Adriana CÎTEIA [*]

Arrière-boutique and chambre ronde: The Architecture of philosophical space in Michel de Montaigne' s Essays

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the links between the subjective interior space in Michel de Montaignes Essays and its projection into physical space. Another intention is to capture the way in which the space-memory axis is defined on the three landmarks: distance from oneself (se quoque fugit), autonomy (vincula rupere), self-containment (in solis sis tibi turba locis). The third objective ist o identify the arguments drawn from classical philosophy.

Keywords: self-definition, distance, space, memory, authenticity.

Introduction

In his "Essay on Solitude" I, XXXIX, Michel de Montaigne delineates a subjective space, set in opposition to any form of otherness. In this space, where "the sensible man has only himself," (Montaigne 1966, 242) aspects of identity are freely constructed, independent of the world, of "others," and of any form of otherness.

Montaigne rejects the idea of compatibility with "the community." Aristotelian happiness within the community is entirely foreign to him (Aristotle 1968, 31-34), the reason being "the evil means by which one attains office" in his time (Montaigne 1966, 239).

Life in the community is, for the philosopher, the source of self-loss, the source of a negative mimesis, for "the wicked are in the majority," and "in the throng there is great danger of contagion." The guarantees of the correct choice-that of solitude, are Juvenal, Satirae**,** XII, 26, Seneca, Epistulae, VII, and the Old Testament text of Ecclesiastes.

For Montaigne, the cult of distance is essential to self-definition:

"You must either follow the wicked or hate them. Both are dangerous: to resemble them because they are many, or to hate the many because they do not resemble you" (Montaigne 1966, 239). The philosopher points out the danger of imitation, of losing oneself in the community, but also the danger of failing to find oneself in the community. Montaigne establishes the limits of relating to the common

[*] Associated professor, PhD, Ovidius University of Constanţa, Romania;
e-mail: adriana.citeia@yahoo.com

model-identity-based mimesis and dissimilarity through the rejection of the common identity paradigm. His choice is to "be dissimilar" (dissemblable), to be unique. He is not caught up in the "collective dance"; he is not like those who seek personal gain from public affairs, nor does he define his autonomy through hatred of those who are dissimilar, vicious. His distancing from the manifestations of the common model is achieved through reason and prudence -*ratio et prudentia* probably from Horatius.

If he can choose, the wise man will choose solitude as the arena for confronting himself, the passions that "impede the peace of soul and body" (Montaigne 1966, 247). Philosophical anachoresis aims at the struggle with one's own thoughts, self-orientation, and monotropy, the meanings of which Montaigne gradually constructs until the end of the XXXIXth Essay.

> Ambition, avarice, indecision, fear, and envy do not leave us, and if we have changed our surroundings, sorrow mounts the saddle and gallops behind us. They often pursue us even into monasteries and philosophical schools. Neither deserts, nor caves, nor the practice of penance, nor fasting grant us release. (Montaigne 1966, 247)

The anachoretic journey has no spatial meaning; it does not signify a departure from an external frame of reference (the country, the community), but rather

- a departure from the self: *se quoque fugit*, from Horatius, *Odae* II,
- a release from the self: *vincula rupere*, from Persius, Satirae V, followed by
- an embrace of the self: *in solis sis tibi turba locis*, probably from Tibul, 1V, 13.

1. Se quoque fugit

"Withdrawal from oneself" has a clearly defined meaning for Montaigne: "withdrawal from the states of the crowd found within us," distancing oneself from what is like others, from what is common to the "community"; the term carries the pejorative sense of mob, rabble, undifferentiated crowd. But it is not enough to distance oneself from the crowd; one must also distance oneself from collective representations, from the "states of the crowd." Se quoque fugit seems to suggest the modern meaning of the negation of the collective unconscious, of distancing oneself from any common matrix of thought.

On the other hand, Montaigne's text can also be understood in a Stoic key, as a detachment from the primary ideas common to all, as a means of differentiation, distancing oneself from others, or as a form of

metriopathy-the moderation of passions in relation to the external world, a position between mimesis and the categorical rejection of any resemblance to the crowd.

The Stoic vocabulary of equidistance from others is complex. Montaigne, however, takes up two fundamental ideas: liberation from the affairs of the community- Speusippus's *aokhlesia* and the liberation of reason from the tyranny of the passions- the *apatheia* of Chrysippus and Zeno.

