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Orest Ranum

## Inventing Private Space

Samuel and Mrs. Pepys at Home, 1660-1669

Let us begin by observing a primordial phenomenon - *ein Urphänomen* - in human societies; no matter how rich or how poor, how young or how old, human beings create around them a space that is uniquely theirs. It may only be their clothing and their bedding, or perhaps the distance between themselves and their clothing. The amount of private space may be very small, but there is some privacy and sense of recognition of that privacy by others.

When a couple - let us say male and female - chooses to live together, and have some space in which to live that is theirs in some particular way, it may only be a bed with curtains around it, corner of a room, or tiny attic that is theirs, they will distribute their clothes and other effects in ways that make the space theirs in some collective arrangement.

If there is some permanency in the relationship, then there is a process of selection of objects to »furnish« the private space. The little trollies and discarded baby carriages that are filled with bags of food and clothing of the Parisian *clochards* immediately come to mind. And, of course, many of us have participated in the joyful selection of bedding, furniture, drapes, pictures, silver, and tablecloths and dishes with a spouse at just the time when we establish a private household. There is some sort of sacralization by the couple (or individual *for* the couple) in the selection of the more »noble« objects that help us define our privacy. Are these objects selected together? Does one member of the couple have veto power over the initiatives by the other?

Does the female have the power to decide in the selection of all the objects in certain parts of the space that are reserved for her division of labor? If the couple is married, to what extent, in traditional societies, is the wife also part of the property that occupies the private space? We might imagine some formulas:

a - democratic decision making over the furnishing of private space - with each spouse having right of veto over the initiatives of the other.

b - paternalist selection - where the male furnishes and has power over the furnishing of the space occupied by the couple.

b 1 Female selection (not necessarily maternal) ...

c - Mixed or allocated powers to decide the furnishing of the space to be occupied by the couple - some spaces becoming largely female, and others largely male.

At this point it is tempting to pursue the discussion of the relationships between space and the possession of objects that are in it, but that would take us far afield. Let us note in passing, however, the modern feelings of uneasiness, or *Unbehagen* about objects when they are given away, sold, or in some way divided up by married couples who divorce. The objects may go on to help define private space for another couple, or remain the relic that evokes a former loved one. There is also the emotional dimension to the inherited private space, say a room in a family house, and also to the object that is inherited from some member of a couple's family. It too is a relic, in some sense, because of the associations and memories attached to it.

At this point it is evident that private space is a vast subject. There seems to be no end to the examples, reservations, and contradictions that come to mind when such general observations are made about it. But before turning to a specific source, let us ask the question of when did the study of private space begin? Since Herodotus, at least, there have been historians curious about the private lives of people. Plato began the *Republic* with a discussion of the congruencies between household and polis; Aristotle may have begun his lectures on politics by asserting that household life was in some way different from political life because there was a different word for it. The distinction that we make between private and public, like individual and social, is fraught with ambiguity. As we shall see, the Pepyses created a private space that was in every sense theirs, and yet their creation was profoundly influenced by the social and cultural norms that prevailed in their day. Uniqueness and typicality are never separable in the social sciences. The Pepyses proudly took guests through their house to show them every room it contained, and all their furnishings. They visited the houses of their friends and social superiors with curiosity and attention to the differences between their house and the one they were visiting. What could be a more social or public activity than visiting other people in their houses? Private space can never be devoid of social and indeed, perhaps political significance, no matter how explicit the boundaries may seem to be drawn between them.

All a historian can do is to break in somewhere, select texts that are particularly revealing, and attempt to understand them. The history of our subject is much richer than the documents that have survived. The creation of private space may so often appear as part of routine, and is therefore not brought to the surface of argument and discourse. And historians of society



have all too often become slaves of the word. Some are so naive as to believe that words are somehow *truer*, or more objective than pictures of society. Such is obviously not the case. Words and pictures both have exceedingly difficult problems of interpretation for the historian.

