strain of the boy's separation from his mother, this is an incredibly doubtful accusation, made all the more so by Louis Charles's previously-known tendency to self-protectively lie.[84] Nevertheless, Simon and revolutionary leader Jacques Hébert leap on the potential of this astounding allegation, and in further interviews, the boy is coaxed and prodded into telling stories of joining his mother and aunt in their bed on a regular basis, incestuous relations that even occur within the Temple. Marie Antoinette and Madame Élisabeth vehemently deny these allegations when faced with them at a hearing, but to no avail. Like the Knights Templar, Marie Antoinette is said to use the set-aside Temple

83. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 723.
84. Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 541--42.

precinct for abominous ends, with nothing to contradict the stories but the accused's own, dubious words. And even if the evidence of such sexual abuse is just as weak, who is to say that the accusation is not true? Who knows what really goes on behind Marie Antoinette's many closed doors, anyway? The fact that no-one can know what the former queen *does* do in private means that no-one can say for sure what she does *not* do, and so even if the public might be disinclined to believe the stories of incest, they also retain undeniable doubt of Marie Antoinette's full innocence. The revolutionaries at last have "proof" of Marie Antoinette's monstrosity.

From flirtatious dauphine, to frustrated mistress of the duc d'Artois, to hostess of orgies, to lesbian, to sexual manipulator of Cardinal de Rohan, and now finally pædophile; the list of Marie Antoinette's supposed libertinisms that grows ever longer and more shocking throughout her reign crosses into a last, inexcusable perversion. If her rumoured activity before ranges from the distasteful to the politically dangerous, she now commits a crime against nature; her sins go beyond the present context of her life and country to affront fundamental morality. The Marie Antoinette of the pamphlets may, in her luxurious gratifications, contrast with the wholesome women and mothers the Republic idealizes;[85] but the Widow Scarron who has sex with her pre-adolescent son after the death of his father is nothing sympathetic, nothing human. There can be no guilt, then, in what the revolutionaries do to her.

And so, within weeks, Marie Antoinette is placed in front of the Revolutionary Tribunal for counter-revolutionary conspiracy, in a hall in the Conciergerie. She faces a jury of the people, with evidence and questions brought forward by Hébert (the court president) and Public Prosecutor Antoine Quentin Fouquier-Tinville. The evidence is disorderly and not always related to the charges at hand; the trial is an act of character assassination as much as a trial for any particular plot, with forty witnesses presenting rumour and speculation. Marie Antoinette is accused of dominating and thus leading Louis XVI,[86] of sending her brother the Austrian emperor large sums of money before the Revolution, and of attempting to murder the duc d'Orléans. The Trianon's large expenses are questioned, though the former queen cannot vouch for the exact amounts. She deflects questions that do approach incriminating, conspiratorial behaviour, claiming not to remember events. And of course, the Affair of the

6-18 Alexander Couaski, ***Louis Charles of France*****, ca. 1792.**

85. Thomas, *La Reine scélérate*, 145.
86. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 740.

Diamond Necklace is raised, Marie Antoinette steadfast in her assertion that she does not know Jeanne de Lamotte-Valois, nor did they ever have an affair.[87] For hour on end, the accused sits in a wooden chair at the front of the packed courtroom, responding to her prosecutors. There is little stately or pampered about her appearance; she is haggard and pale, with sunken features, having developed a chronic hæmorrage perhaps related to the injuries sustained with the birth of her first child; she has aged beyond her thirty-eight years, and is wearing a simple dress.[88] Nevertheless, she addresses the audience with all the composure she has been trained to muster in her public appearances; whether the audience finds her attitude haughty or confident depends largely on how they feel about her.

President Hébert himself is called as a witness, and it is he who raises the accusations of her performing "indecent pollutions" with Louis Charles. The president attempts to make this allegation relevant to her conspiracy trial with a convoluted explanation that Marie Antoinette hopes, with this incest, to have raised a future king who will mount a restored throne, over whom she would dominate as she did her husband. The accusation likely has its desired effect; the emotions of the jurors, assembled to uphold the laws of a new state founded on reason, are nonetheless disturbed and tainted. Marie Antoinette makes no reply, until one of the jurors asks that she be given a chance to respond; "If I have made no reply, it is because nature refuses to answer such a charge brought against a mother. I appeal in this matter to all the mothers present in court."[89]

Marie Antoinette throws back at her accusers the very charge they have launched at her; she is not the one to have violated nature, but it is they, daring as they do to question her conduct as a mother. With this retort, she begs the people to consider who she really might be, rather than what they have been told for years by those manipulating popular sentiment. Does her plea make a difference in this courtroom? It likely does raise a great deal of doubt among the audience, and Hébert silently steps down as a witness, thoroughly embarrassed.[90] But then, Marie Antoinette hears someone whisper about her seemingly proud demeanour. She asks her counsel if her reply is too self-controlled, to which he assures her with the only honest answer possible in this circumstance, an affirmation she has probably longed to hear, from her introduction at Versailles to this very tribunal: "Madame, be your own self, and you will always do well."[91]

87. Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 554–557.

88. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 730–31.

89. Quoted in Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 558.

90. Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 558–59.

91. Quoted in Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 560.

Such ends the first, fifteen-hour-long day of the trial; the next submits her to another twelve hours of testimony with little food or rest, before they jury deliberates. They find her guilty of manœvering with foreign powers against the Republic and attempting to bring about a civil war, crimes in which, through her correspondences and alliances, she does have a hand, though she can hardly be said to have been at their helm. Of course, no other decision than one of guilt, carrying with it the death penalty, could save the jurors' own heads; at this point in the Reign of Terror, the cost of disagreeing with the leaders' sentiments is clear.

At four in the morning on October 16, Marie Antoinette, weak and exhausted, having just heard the trial's decision, is brought back to her cell; her execution is scheduled for later that day. She writes one last letter to her sister-in-law Élisabeth, who is still locked up at the Temple; then, the former queen attempts to sleep on her small cot for a few hours before Rosalie Lamorlière, the prison kitchen-maid, comes to her cell to urge her to eat some broth. Lamorlière then helps Marie Antoinette change her clothing, including her undergarments that are soiled from her hæmorage. The guard, however, has been ordered not to let the condemned out of his sight for a moment, and so Marie Antoinette, denied privacy at the very end, must change as he watches closely, Lamorlière attempting to at least cover some of her nakedness. Contributing to the indignity is Marie Antoinette's knowledge that after her death, her cell will be searched and scoured; to avoid the shame of their discovering her bloody linen, she hides it behind the stove. Soon, however, she has another attack of her hæmorrage, but yet again the guard will not let her out of his sight; so she crouches in a corner of her cell until her attack passes, attempting to keep her undergarments clean while not exposing too much to her jailer.[92]

The executioner comes to cut her hair and tie her hands behind her neck, and she is at last led outside, the first time in many months she will be in the daylight. Marie Antoinette is led through the streets of Paris to the Place de la Révolution, sitting in a rough open cart on a wooden board, onlookers crowding the streets all the way.

Many in the crowd who watch her procession look on in silence; others yell and boo.[93] The artist Jacques-Louis David is among the audience, quickly sketching a portrait of Marie Antoinette, her last portrait, as she passes by (*6-*

92. Zweig, Marie Antoinette, 563.

93. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 746–47; Zweig, *Marie Antoinette*, 572.

19). David is a revolutionary supporter, himself exhibiting the Revolution's quickly-changing ideologies and alliances, its soon-perverted idealism, its rhetorical justification of tyranny and attrocity, its lust to grab power and take revenge. In this drawing, his subject sits upright, her eyes cast down to ignore those about her. The Widow Capet is shown in profile, never her most attractive angle; David takes care to outline her large nose and characteristically fat Habsburg lower lip that adds to the sitter's prideful impression. For all her dignity, this portrait attempts to reduce her, the artist enjoying the contrast between what she was and what she has become. The sketch seems to goad her image, echoing the text of a pamphlet published for the event of her execution: "Superb queen, take advantage of your misfortune to repent of your crimes, consider that with you debauchery is already wrinkling beauty..."[93] But could the sketch, and the crowd, not go even further? "How does it feel for you now, Widow Capet, Marie Antoinette? Were all of your pleasures, all of your luxuries that you enjoyed in your Versailles paradise while we were starving and powerless outside, worth this? You played at being a milk-maid in the Hameau, but at last you have been stripped of your crown and Habsburg dignity, so now you can know what it is really like to be normal, to be average. It is very different this time, though; there will be no Picturesque landscapes where you're going, no Temple of Love; the crumbling barn will not open to reveal a ballroom, and you will not be returning to your mirror-lined boudoir tonight. How do you like at last having no option but to accept your fate, to resign yourself to the insignificance we have known so well, and that is now your own lot in life? We had not an ounce of the power that you did, and yet you oppressed us anyway?! Is this not justice then, Marie Antoinette? Tell us, you spoiled brat, you foreign tyrant, you selfish slut! How do you enjoy really being common, being nothing? How do you enjoy being nothing like us?"