Montaigne's "metriopathy" means detachment from radical attitudes, a moderate, prudent attitude governed by reason (Soraliji 1983, 99). Happiness is synonymous with Stoic eudaimonia. A life in accordance with nature -The Essay on Cannibals and reason is a happy one. "Detaching" oneself from the crowd is, however, only the first step toward the philosopher's autonomy.

2. Vincula Rupere

"Breaking the chains" means for Montaigne liberation from worries, passions, and vices (pride, lust, anger, sloth)-which he lists, inspired by Lucretius and Horace rather than Christian moralists, in a cathartic prescription essential for the stage of "self-containment."

"The soul must be turned inward and brought back to itself, far from the clamor of the world" (Montaigne 1966, 241).

Detachment from the self implies moral purification and withdrawal from the world.

> And since we are beginning to live alone and to deprive ourselves of the world's turmoil, let us make our contentment depend on ourselves, let us sever all ties that bind us to others, let us gain from ourselves the worthiness to live with good sense in solitude and at our own ease. (Montaigne 1966, 241)

The passage above establishes the relationship between the cult of distance and the cult of authenticity. Renouncing others, "forgetting" them—as Montaigne discusses in his Essays-and ignoring everything that signifies otherness represent the sources of authenticity and comfortable autonomy.

The metaphor of "floating wealth," borrowed from Diogenes Laertius, refers to complete self-possession as the sole source of happiness.

3. In solis sis tibi turba locis

Self-containment is defined through the metaphor of the hidden inner room:

> We must keep a secret room, entirely separate, where we may establish our true freedom and our most important refuge and solitude. In this we will hold our customary counsel with ourselves, so much a part of our inner self that no foreign encounter or connection will find a place within it; there let us converse and rejoice as if we were without a wife, without children, without possessions, without a retinue, and without servants, so that if chance should cause us to lose them, we may be accustomed to life without them. We have a soul that can turn in on itself; it can be its own companion, it has what to urge itself on and what to defend itself with, what to give and what to take: let us not fear in that solitude that we will smolder in a gloomy idleness. (Montaigne 1966)

The quote from Tibullus is nuanced by Montaigne in I, XLII, with a fragment from Horace, Satirae II: "in se ipso totus teres atque rotundus" (enclosed within itself as in a round globe).

Self-protection and withdrawal into oneself are the pillars of a dynamic, comfortable inner architecture, in which dialogue with the soul returned to itself is the source of a particular kind of action, for one's own benefit. The self-oriented act aimed at the tranquility of thoughts and the satisfaction of personal will is proof of self-respect understood as belonging to oneself, "self-embrace," autonomy guaranteed by reason.

The cult of the self, as defined by Montaigne, does not take place in the absence of reason. Withdrawal into oneself is not a mystical act, but a consequence of feeling useless in one's relationships with others-a sense of uselessness felt toward the end of life. Distancing oneself from those arounds is a right earned after "we have lived long enough for others."

> We have lived long enough for others; let us live for ourselves at least this final stretch of life. Let us turn our thoughts and desires toward ourselves and for our own rest. It is no easy task to withdraw well into one's own affairs; it gives us enough to do, so that we need not take on other undertakings. Since God grants us permission to prepare for our departure, let us get ready for it; let us pack our bags, bid farewell in advance to those around us, and tear ourselves away from the terrible bonds that hold us back and distance us from ourselves. We must untangle those heavy obligations and, from now on, love here and there, but embrace only ourselves…'The greatest thing in the world is to know how to be yourself'. (Montaigne 1966)

The move itself—the detachment from everything foreign to one's own will—does not happen all at once, but is gradual, the withdrawal accompanied by the promise of a joy savored discreetly and in solitude. "Carpamus dulcia" from Persius, Satirae V, means gradually coming to terms with the self (an idea to which he returns at the end of the essay),

detaching from the external world, before becoming "useless, cumbersome, and a hindrance to others" (Montaigne 1966, 243-244).
The cult of the self does not refer to narcissistic self-adoration, but to lucid and rational self-knowledge. The encounter with the self is mediated by reason: "above all, to govern oneself by honoring and fearing one's mind and conscience." (Montaigne, 1966, 244).

Montaigne establishes a typology of the solitary:
-gentle but unyielding natures -to which he confesses he himself belongs and
-harsh and strong natures, "great and exemplary," for whom solitude has the meaning of self-imposed asceticism, destined to become a model for others.
Solitude is therefore,
-a natural necessity,
-an ascetic model,
-a condition of originality.