Was it accidental that Pepys's Diary, one of the two or three most important sources on private life to come down to us in Western culture, was written in just the period that the great Dutch painters, Vermeer, Terborch, Metsu, Hooch, Steen, and Rembrandt depicted the banal scenes of everyday life with all the moral sensitivity and intellectual-spiritual force that had

previously been reserved for what was formally described as religious and history painting? Was it fortuitous that Rembrandt probed ever deeper into self-depiction at a time when Pepys sought to record his inner most *accounting* of the aesthetic, sexual and political experiences in his life? At no time before in Western culture had the moral and political fabric of a society been expressed with so much clairvoyance in pictures of individuals, just sitting in chairs reading, writing and reading letters, counting money, weighing coins, caring for children, and playing music and games or drinking wine and eating fruit as couples, families, and small groups. And what could be more revolutionary than simply to paint the picture of part of a room devoid of people (van der Burch 912 D, Dahlem Museum)? The satin jacket thrown casually on the chair and the shoes placed primly next to each other indicate the presence of a women in a private space, but she is not depicted.'

The congruities and disparities between powerfully articulated courtly and middle class cultures, individualism and family constraints, science and superstition, monarchism and republicanism, and protestantism and catholicism manifested themselves in every aspect of life and thought in the Netherlands and England in the mid-seventeenth century. Why did Pepys take so much trouble to write and to rewrite about furnishing his house, eating, sleeping, walking, shopping, ogling women, and quarreling with his wife? He would have been more conventional if he had simply recorded his activities in the naval administration, or, as is the case in German autobiographies written in the same period, recorded a soul's search for God. Why did Rembrandt paint his own portrait over and over again? The results of these highly private explorations were an almost scientific oeuvre on the private life that would have very powerful influences in Western culture. Dutch painting flourished in Pepys's London, and with historical imagination it is possible to glimpse in Pepys's verbal images those scenes from everyday life that survive in the works of the Golden Age of Dutch Painting.

Before turning to the abstract sense of the house that the Pepyses have, and of the allocation and use of space within it, a few salient points about their social background. Samuel Pepys was 26 years old when he moved into his new house. His father, a tailor in London, was still living, as was his mother, who had been a wash maid to Lady Vere before marrying. His branch of the Pepys family lived strictly on the income from work. The Pepys family in general, however, had respectable if modest gentry origins, and thanks to the death of a childless uncle Pepys inherited the family estate. He faced indebtedness and litigation for years as a result of this inheritance. When he went to church in the country, however, all the »country people« stood up when he came in. He also inherited a patron, Edward Mountague, Earl of Sandwich, who played a very important role in the Restoration of the

Monarchy in 1660. Pepys gained posts in the naval administration through Mountague's influence, and the house he moved into in 1660 belonged to the Royal Navy. Indeed, he was able to arrange for the painting of the interior of the house, and a new stairway and floors, and finally the addition of a floor on the house at the Navy's expense.

Mrs. Pepys had no money when they married in 1655, and no prospect of inheriting any. She was French, beautiful, and high spirited. She had a natural self assurance, good carriage, grace and fine manners. We can be certain of this, otherwise Pepys would have recorded complaints about her if he had had any reason to find fault with her. The Pepys marriage was founded, it seems, on what would be called a love match in later centuries. Pepys could not enjoy certain festive occasions, such as going to a fair, or seeing the Queen for the first time, without his wife's presence. This need to share joyous moments with his spouse bound Pepys's life in ways that may have been related to his need for spiritual fulfillment through aesthetic experiences. Physical beauty and her desire to be received in courtly society may also have been important criteria for a wife in Pepys's mind. We shall note later how he perceived Mrs. Pepys as an extension of himself, as well as a creature to be kept in submission. At the same time, he experienced the need for her approval on many occasions, and noted that she found him to be more handsome in some clothes than in others. Two other facts should be mentioned. Though Mrs. Pepys's Huguenot refugee parents lived in London, she never once allowed her husband to meet them.

The Pepyses had a vision of how the space in the house should be lived in from the moment *he* first saw it. No discussions seem to have taken place about what each room should be used for. They decided to call one of the two chambers a »Nursery«. They had been childless, but perhaps the prospect of settling in a new house raised hopes for children. The cellar had been open when they moved in, and had become a latrine. Pepys had it closed off, and a wine cellar installed with a door on it that could be locked. Later he ordered small casks of claret that he would have put in bottles made to order with his crest marked into the molten glass.