Indeed at this moment, Marie Antoinette—no longer officially the queen, yet still a symbol of that magnitude—and the people are very much alike. The drawing then is like another mirror, this one held up to the Revolution surrounding Marie Antoinette; not a mirror of spatial illusion or vanity, but of truth. The sketch shows her from head to toe, and in its outlined simplicity, she may as well be naked. Marie Antoinette is dressed in a straightforward white dress, and her shorn hair peeks out from a humble house cap; other than the old, once-fashionable purple shoes she is wearing,

94. *Semonce à la reine*, 1789. Quoted in Thomas, *La Reine scélérate*, 67. My translation.

6-19 Jacques-Louis David. Marie Antoinette. 1793.

the only shoes she now has, she is far from the enormous hair and wide skirts of legend, or even from the quaintness of her West Indian outfits. David may be attempting to portray her as arrogant, but he also shows her banality. At this moment, upright, her hands bound behind her back, her last moment of display when, as with all the other times, appearances matter, she must resemble so many of the women in the very crowds watching her. This is part of the reversal of dignity that David is intent to show: The Queen of France, now just the Widow Capet, another washerwoman, fishwife, peasant, *petite bourgeoise* housewife. This drawing, and Marie Antoinette herself sitting in the cart, are mirrors, refecting back to themselves the very people who have come to watch her die, who have condemned her to die, who now claim to be the sovereign power of France. Joining their ranks is for this former queen a diminishment; but the newly-empowered people, in resembling her at this moment, remain just as diminished as she.

As the comte d'Hézecques explains, "Strip a Prince of the glory with which he is surrounded and he will be no more in the eyes of the populace than an ordinary man."[94] To be a noble, and especially a monarch, is among other things to *not* be common—to be above the average, powerless masses over whom one must rule, and the culture of aristocratic display is meant to serve this, offering an ideal for those of wealth and power to reach. However, reaching for this ideal not only excludes the common people, but demands that ruling men and women themselves exclude all that is common about themselves. Members of the ruling classes cannot bear to have their banality—their humanity—seen, lest they lose their power, and as they rely increasingly on behaviour and display to hold on to their authority, this imperative is ever more crucial. Much of the culture of aristocratic privacy that emerges in parallel to the culture of display is then the means for its occupants to hide that which they have too much *in common* with the people, so to speak. They hide not only in erotic spaces, the boudoirs and hidden passages and *petite maisons* described in this story, where lust and emotions may at last be uncovered, but they also hide in all manners of *commodité* space; the libraries and workshops for personal interests; the studies where a class that is expected to be wealthy without work may privately take account of personal budgets and incomes; the wardrobes and dressing rooms that conceal the lengthy processes of dressing to a dignified standard; the water closets, bathing rooms, and

95. Quoted in Dunlop, *Versailles*, 170.

small bedrooms used during illness, reminders that all bodies are imperfect and in need of care. After all, these are the spaces of Jacques-François Blondel's frequently embarrassing routines, embarrassing because they show how supposedly wise and strong rulers have, like their subjects, very human idiosyncracises and weaknesses. When the nobility's culture of libertinism escapes from the boudoir, however, and is written about and illustrated for all to speculate, society begins to question the assumed superiority of those in power. And women, as always under additional pressure to uphold a received standard, often face the worst of these doubts. So it is that Marie Antoinette, with her private life supposedly exposing in its lack of regal conduct the lack of a regal soul, is judged far too banal; she is too "common", too *human*, to rule.

But revolutionary France, as much as it wants to overturn all institutions and concepts, is in many ways the child of the Baroque state, and inherits from her mother several conventions that it tries to re-shape into its own likeness. And so if the sovereignty held by the absolutist monarch is now held by the mass of the republican people, then they are also compelled to live up to the ideals that validate their nation; they too are asked to transcend, in a way, their humanity. The exhortations to narrowly-defined, proper republican behaviour, and the paranoia and rabid desire to purge huge numbers of traitors that characterizes the Reign of Terror, is symptomatic of how nearly impossible those ideals have become. Similarly, seeing Marie Antoinette so humbled on her way to the guillotine, where in full public view she will meet her death with the same composure she accepts the rest of this final ordeal,[95] might also remind the equally humble populace how far they, as much as any high-born ruler, can fall short of the expectations of power.

96. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 748.

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