

Mapping the Heart

JOAN DEJEAN

*This article was first published in my 1997 study, *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Invention of a Fin-de-Siècle*. One of the goals of that project was to study certain »keywords« that were invented in the late seventeenth century in France. My hypothesis was that we can only truly understand a given period if we understand the new vocabulary then invented, because the invention of a new word proves that the period experienced a need for this vocabulary. In this essay, I explore the invention of a new vocabulary for the emotions, a process that began in the mid-seventeenth century and was initiated by a novelist, Madeleine de Scudéry.*

This article is part of a project in which I take a revised look at the revolution in *mentalités* which the historian Paul Hazard termed »the crisis in European consciousness«. ¹ I have a number of goals for my re-examination of the years between 1670 and 1715. I am trying to isolate a set of phenomena I see as most crucial in explaining the radical shift between French culture as it was constituted in mid-17th century France and French culture as it had been redefined by 1720-1730 when the Enlightenment had been truly launched. In so doing, I am calling into question the standard view of periodization adopted by those who deal with early modern France: we might do well to consider adopting the category »the long 18th century« commonly used by students of early modern England, to suggest that the Enlightenment was not a phenomenon that lasted for precisely 100 years. We need to acknowledge in some official way that France was on its way to acquiring its 18th-century character long before the 17th century was over. Finally, I am arguing for the importance of decades that are all too often neglected, since they are considered neither truly part of 17th-century studies nor fully integral to the 18th century. And yet those decades of crisis were a moment of intense cultural creativity. For instance, they generated the first serious speculation about the phenomenon of a century's end; it was at this time that the dominant meaning of the term »century« became what it still is for us today: »a period of one hundred years«. It was at this time that commentators first speculated on questions being talked about around us today, for instance, when does a new century begin, in 1700 or 1701? (They decided that the correct answer was 1701). In short, the closing decades of the period I will be talking about constituted the first true »fin de siècle.« Throughout the following pages, I will be using that term as a given.

The decades I will be considering were also creative in a semantic and epistemological sense: they generated a number of discourses crucial to the future of French culture. During the now forgotten decades »between« centuries, a true constructive cultural revolution took place.

I will be presenting cultural evidence from the period roughly between 1650 and 1710. I will focus on the evolution of French culture during the intellectual crisis known as the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. This was the epistemological upheaval that in effect put an end to the 17th century and began the 18th century – a cultural battle that was fought again in Germany, where it also played a generative role in initiating the Enlightenment. Throughout this article, I am interested in particular in one way of measuring epistemological change, one aspect of the relation between words and things. The question I was asking was the following: could a concept have existed before the word that we use to designate it had been officially invented? This project considers the origins during the period of certain keywords. I borrow Raymond Williams' term in a particular sense, to designate words that point to a period's particular obsessions, to the anxieties peculiar to it.

I had a particular goal behind my reexamination of these keywords. I wanted to call attention to the general passivity, on the part of scholars of modern languages, with regard to the history of those languages. In French studies, we have been too willing to accept, first of all, the findings of late 19th-century lexicographers and historians of the language – whereas those findings are based on the vocabulary found in a very narrow »canon« of literature – a canon that virtually excludes, for example, both writings of women authors and those of authors deemed too popular. In the case of scholars of French in particular, we have also been too willing to accept without question the French histories of keywords recently proposed by a series of German *maîtres à penser* – I think most notably of Habermas and Elias. Whereas, when one checks carefully into their notes, one learns that neither of them did original semantic research, but simply relied upon standard late 19th-century French sources – and Habermas even copied Auerbach – and we know what his research conditions working in exile in Istanbul were like. I decided to have another look at the history of words like »public« and »civilization« so important to Habermas and Elias to see if the conditions surrounding their creation – in particular, class and gender politics – confirmed Habermas' and Elias' findings.

All the key words that I discuss subsequently became crucial to the development of what Paul Hazard termed »a European consciousness.« In the case of all of these terms, historians of the language have long claimed that the words did not exist at the end of the 17th century. I was able to rewrite the long accepted linguistic history because of the newest tool at our disposal, the ARTFL data base. The ARTFL allowed me to prove that these key words were in fact coming into existence decades before they were supposed to have been invented. My theory is that the age of intellectual conflict, the *Querelle*, forced the beginning of an awareness of a series of new concepts and that that awareness made the existence of a new vocabulary inevitable.

In this project, I try to situate literary texts in relation to other contemporary discourses – medical, psychological, religious. What I present here is my attempt first to account for the explosion of intense emotionality, known as *sensibilité*, that becomes ever more present all over Europe in the course of the 18th century, and second to account for the new prominence of interiority and subjectivity that becomes increasingly

visible throughout the late 17th century. I came to trace the origins of *sensibilité* to the mid-17th century and to a moment of extraordinarily active and conscious linguistic exploration in the domain of affective vocabulary. Linguistic change is most often unconscious – a kind of semantic drift. What I'll be describing here is a relatively rare conscious attempt at linguistic change, an attempt consciously to alter the vocabulary used to refer to what we call »the emotions«. To describe 17th-century semantic innovation, I rely heavily on the greatest early modern dictionary in any language, published by Antoine Furetière in 1690.