The room that received attention first was the kitchen. A new iron »range« was installed (it broke immediately) and Mrs. Pepys made tarts and pastries in the new oven herself, to try it out. Plasterers worked also in the kitchen, though it is not clear what they did. We learn no more about the kitchen furnishings in the 1,250,000 words in some 3,100 pages of shorthand text about Pepys's life from 1660 to 1669.

He mentions being merry with the servants there, washing his feet and legs in warm water there (Mrs. Pepys wanted him to take baths, and he did so once, at least) and kissing his wife at exactly 1:00 a.m. in the kitchen, on New Year's Eve.

The dining room underwent two distinct waves of remodeling and redecorating. The ceiling was repainted and gilded leather was affixed to the walls. The luxurious golds and silvers of tooled leather are frequently depicted on the walls of Dutch houses by Vermeer and Hooch, and the effect must have been quite grand also in Pepys's dining room. Green serge drapes completed the decoration. Pepys had consulted his father about the cloth for the drapes, presumably because he was a tailor. There is no mention of inherited pieces of furniture, crockery, or silver in the house. He bought no new chairs or tables immediately for his dining room, but within weeks of moving he purchased a table cloth and 12 napkins, the first time in his life, he says, that he ever bought such things. Then he and Mrs. Pepys bought glasses together. He also bought candlesticks, but it is not clear that they were for any specific room. Later he would buy pewter sconces for the new staircase.

Pepys returned home one day with two pictures (probably prints) that he had selected on his own. Mrs. Pepys did not like them, and so he returned one to the shop. It was a picture of Paris. Were these purchased for the dining room? Pepys took great joy in moving his pictures about from room to room in the house. He seems not to have consulted Mrs. Pepys on these changes. One day when Pepys saw the portrait by the Dutch painter Lely of his patron, Lord Sandwich, he decided immediately and on his own to commission a copy for himself. He does not say where it was hung. He had an office in the navy buildings, and it is just possible that he hung it there.

Mrs. Pepys took up drawing and painting, and this gave her husband enormous pleasure. The hesitation before the cost of the drawing lessons diminished, but we do not learn if her paintings were ever considered of the quality essential for hanging in the dining room. After he became somewhat familiar with the Dutch portraitist Hayls, through sitting for him for his portrait, Pepys and the artist went together to look at pictures in one of the royal residences. Pepys learned about >workmanship( in painting from Hayls, and he became just a bit more cautious about giving his own judgement of a work of art. The desire to possess paintings had preceded Pepys's desire to develop aesthetic discernment. When Pepys and Hayls disagreed about the portrait that Pepys had commissioned the artist to do of him, Pepys's wishes prevailed over what the artist had wanted to paint. Hayls seems to have decided on the pose (the sitter complains of the strain it caused him) but it was certainly Pepys who chose to be painted in his dressing gown, and holding a song composed by himself in his hand. The portrait that now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, London, shows only a darkness behind Pepys. Hayls had wanted to add a landscape, but Pepys's desire prevailed, and the result is significant because the darkness supports the intimacy and drama of the luxurious dressing gown that Pepys wears. The portrait captures a private space within a private space, as it were, because the trappings of office, swords, coats of arms, and street dress are absent.

Pepys also commissioned Hayls to paint a portrait of his wife, and of his father, but not of his mother. Was it her lower social origins or the fact that Pepys did not particularly like to receive advice from his mother that prompted him to deny her presence in his house? The answer cannot be discerned. Nor do we learn where in the house he chose to hang the portraits. The closets, those little rooms just off the bedrooms, were frequently graced with portraits of owners of the house and their immediate friends. The Pepyses had closets, as we shall see, but it is not certain that the portraits were hung in them.