Montaigne quotes Pliny the Elder's advice to Caninius Rufus, whom he confuses with Cornelius Rufus, proof that he is not interested in the ancient context or the accuracy of the quotation, but in the message's utility as support for his plea in favor of intellectual autonomy:
"I advise you, in the full and abundant seclusion in which you find yourself, to leave the humble and tedious care of the household to your servants, and to devote yourself to scholarly inquiry, so that you may bring to light that which is yours alone." The manifestations of solitude are the result of self-knowledge, of the subjective capacity to discover the "limits of natural need," of "each person's taste," and of the need for originality.

Montaigne confesses that, as far as he is concerned, solitude is the result of a certain indifference, but also of the need to prepare for life's unfavorable moments. The philosopher's attitude is already typical: he proposes a typology of the solitary figure, to place himself outside of it, to declare himself nonconformist, unlike existing models. However, delicate health, a lack of taste for household chores, the need for scholarly research as a form of carpe dulcia, coupled with the search for that "something of one's own," are included in the list of sound reasons for withdrawal.

For Montaigne, solitude is also a means of fulfilling an eschatological imperative:

> The mindset of those who, out of humility, seek solitude and draw strength from their trust in God's promises of the afterlife is far healthier and more appropriate. Their aim is God, a boundless vision of power and goodness... (Montaigne 1966, 248).

Solitude is a way of exploring creative potential; it can be a source of immortality achieved through one's own work or a means of cultivating Christian virtues and awaiting eschatological bliss. Yet neither option fully satisfies him. Solitude aimed at the pursuit of intellectual joy is "difficult and harmful to health," and solitude as asceticism lies "beyond the natural limits of Montaigne's needs." The philosopher confesses that he prefers pleasant and light books (an idea to which he returns in the Essay on Books) and the joy of the pleasures of life appropriate to his age. Solitude is the condition for harmony of body and soul, with hedonistic undertones:
"Let us enjoy the pleasures of life, for this time is all we have; later we will be nothing but ashes and shadows" (Montaigne 1966, 248).

Montaigne summarizes the philosophical practice of solitude at the end of the essay into five rules:
- coming to terms with the self: "withdraw into yourself, but first prepare to accept yourself,"
- autonomous self-discovery: "you and yourself as your companion are enough to reveal one another or yourself to yourself,"
-rational self-knowledge: "it would be madness to trust yourselves if you do not know how to govern yourselves,"
-originality: "borrow nothing but from yourself,"
-philosophical humility: "without the desire for a long life or a name" (Montaigne, 1966,249).

Withdrawal into oneself, necessary for the philosopher, is proof of the practice of authentic philosophy, "not of a boastful and talkative philosophy." Turning inward thus implies abandoning others, forgetting them. The "historical distance" is preferable to the "contemporary neighbour." "The others" are strangers in a gallery of portraits or occasional companions of the philosopher. In the labyrinth of affectivity, love is the trap of dependence, of estrangement from the self.

The text of the *Essay on Solitude* is a demonstration of the minimization of Christianity's relevance in resolving the dilemmas of the post-Renaissance intellectual. My neighbour, the one I must love as myself, becomes my adversary, the reason for my estrangement from myself.

4. Arrière-boutique and chambre ronde

In the *Essay on the Three Bonds*, Montaigne proposes an external projection of the hidden inner room from On Solitude.

In the first part of the Essays, the philosopher delineates his inner space, "the space of true freedom and solitude," with no connection to

"wife, children, possessions, retinue, servants." This first self-delineation defines a space of the soul turned in on itself:

"We must keep a hidden room, entirely separate, where we may establish true freedom, and the greatest refuge and solitude."