It is particularly appropriate that this material is presented in a German publication for two reasons:

1. *Sensibilité* and consciousness of the centrality of the emotions became major phenomena in Germany as well – in no other country was Romanticism such a powerful cultural force. Indeed, throughout this project, I was aware of the moments at which French semantic creativity during the 18th century began to yield to German influence. You have only to think of Romanticism itself, which »returned« to France in the early 19th century via Germany.
2. It might be particularly interesting for a German readership to consider the influence of Habermas and Elias upon French cultural historians in recent years.

The process I will be highlighting in this article involved nothing less than a complete rewriting of the language of the emotions, the most extensive such revision ever accomplished in modern times. So extensive was this revision, in fact, that it seems on occasion as if the French writers, philosophers, and scientists who organized it were consciously attempting to reinvent – if not the emotions themselves, at least the range of possibilities conceived of for the emotions and the very way in which emotional life could be portrayed by everyone from novelists to doctors.

The first French *fin de siècle* was a period of intense creativity in several domains that are not normally interrelated, or at least not to such an extreme degree: literature, philosophy, theology, medicine, and a discourse so new that it did not even receive a name in French until the middle of the following century, psychology. At the same time as Ancients and Moderns were doing battle over the relative merits of classical and modern authors, linguistic innovators from what we now consider completely separate disciplines were inventing the same language for the emotions. During the *fin de siècle*, that language of affect was the foundation upon which were built a new literary aesthetic, a new discourse of moral philosophy, and a new discourse of the body. For these innovators, it became necessary to imagine nothing less than a radically revised vision of the human heart. The heart thus reimagined proved to be the concept upon which a new era was founded, an idea whose influence became so pervasive that it is evident in every discourse essential to the age of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment, that paradigmatic age of reason, intelligence, and all the faculties of the head, would not have taken shape as it did, without the need, perceived more and more intensely from 1660 on, for a pre-

viously unexplored language of the heart. As will become clear, I am arguing throughout this article against what is still an amazingly prevalent view of the Enlightenment: critics and historians all too often still act as if the philosophical and the sentimental project were warring forces, whereas they were clearly complicitous.

The process of semantic innovation that I have in mind had roughly three phases. The initial phase was a failure, but a spectacular one. In 1649, Descartes begins his treatise, *Les Passions de l'âme*, by announcing that, since everything previously written about the emotions is worthless, he will write as if »I were dealing with a subject that no one before me had ever considered« (vol. 3, p. 951-952). Descartes begins his treatise by explaining that the term featured in his title, *passion*, the then dominant designation of a feeling, should be changed: he suggests »les sentiments« (vol. 3, p. 962) as a replacement, but explains that he prefers to say »les émotions de l'âme« because this term suggests that the feelings »agitate and shake [the soul] with great force« (vol. 3, p. 974).

Descartes situates his discussion of affective terminology in a scientific, in particular a medical context (vol. 3, p. 956), a context entirely appropriate for »émotion«, then commonly used as a synonym for »fever«. Next, he justifies his preference for »emotion« because of the term's connotation of »powerful agitation and upheaval in the soul« (vol. 3, p. 962). In this, he is faithful to the etymological roots of the term »émotion«. In both French and English, the term's primary meaning in the mid-seventeenth century was that of political or social agitation. An »émotion populaire« meant a political uprising with popular origins. Then, in both countries, in mid-century the term was transferred from the political to the affective realm. Thus, in the two nations for which the seventeenth century was marked by uprisings and revolts, the Civil Wars and the Glorious Revolution in England and the Fronde in France, the modern language of the emotions was explicitly generated from this spirit of political sedition. In its initial, Cartesian concept, »emotion«, the central term in our modern affective vocabulary in English connoted a form of inner turmoil as threatening as a popular uprising. Furthermore, since the Fronde had broken out only the year before Descartes published his *Passions de l'âme*, his attempt to shift the word »émotion« from the body politic to the body personal would have been perceived by his first public with the full force of its revolutionary implications.

Can this threatening conjuncture alone explain the totally different fate of »emotion« in French and in English? In England, no one tried to introduce »emotion« in that most revolutionary of years, 1649. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word is first transferred to the affective realm, in 1660, the year that Charles II and his English court returned to England from their exile in France. This shift in meaning could be seen as one way of burying the threat of political sedition. Indeed, it was as if a word could ward off political emotions: »emotion« quickly took root in England and was launched on the course that led it to become the central term of modern affective vocabulary. In French, on the other hand, Descartes' overt attempt to revolutionize the emotions was a virtual dead end. In his wake, his suggested use of »emotion« was only rarely adopted; late 17th-century dictionaries show barely a trace of its transfer from the

realms of politics and medicine to that of feeling. Even today, »émotion« used as a synonym for feeling is generally the last definition to be included in French dictionaries. At no time has the term been the primary French affective term.