A carved mantel would later be installed in the dining room, and richer materials would replace the serge hangings. The mouldings on the mantel, and perhaps on the frame of the picture encased above it were too big for Pepys's taste, but the overall result gave him pleasure. The dining room fireplace smoked, but several years of living in the house and the prospect of having a lord for dinner prompted him to have it fixed. Workmen continued until midnight to complete the changes needed to make the fireplace draw properly. Pepys took great pleasure in supervising the workmen who remodeled his house. After observing that planning and supervising changes in his house >put other things out of his mind<, Pepys would then press the workmen to work harder and faster. The responsibility of the Navy accounts, the political machinations in the Restoration government, and last but not least, family cares and quarrels with his wife over servants, all retreated from his mind as he dreamed of ever finer and more beautiful rooms and furnishings for the house. Pepys never called on architects or interior decorators to make suggestions and plans about the remodeling of his house. Nor does he mention consulting his wife. As he hung his >fine< pictures in the dining room, which were probably prints framed in black wooden mouldings and covered with a special varnish to give the pictures surface a sheen, Pepys was at once following a trend and setting a trend in the creation of private space.

The >great cupboard< of silver may also have been in the dining room. It became a source of pride as a result of the gifts of silver that Pepys received in return for political favors. The possession and display of large quantities of silver was obviously an acceptable mode of displaying wealth in the seventeenth century. Pepys would own 30 silver plates for dining, and a large number of assorted dishes by 1669. He bought a dozen silver >salts<, some silver chafing dishes, and a >salt< for everyday use. Forks and knives were kept in boxes especially made for them. He had a P engraved on his spoons, presumably partly for decoration and partly for protection against theft. Pepys rarely mentions his cupboard of silver in the bouts of fear of being robbed that 'overcame him several times in the middle of the night. The horde of gold and silver coins that he kept in bags and chests in his closet

(or in the cellar for a period after the Great Fire of 1666) was a much greater source of worry.

In addition to being used regularly for meals by the couple and frequent entertainment of guests at dinner, the dining room was also occasionally used by Pepys, who played his violin and lute there >while taking much pleasure to have the neighbors come forth into the yard to hear me<. He would also play his Flageolett in the moonlight in the garden, and again the neighbors signified pleasure in listening to him.

What was in Pepys's house was his, as well as its immediate surroundings, in a sense, but he did not attempt to create the type of secretive privacy that can be observed in the novels of Balzac or Mann. Indeed, the task would have been extremely difficult. Pepys may have quarreled with his neighbors a bit, but in a sense, he appreciated their presence. There were boundaries of privacy but not exclusivity. Inside the house the lack of specialization of rooms, and the eyes that watched whatever happened in the Pepys household from the outside, established boundaries of privacy that would seem very low if compared with those in bourgeois households in later centuries. One day after rushing home, Pepys walked into his dining room, and to his dismay discovered that he had come into the room while a very, distinguished guest, Lady Sandwich, was using a chamber pot in it. He feigned not to notice and retreated, but he was embarrassed nonetheless. There were, of course, no water closets in the house. They had only recently been invented. Pepys did not have one installed.

The parlour is not described in detail. Did the new staircase and entry that Pepys installed lead out of the parlour? Perhaps a longer reflection on all the clues given in the Diary would yield an answer. The parlour walls were painted and >gilded< Pepys says, which presumably means that the room was paneled and that the mouldings had gold leaf put on them to add richness and color to the painted wood.

After the nursery was reassigned by Pepys to be his chamber, each spouse assumed full authority over the selection of the principal furnishings. Mrs. Pepys selected »her« bed and its furnishings, presumably the curtains and decorated finials on it. The old bed was probably put in his chamber, so his principal purchases were a chest of drawers and an »Indian gown«. Pepys noted that his wife gave him »his linen« to keep himself, presumably possible now that he had a chest of drawers for himself. Shortly afterward he put together a model of a ship in the Royal Navy that he proudly installed in his chamber. Somewhat later he had plates depicting the four navy yards of England engraved so that he could hang them in his »closet«. He bought more fireplace »dogs«, etc., but did not mention the room in which they were used. The same is true of the mouse traps that he purchased.