In the third part, he delineates the familiar external space. The two planes of his existence are thus revealed, the communication between them accessible only to the philosopher. While the architecture of the inner room is sketched out briefly-a space for counsel with oneself—the familiar external space, the space of encounter with his favorite ancients (arrière-boutique) is described in detail: it is located above the main entrance, overlooking the garden and the other parts of the house (which remain undescribed, as they are unimportant). Montaigne sketches the structure of a tower, with a chapel, a room where he often retreats in solitude, a wardrobe, "the least-used part of the house," next to which is a room, a round "hiding place," with books arranged around the table and his chair. It is a secret place, sheltered from "the bustle of domestic life, whether parental or communal":

> At home, I often retreat to my library, from where I can keep an eye on the household: I am above the entrance and have a view of the garden, the poultry yard, the farmyard, and most parts of the house. There I leaf through a book at one moment, another at another, without order or plan, at random: sometimes I dream, sometimes I jot down and tell my deacon, as I walk, the visions I reveal here. It is located on the third floor of a tower. The first floor is my chapel; the second, a room with its annexes, where I often retreat to be alone. Above is a large alcove for clothes; it used to be the most unused part of the house. I spend most of my days there and the greater part of the day's hours; I never stay there at night... Every hiding place must have room to stretch one's legs. The room is round in shape; the only space is where my table and chair fit, and all around them I have placed my books, arranged on shelves in five rows...I like that it is cramped and off to one side, so that I can enjoy movement and escape the crowding. Here is my chair; I try to keep my dominion serene and to shield this single corner from the turmoil of domestic life, whether parental or communal... In my opinion, a wretch is one who has no place at home where he can be himself, his own courtier, and where he can hide. (Montaigne1966, 395)

The Montaignian philosophical space is defined from the inside out, from an invisible arrière-boutique to the visible one, from the inner room to its outer projection, the hiding place on the top floor of the tower, with its table, chair, and books, over which he is the sole master.

The architecture of the philosophical space is that of a sanctuary with its cella, which no longer serves the encounter with the divine, but the encounter with the self, to which are added several adjacent rooms, necessary for the gradual transition from the interiority forbidden to

others, toward an exteriority carefully protected from the turmoil of domestic life and the community.

Between the "chamber" of the self and the "hiding place"-a space for encountering favorite authors, for dreaming, for notes, and for confessions to the deacon-lies the paraclis, which marks the tripartite structure of Montaigne's space:

- arrière-boutique, an interior, subjective space, inaccessible to others,
- chapelle, a sacred space, an intermediary between interiority and exteriority,
- chambre ronde, the hiding place, an exterior, diurnal space, protected from others but not inaccessible.

If the arrière-boutique is the place for counsel with the self, the soul's return to itself, the chambre ronde is the place for the encounter with the ancients, who dwell in his memory. The room in the tower is the place of confessions, of self-revelation, of pleasure, of play, of the pleasant passing of time.

In the same essay, Montaigne confesses about himself:

> I have a dreamy nature that draws me inward" (a statement that complements the confessions in the Essay on the Power of the Imagination). "The solitude I love and preach is meant above all to turn my affections and thoughts back to myself, to gather and collect not my steps, but my desires and my care, freeing myself from the burden of others' affairs, and shunning oppression and duty as I would death, and not so much the bustle of people as the bustle of tasks. Truth be told, solitude on the spot carries me rather outward and farther... The crowd pushes me inward... I remain silent, dreamy, and in my own world, without annoyance from my guests. (Montaigne 1966, 387)

Montaigne's verbs: "to turn," "to gather," "to collect," "to avoid," "to spare myself" are verbs of self-protection, which for the philosopher occurs on two levels:

- that of the hidden inner room, and
- that of the tower with its chapel and round room, a place far from the public and domestic bustle.

Both reference systems of Montaigne's philosophical space are points of departure toward the outside, toward the distance, the adverbs of solitude serving as directions for self-searching and self-exploration. "Outside," "far away," "inside," "within me" have specific meanings:

- "inside," "within me"—outline a space of memory and recollection, with childhood, the figure of the father, friendship with Sebond, and the suffering caused by kidney disease as favourite subjects,
- "outside"—refers to the turmoil of domestic and social life,
- "further on"—refers to classical antiquity and the Greek and Latin authors "visited."

In his *Essay on Repentance*, Montaigne notes:

> I do not regret that I am not an angel or Cato. My actions are in accordance with who I am and my condition. I cannot do better… I do not correct my traits: neither my arm nor my mind becomes stronger simply because I realize that another is different. (Montaigne 1966, 380)

Montaigne reopens the discussion on the inner benchmark, on personal units of measurement. For the philosopher, self-exploration is the exploration of one's own limits as natural limits, in harmony with one's own ideals. In the following essay, "On the Three Bonds," he adopts the motto "as much as I can."