Pepys continued to buy pictures all his life. He liked just about every type



of subject when he was younger (he bought two prints of Rubens' pictures the very day he learned his salary had been increased) but as the years went by his taste centered on engraved portraits of important personages in England, and abroad, as well as maps and scenes of cities. A very large map of Paris graced Mrs. Pepys's chamber. At one point he thought of buying a Holbein (offering 200 pounds for a picture said to be worth 1,000 pounds) and the reason may have been that he saw Holbein portraits in so many of the aristocratic houses that he visited. He was very struck by the beauty of the pictures in Charles II's collection. He bought a portrait of Elizabeth I and also one of Mary of Braganza, then Queen. When in a shop of a Dutch artist he could not refrain from touching the drops of dew in the pictures.

Pepys himself selected almost everything in the house except in his wife's chamber. He may have consulted her in advance, but from what evidence there is about such consultations they would appear to have been more his expression and sharing of his dreams and visions of how they would live as he grew richer, than her expressions of taste. Mrs. Pepys bought very little for him. An agate handled knife was one present; he recorded that this gift cost him 5 shillings. When he bought a gift for her she had little choice but to wear it or to install it in her chamber. At one point he became enchanted by an artist's work, immediately bought a picture, returned home and gave it to his wife to hang in her closet. We do not learn whether or not she liked the picture.

Great attention was given to the decoration and furnishing of Mrs. Pepys's closet. After the chintz wall covering that had been installed when they first moved in, her closet would be entirely refurnished with a new and richer fabric. An upholsterer was hired to help with some of the hangings, but Mrs. Pepys did most of the decoration herself. Blue was the prevailing color in both her closet and her chamber, en suite, the fashionable way to decorate the most private rooms in a house at the time. Mrs. Pepys undoubtedly gained more authority over the color and quality of the furnishings and decoration of her closet and chamber as the years went by. Was the change from chintz and red paint, to a uniform blue in a rich fabric for both rooms, approved by Pepys because it was in fact more in conformity with fashion than what he had decided on earlier?

Apart from the pictures that Pepys hung in her closet the only piece in the room that we learn about is the cabinet that was given to Pepys by someone for whom he had done a favor in the Navy. Pepys decided that the cabinet, presumably a multi-drawer piece of furniture that stood on legs, should be in his wife's closet. After spending part of an evening joyfully finding, opening and closing the secret drawers in the cabinet, Pepys paid no more attention to it.

The flat paved area just outside the window of Mrs. Pepys's closet (called

the leads) was clearly a part of the house, but neighbors might walk on it as well. The Pepyses frequently sat out on the leads to take the air in the evening. He had rails installed around the leads, an evident decision to enhance the prestige of the house, and to enclose and to make somewhat more private a surface next to it. The pleasure that the railings gave him was dashed one evening when a neighbor dumped a chamber pot into a nearby latrine, sending a terrible odor in the direction of the leads where the Pepyses were sitting. Pepys hoped that his neighbor's action had been accidental, but he could not be certain. There had been disputes with the neighbors over access to the leads in the past, and Pepys hoped that his installation of railings would not provoke hostile reactions from his neighbors.

Pepys refers frequently to his closet. He installed shelves in it himself. He bruised his thumb badly while knocking up nails to hold shelves. These must have been quite rudimentary and so open that Pepys was forced to dust his books. Later he had the Navy joiners make beautiful bookcases (he calls them presses) with glass paned doors in which he carefully placed his gold tooled leather bound books. Pepys also stored his papers, counted his money, and kept his collection of prints and music, and perhaps his musical instruments in his closet. There seems not to have been a bed in it. There is no mention of Mrs. Pepys joining him in his closet, though he expresses pleasure at her initiative in installing the drapes that had previously hung in the dining room in his closet.

We have noted in passing what amounted to be the major decision in the allocation of space in the house, and this was the decision to make the nursery into Pepys's chamber. Separate living areas were thus created for the master and mistress of the house. The same delineation could be found in the huge palaces and country places all over Europe beginning in the sixteenth century. The only differences between very rich aristocratic and aspiring gentry living spaces that were sexually defined would be the size and furnishing of the chambers, closets, studies, morning rooms, and anti-chambers that were divided by master-mistress definitions.

Why sexually delineated private spaces within the house? The principal reason probably was the way people dressed, undressed, went to bed, and got up in the seventeenth century, if they could afford to have at least two servants. In the first years of living in the house Pepys had a male servant who helped him dress, and Mrs. Pepys a chamber maid. Every article of clothing was unfolded, brushed, and handed to the master or mistress, or put on them, at the appropriate moment. Pepys notes on occasion: >Rose and dressed myself. It occurred infrequently in the period when he had a male servant. Occasionally he remarks that he slept in his drawers, which suggests that he usually slept in a shirt, or in nothing at all. On one occasion he notes that he slept in a >down bed in the Danish manner<. Were male and female



Pepy's beliefs on household governance were not aberrant or untypical. These were perhaps most succinctly summed up in the two prints by the French artist Abraham Bosse, the *Husband who Beats His Wife*, or *The Wife who Beats Her Husband*. Note how authority, power, and order in the entire household are linked to male dominance. And how female promiscuity is explained by the weakness of male dominance.

servants in the bed chamber helping the master and mistress out of bed and to dress at the same time? It is doubtful. The use of the chamber pots and commode chairs may also have taken place in the different chambers.

The Pepyses, except when ill or quarreling, slept in the same bed, so it was not the desire to sleep in separate beds that prompted the separate chamber delineation.

There was little exclusiveness and privacy in sleeping habits in the seventeenth century. One night a party continued until a very late hour; a male and female guest had to spend the night. The female guest went to bed with Mrs. Pepys in what was the Pepyses' bed, and the male guest slept with Pepys in his chamber. Since the guests were not married the Pepyses gave up sleeping together in order to sleep with their guests. The other alternative, that is displacing servants in order to give their beds to the guests, would have been considered socially degrading. When traveling the Pepyses often ended up in separate beds with other travellers. When Mrs. Pepys went to the country his manservant came in to sleep at the foot of Pepys's bed, and the cook maid then moved in to sleep in the man servant's bed. Mrs. Pepys's maid had accompanied her mistress. Pepys bought a bell that he could ring to call the maids after they ceased to sleep in the same room with them. The first time Pepys tried to wake up the wenches( at 4:00 a.m. to start the laundry, they slept right on despite his ringing. He resolved to buy a bigger bell.

After the first years of trying to live as they imagined they should because of their increased wealth and status, the Pepyses relaxed a bit, and modified their sleeping quarters still another time. What had become the dressing room, and his man servant's bed chamber (also called the wardrobe room) was modified into a sleeping room for his boy servant, and a music room. The floor was replaced, and a new table was purchased specifically for that room. Pepys also mentions that he planned to eat in that room occasionally. He paid for the instruction of his boy in music and grammar. The man servant was obliged to show Pepys his lessons in Latin.

Later in the decade Pepys would have female servants help him dress and comb his hair, which suggests that the rigid compartmentalization of mistress and master chambers and specific roles for servants according to sex diminished. Pepys had a very emphatic idea of how many servants a family of his estate should have, and the purchase of a coach and the need to have someone drive and to keep it and the horses clean seems to have provoked the shift away from his having a full-time man servant in his personal attendance.

The servants were thus very much part of the private space in the Pepyses' house. There were sexual boundaries that Pepys began to transgress, but just as in the remodeling and furnishing of their house, the Pepyses put into practice ideas acquired from reading and watching others about how to live

with servants. It is doubtful that either of them had known anything but rudimentary domestic help before their marriage. They took personal pleasure in lying in bed and watching their maid bustle about in her smock. But the Pepyses would have an extremely painful time adjusting to the almost ceremonial life that their new wealth not only permitted, but in a sense, required. Pepys's dominant role has appeared in the decoration of the house. This power to define and embellish private space was accompanied by a need to keep his wife in a dependent status in the house. No detail of daily life or utilization of private space was beyond or outside the boundaries of dependency and possible social control. Let us touch on this very important subject because it is inseparable from any definition of private space and governance in England!

Pepys kept his wife in a dependent position, and only rarely feared loss of command over her. He watched over her selection of clothes every day, but especially at times when they went out for social occasions. He refused to allow her to put black patches on her face when these became fashionable. He finally permitted it. Only hairpieces made of her own hair could be worn. Social constraints in a couple that wished to earn the respect of their social superiors, and his dominance over her came together over the purchase and wearing of her clothes.