> I may wish to be entirely different; I may condemn heaven and take offense at my own appearance, and beg heaven to correct me and relieve me of my natural weakness... But repentance does not truly concern things beyond our power, but our own sense of regret. (Montaigne 1966)

"Neither angel nor Cato" refers to coming to terms with oneself, to acknowledging the limits that are not in accordance with one's nature. The philosopher confesses that he is not without sin, though he hates vice; but "his excesses were not among the worst," and virtue or innocence are in his nature and in his people; they are "a natural inclination."

Montaigne "acknowledges" that "he is not Cato," without specifying which of the two figures of the same name he is referring to; the distinction is likely, from his perspective, irrelevant. Cato becomes the cumulative benchmark of political tenacity and of his preferred Stoic thought. In the same paragraph, the author of the Essays expressed his disagreement with Pythagorean philosophy and his admiration for the Stoics. Thus, Montaigne confesses that he is neither the perfect philosopher, nor the perfect politician, nor the perfect Christian, but is as much as he can be, "to the extent of what I am, and according to my condition."

"When I look back on the excesses of my youth with my old age, I find that I have generally managed them with order, as far as I believe; that is all my strength could do."

Montaigne gathers elements of Stoicism which he puts at the service of the idea of self-contentment, of intellectual joy, sustained with the help of Stoic and Epicurean philosophical ingredients.

Withdrawal into oneself as a form of prevention against existential failure, in its immediate as well as eschatological coordinates, seems to the philosopher to be the result of a double necessity: of capitulation in the war with others and of complicity with the self. The external world is consigned to oblivion, placed in a distant background, against the backdrop of the adventure of self-discovery.

Montaigne does not propose a recipe for a happy life, but rather points out possible paths in the search for happiness, sketching a map of self-rediscovery, with its coordinates being detachment from others and the exploration of one's own intellectual needs, one's own physical sufferings, and one's own comfort-a point at which Montaigne's apatheia is no longer synonymous with the Stoic's.

Standing at an equal distance from the divine and the world, with no intermediary in his relationship with the two poles of existence: La Boétie had died, the rest of his friends were necessarily forgotten, and his relationship with the divine is framed by moral laws, not mysticism or dogmatism, yet with a multitude of friends from his glorious historical and philosophical past, Montaigne possesses himself in the Stoic and Epicurean sense of individualism unhindered by any external constraint. The philosopher gives himself to himself- "se quoque circumdare", the touch of Epicureanism being visible in the need for independence from the external world and in the cultivation of the self in the sense of "visiting" his favourite authors. The yardstick of self-perfection is the philosophical past, to which Montaigne adds a few moments from the late Middle Ages. Self-disposition means liberation from the present, intellectual joy, prudence and wisdom, retreat into the hidden inner chamber, inaccessible to strangers, philosophical anachoresis.

In the *Essay on the Education of Children*, Montaigne speaks of every young person's need to be initiated into the craft of autonomous thinking, in accordance with reason and prudence, rather than to acquire a body of abstract knowledge. In the architecture of one's own life, reason and prudence are paths to harmony with the self.

The Epicurean exhortation λάθε βιώσας, synonymous with "se quoque circumdare", refers to complicity with the self, which excludes any foreign influence, to the possibility of comfortably circumscribing oneself, to the subjective dimensions of the hidden inner space.

It is difficult to determine where Epicureanism ends, and Montaignian Stoicism begins. The need constantly emphasized in the Essays is that of full possession of one's own life, through detachment from the external world. In Stoic thought, separation from the world does not mean the denial of the world. Separation, the retreat into the arrière boutique, is necessary for the individual to view the world as an annex situated at a convenient distance from the inner room.

For Montaigne, visiting the world, stepping out of the arrière-boutique, means visiting his favourite philosophers and the way to return from time to time to those he knows, to "love them a little."

The individual withdrawn into himself, restored to the self as a perfect sphere, free in his isolation, can create only by relating to the past as a frame of reference from within the inner room. Fellow human

beings are isolated in a gallery of portraits, sharing no common trait with the philosopher's self-portrait, outlined according to ancient standards.

The need for self-knowledge, for discovering and accepting one's own imperfections, is stronger in Montaigne than the need for individual perfection, which is at odds with the limits of human nature. Montaigne does not confess his "states, habits, and shortcomings" in order to overcome them, but to familiarize his relatives and friends with them, so that he may be known as "unpolished, natural, and ordinary."