Pepys would become very jealous of his wife's dancing and drawing masters because he feared his wife might be seduced by them. Indeed, when returning home on one occasion he found Mrs. Pepys alone upstairs with her dancing master, and with no servants in the house. The projection of his own promiscuous tendencies on the dancing master is evident, and at one point he became so jealous that he stayed downstairs to listen as Mrs. Pepys and her dancing master went through their steps above him. When they stopped dancing Pepys became almost physically ill. On other occasions he would appear to saunter in just to watch.

Within the boundary of private space Pepys could be terribly jealous of his wife though her occasions for possible promiscuity were restricted much more than his. Possible promiscuity challenged his notion of dominance over Mrs. Pepys. On one occasion, in a quarrel over a female servant whom Pepys was about to seduce, Pepys reflected that he was:

troubled to see how my wife is by this means  
likely forever to have her hand over me, that  
I shall forever be a slave to her.

The expression of dominance and dependence in the language quoted from their quarrels and Pepys's reflections about those quarrels, are the same that Pepys used to describe his relations with his patrons in court politics. Kindness, he says, will slowly bring his wife's head lower again. The physical

characteristics of dependency, the down-cast eyes and inclined head, were parts of a much larger social code of gestures and signs that extended far beyond the private space of the house, but it was very strongly articulated there as well.

Pepys thought of hiring a woman he met to be a maid, but then he noted that she >held her head up very high( so he decided not to hire her. One of his maids had also observed the angle of the other woman's head, and commented on it to Pepys. The gestural code of servitude was not a private one for masters alone. Pepys had a deep personal need for a wife and servants who were dependent on him. The complementary pleasure was his feeling of happiness in dependence on the Earl of Sandwich, to whom he was, the >most obedient servant. When Lady Sandwich, of common origins, scolded a servant in Pepys's presence, he observed that she would not have done this had she been of noble birth. The appropriate behavior for persons of a certain rank implied boundaries of household privacy.

Pepys acted on the principle of conjugal solidarity with his spouse relentlessly and brutally as a result of his need to keep his spouse in dependency. The one thing Mrs. Pepys had sovereignty over, or to put it more accurately, veto power over, was the presence of a servant in the household. If Mrs. Pepys wished to have a servant dismissed Pepys believed he had no choice but to do so, regardless of how wrong, unfair, and arbitrary his wife was about the servant. Mrs. Pepys had a habit of accusing servants of lying, and Pepys would have to dismiss them even if his efforts to find out the truth revealed no lying. After numerous intense quarrels over chamber maids, Pepys finally permitted his wife to hire her own maid servant. The results turned out to be excellent from Mrs. Pepys's point of view - at least until her husband began to seduce that servant, whereupon she insisted that that servant also be dismissed.

When Pepys's sister moved into the house, he made it clear to her that she would have servant status in the house. Indeed, he did not permit her to sit down at the table so that she would learn to accept her status. She too had eventually to be sent away. Pepys noticed that one of his male servants had found an excuse to wear a hat in the house. He took this as failure to mark respect for him. All the servants were supposed to go to church at least once on Sunday, and to sit only in their places. He was made uncomfortable on one occasion when he discovered that servants were sitting up too close to him. He read prayers to everyone in his house every Sunday evening. On one of the very rare occasions when he failed to do so it was because he had been drinking, and he feared the servants might find out if he read prayers to them.

On occasion a servant would fight back. When Sarah was dismissed because Mrs. Pepys insisted on it, Pepys as usual, almost wept. He then met her



in the city one day, and the girl told him that Mrs. Pepys had been >lending< money to an unemployed brother of Mrs. Pepys. This was a calculated gesture to prompt Pepys's inquiry into how Mrs. Pepys was spending the allowance he gave her. He declined to ask his wife about these allegations, perhaps out of fear of a quarrel and fear of what he would find out. Sarah, it turned out, went to work for some neighbors, which immediately provoked a »strangeness« between the Pepyses and those neighbors.

Accusations of lying, stealing, forgetfulness and laziness were occurring almost continuously in the early 1660's in the Pepys household - as each

spouse sought to establish a single hierarchy of control over the servants. Quarrels were many and punishments at times violent.'