The idea of self-conquest, of "breaking the chains," from the Essay on Solitude is likely a cynical legacy of Stoicism, encountered by Montaigne in Seneca, with the same sense of struggle against the self, resulting in liberation from passions and vices, moral progress:

"He is free who escapes from his own slavery... to be a slave to yourself is the heaviest bondage. It is easy, however, to free yourself from it, if you cease to demand a multitude of favours from yourself, if you give up pursuing your own interests, if you keep your human condition and the brevity of life before your eyes—no matter how young you may be—and say to yourself: 'Why do I behave like a madman? Why am I panting, sweating, restlessly roaming the earth and the public square? I don't need much, nor for very long."

The "embrace of the self" of which the philosopher speaks in the "Essay on Solitude" is the simplified form of the Stoic concept of *oikeiosis*-self-inhabitation (Robin 1963, 32-33), used without the ethical imperative of moving from self-love and self-boundaries to the love, with the same intensity, of all fellow human beings. And the voluntarist ethics of ancient hedonism places the individual at the centre of his own being and rejects any necessity external to the self.

The joy of one's own existence excludes participation in public affairs and political life; it equally excludes involvement in family matters, an idea also present in Montaigne's Essay on Solitude; the family is a source of trouble and anxiety; raising children is impossible, and a failed upbringing is a constant source of unhappiness, which is why the philosopher does not even undertake such an effort. Montaigne's individualism expresses the ambition to be subject to no coercive authority except one's own laws. The need for withdrawal and indifference toward others, including one's own family, are mandatory conditions for personal happiness.

The path to happiness is travelled alone and involves a focus on one's own transformation rather than on changing the world. Death is a banal reality with which the philosopher becomes familiar far from the world. The ideas in Essay I, XX (To philosophize is to learn to die) have hedonistic influences, acknowledged directly through quotations

from Epicurus and Lucretius or indirectly through paraphrases without citing the ancient source (Guyan 2002, passim).

The redefinition of self-concern in a sense different from the classical Christian one was a major event in post-Renaissance self-reflection. The dualism of man-world, man-God has, both in classical philosophical thought and in modern philosophy of identity, the meaning of a de-divinization that determines a return to subjectivity (Culianu 1997, 42).

Coming to terms with death is a way of revealing the authentic self, freed from the mask of role identities.

"We can no longer pretend; we perish in our own words and reveal what is good and pure at the bottom of the cup."

The influence of Lucretius (*eripitur persona, manet res*) on the essays about death is evident. Meditation on death produces detachment from the world, a withdrawal into oneself, even during the crowd. Montaigne recounts how "at parties among ladies" he would think "of some man suddenly taken by death". The contrast between the noise and merriment of the fashionable salons and the solemnity of philosophical speculation on death is a typically Montaignian way of distinguishing between the precarious stage of the world and the protective atmosphere of the inner room, as a place of self-rediscovery. What are important lies within the inner space. Nothing outside the hidden inner room is necessary; the external world is marginal and irrelevant.

In the Stoic and Gnostic education of renunciation, the individual journey is marked by successive abandonments. For Montaigne, the various forms of renunciation are preconditions for autonomy, not for a return to a collective paradise, as in Gnosticism.

Montaignian solitude is a form of rejection of the world's weaknesses, of the corruption of the age, of betrayal, injustice, tyranny, vanity, and disloyalty. Retreating to the arrière-boutique was also a way of drawing the intellectual boundary between the philosopher and the ordinary world and of delineating a space of continuity between the inner chamber and the philosophical space of memory inhabited by the ancients so dear to him.

Returning to oneself is a way of life, a "mihi sic usus est," necessary to avoid unpleasant or casual company. The formula borrowed from Terentius identifies Montaigne with the world of his favourite authors and with the works whose originality he praises in the text of the Essays.

In the post-Renaissance period, the adventure of the exodus (understood as a pilgrimage to the sites of memory within the Christian world) was replaced by the adventure of inner exile, and the old Christian mystical ideal of peregrinatio in stabilitate (a vertical exodus, necessary for the encounter of the created being with God) was

replaced by the journey within the confines of the study. The themes of pilgrimage and claustrophobia overlap. The Promethean hero, capable of transforming the world, is replaced by the agnostic philosopher who withdraws from the world into his own arrière-boutique. The Christian pare-epidemic (the identity structure of the Christian as a stranger and traveller on earth) has been reinterpreted, in the sense of a withdrawal from the world into oneself, rather than from the world toward God. Hiding within oneself-*kallyptein* becomes synonymous with alienation from the world, the adventure of the inner journey being accompanied by claustrophilia. A good example of this is the Latin inscription in Michel de Montaigne's library:

"In the year of Christ 1571, at the age of 38, on the eve of the calends of March, on the anniversary of his birth, Michel de Montaigne, long weary of his service in Parliament and the public duties that had weighed upon his shoulders, retired into the bosom of righteous learning, where in rest and peace he will spend the days he has left to live. May fate grant that he may complete this dwelling, a place of rest for his ancestors, which he dedicates to his freedom, tranquillity, and respite."

The space of self-exploration includes archetypal memory and historical memory (the philosopher uses both the Roman and modern dating systems simultaneously), with values defined under the sign of the past. Montaignian solitude is, in part, the result of an exodus into the past. Temporal ambiguity (classical past-Hesiodic present) sketches a dual reality, the present being evaluated with the units of measurement provided by classical antiquity, by the political and intellectual heroism of "that time."

Conclusions

For Michel de Montaigne, self-concealment is coupled with the need to anchor oneself in the past. The great Socratic-inspired theme of the sedentary, intimate journey is, however, far removed from the heroic soul-body dichotomy of the classical psychodynamic journey. For Montaigne, the modern-classical duality is not an antithesis, but rather the expression of a concentric dualism, in which the past and the present are simultaneously reevaluated and interwoven, as well as a diametrical dualism, in which the two temporal states confront one another (Mauron 1963, passim).

The theme of the journey, of exodus as a retreat into oneself, is constructed in Montaigne's work through an escape into the past, which makes possible a form of contemporaneity with classical Antiquity. The philosopher's psychocriticism is not difficult to grasp. Montaigne reveals an intermediate world, whose boundaries are drawn in several

stages: early education in Latin, under the supervision of Horstanus, then of the Latinist Antonio de Guvea and the dialectician Nicolas de Grouchi, at the university in Bordeaux, and finally, during the seven years of retreat in the arrière-boutique.

Montaigne's personal mythology can be reduced to an ancient backdrop that reconciles personal antitheses and jarring contradictions on an existential level (Durand 1988, 166). The philosopher arranges a dynamic existential sequence against a static ancient backdrop. He establishes in his library a reality built around the theme of returning home. Home signifies intimacy with the past, with both one's actual and intellectually adopted genealogy, but also a space of "freedom, tranquility, and respite."

Claustrophilia is associated with the need for self-analysis, for justification before oneself and posterity. Montaigne confesses in the few sentences addressed to the reader in the prologue to the Essays (Montaigne 1966, 324): "I wish to be seen as I am, unpolished, natural, and ordinary," adding later, in the Essay on the Unsteadiness of Human Affairs (Montaigne 1966, 325).

The protean instinct (Homer 2000, 135) and the splitting of identity are projected against the archetypal historical backdrop of the Greco-Roman world: "this displacement and incongruity that are visible in us, so thoroughly unsettling us, leads some to believe that we have two souls, others that two powers accompany us, each driving us in its own direction-one toward evil, the other toward good-such rapid change unable to coexist harmoniously within a single being." Montaigne borrows the theme of dipsychism, of contradictory duality, from Homeric literature and from Horace's epistles and satires.

The motif of inner otherness, built upon an epistolary fragment by Seneca, *Epistulae toward Lucilius*, 120, is projected, at the beginning of *Essay* II, II, on to the motif of the world's stromatism:

II, I: "We are all made of pieces and woven together so diversely, and patched with various fragments, that every piece, at every moment, does as it please. There is as much distance from us to ourselves as from us to another. Magnam rem puta, unum hominem agere."

II, II: "The world is nothing but variety and dissimilarity—le monde n'est que variété et dissemblance."

Returning to oneself, retreating behind the walls of the inner universe is the answer to the world's perpetual change: "The world is nothing but a perpetual swing" (Montaigne, 1966, 329).

Montaigne prefers to pursue a single changing reality-his own, because "every man bears the matrix of the integral human condition." The philosopher's inner universe is the result of a profound endeavour to delineate his own limits- "se quoque fugare, se quoque circumdare",

alongside the self-knowledge and self-explanation characteristic of modern individualism.

Montaigne's inner citadel is built upon a past of archetypal value. His intellectual solitude was the consequence of his dependence on the ancient model, to which the philosopher constantly returns, constructing his own past-identity relationship through a continuous process of anamnesis.

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