Mrs. Pepys and her maid »boxed each other in the ears« in one fit of rage. He hit one servant girl with a broom for some inattentiveness. Pepys struck >his man< Will, because he had failed to brush Pepys's coat. The cat that jumped on to the bed in a fright during a summer storm seems not to have been reprimanded.

Mrs. Pepys had to keep household accounts, and he reviewed them regularly. Finding once that his wife had spent 25 shillings for earrings Pepys flew into a rage, and insisted that his wife return them. A quarrel ensued, and when Mrs. Pepys finally accepted defeat and ordered a servant to return the earrings, he intercepted the servant and countermanded the order to return the earrings. Pepys admits that he simply wished to force his wife to return the jewelry so that she would not >forget how to live cheap<. The implicit reason was her initiative without his approval. On another occasion Mrs. Pepys and her maid faced him with a formal request to purchase a pearl necklace for Mrs. Pepys. Somewhat taken aback, Pepys promised that he would do so at a time when he could afford it. He could have afforded the necklace at the time, but waited. He kept his promise, however, and ended up buying a more costly necklace than the one Mrs. Pepys had initially requested. The female dreams about pearl necklaces appear only rarely in Pepys. It was Vermeer who would immortalize them, such as in the magnificent portrait of a lady looking at herself in a mirror while admiring the pearl necklace that she is wearing (Dahlem Museum).

The need to dominate his wife and servants in the house did not, however, diminish Pepys's expressions of affection. There were very powerful erotic dimensions to this affection in some instances, but not in the case of all the maids. The simple pleasures of the company of servants, the attention to the details of cooking, of carving and serving fowl, the smooth table cloths, brushed clothes, combed wigs, and a clean house meant a great deal to Pepys.

There is much research to be done on the history of private space, particularly on the relations between it and community and public life. Pepys remarks several times that none of the tests and trials he had in the Naval administration were as difficult or painful to him as the decisions he found he had to make in his own household.' Pain and suffering the household did give him, certainly, but pleasure as well. Let us give him the last word:

We fell to dancing and continued, only with intermission for a good supper, till 2 in the morning, the music being Greeting and another most excellent violin and Theorbo, the best



in town; and so, with mighty mirth and pleased with their dancing of Jiggs afterward, several of them, and among others Betty Turner, who did it mighty prettily; and lastly, W. Batelier's blackmore and blackmore-maid, and then to a countrydance again; and so broke up with extraordinary pleasure, as being one of the days and nights of my life spent with the greatest content, and that which I can but hope to repeat again a few times in my whole life. This done, we parted, the strangers home, and I did lodge my cousin Pepys and his wife in our blue chamber - my cousin Turner, her sister, and The in our best chamber - Babb, Betty, and Betty Turner in our own chamber; and myself and my wife in the maid's bed, which is very good - our maids in the coachman's bed - the coachman with the boy in his settle-bed; and Tom where he uses to lie; and so I did to my great content lodge at once in my house, with great ease, fifteen, and eight of them strangers of quality. My wife this day put on her first French gown, called a *sac*.. .

## References

*The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed by Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley, 1970.-76) in nine volumes. Volume 10, the compendium, was not available at the time this article was written. Peter Thornton's *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France, and Holland* (New Haven, 1978) is a fine introduction to the subject.

- 1 Not that private space must be defined as being alone. In Adriaen van der Weris' *The Chess Player* (Herzog Anton-Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig) the principal person in the picture is dressed in a magnificent dressing gown while playing chess with another person.
- 2 These prints were copied by Alsatian engravers, and the verses under them were >translated< into German (Dahlem Museum). The transmission of the verbal

messages from one culture to the other involved substantial changes in the choices of socially meaningful terms. The author wishes to thank the Gemäldegalerie Dahlem, for permission to reproduce pictures in the collection, and the Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin for the Bosse prints.

- 3 Such a remark is topological, of course, but this in no way means that Pepys was insincere when he wrote it. A good example, among many others, of the same thought: Tacitus, *Agricola* XIX, *A se suisque orsus, primam domum suam coercuit, quod plerisque haud minus arduum est quam provinciam regere.*