Even if Descartes' innovative attempt ultimately proved to be a failure, he did strike a definitive blow against the word »passion«, which, during the century after his treatise's publication, gradually faded in French. Furthermore, Descartes had succeeded in bringing into the open something that was, as the decades to follow would ever more incessantly prove, a widely perceived need – much as in our century, current work in emotions may well have come out of work by the Annales school from 1950 on.

In the final years of the Fronde and especially in the post-Fronde years, the modern affective revolution began in earnest. In its most striking departure from Cartesian theory and from other prior visions, for the first time in French the emotions are no longer portrayed as revolutionary forces, as an upheaval in the soul. During the second phase, all the terminology being tried out was initially without medical connotations.

The replacements for »émotion« acquired medical significance only once their implantation in the psychological realm had been assured. This uncharted emotional terminology subsequently became essential to the innovative view of medicine that was then being developed – to such an extent that it seems inconceivable that the new language, along with the dramatically revised vision of the emotions' functioning that it introduced, did not determine to a significant extent the way in which the new medicine was defined. Then, once the bond between psychology and medicine had been re-established, the new view of feelings and the new view of medicine triumphed together and forged a powerful force at the Enlightenment's origin. According to Cartesian theory, an encounter with passion is in essence not only a solitary experience but a painful or at least a not overtly pleasurable one: the emotions shake and unsettle the souls of those who feel them. The words tried out in Descartes' wake are, without exception, relational, and the new emotional experience is always described in terms of a shared experience between subject and object, an experience that enlarges the subject's affective capacity. Indeed, by the time this vocabulary had succeeded in replacing all previous possibilities in French, the emotional experience is even conceived in terms of a mutual influence between subject and object. This move away from solitary upheaval is the second phase's most important innovation: more than any other quality, the emphasis on shared experience characterizes the modern reinvention of the emotions.

In view of this new balance of powers, it is appropriate that the entire second phase should have unfolded under the guidance, no longer of a philosopher, but of a novelist, Madeleine de Scudéry. Indeed, in the development of her two ten-volume novels – *Artamène* (1649-1653) and *Clélie* (1654-1660) – the reader can virtually watch Scudéry presiding over this vast transformation. In *Artamène's* initial volume, which appeared the same year as Descartes' treatise, Scudéry stakes out the same territory as Descartes, and she even tries out the same new term, »emotion«.

By the time Scudéry inaugurated her next novel five years later, her work with the emotions had become enormously more complex. In fact, it is evident from *Clélie's* initial volume that the process that led to the modern French language of the emotions was

by now well under way. By far the term most visibly displayed throughout the volume is *sentiment*. Scudéry thus features a word transferred from the domain of the head to that of the heart – »*sentiment*«'s then dominant meaning was »an opinion.« She uses the term as a vehicle for the exploration of the vocabulary and the affective space connected with a wide range of emotions.

It would be all too easy to overlook this generalized exploration in *Clélie*, in view of the affective territory for which the novel is best known, Scudéry's attempt to dissect one emotion in particular: love – its origins, its development, and its effects. Here, her analysis takes a form so striking that it has always blinded readers to the full scope of Scudéry's involvement with the emotions. I have in mind the best known scene in early French prose fiction, the staging of the *Carte de Tendre*, or map of an imaginary land named Tenderness (fig. 1). Scudéry's decision to map the emotions, or at least the emotions related to love, can be seen as the most decisive moment in the French reinvention of the human heart. With this gesture, the century's best selling novelist made all those who held sway over the evolution of French taste and sensibility aware of the semantic revolution then taking shape. The novel was translated all over Europe, and you can still hear her voice in English women novelists of the early 19th century. A true cultural cartography, the *Carte de Tendre* functions at the same time as evidence of semantic drift and as early warning signal of a major shift in *mentalité*. Scudéry's map of Tenderness is as important in its own right as the Cartesian *cogito*. In its wake, no French speaker would ever be able to conceive of feeling in the same way again. I truly mean this in view of the recent backlash against Descartes – with Antonio Damasio for example – it might even be possible that this could be recognized in our *fin de siècle*.

The *Carte de Tendre* scene is staged as if to echo Descartes' message that everything previously written on this subject is useless. Several young friends are discussing what they feel for others and what these feelings should be called – *amour*? *amitié*? *tendresse*? Aronce declares that they should ask Clélie to sort things out because she »is able to talk about them better than anyone ever has« (p. 390). Clélie herself agrees with this assessment and explains why – in terms that uncannily prefigure the basic formula used by the playwright and novelist Marivaux, the early Enlightenment aesthetic philosopher Du Bos, and all the sentimental theoreticians active by the early 18th century – »it's because my heart taught me how to talk this way; it's never difficult to say what one feels« (p. 390). The importance of this sentence cannot be overestimated – it is one of the first clear signs that the heart was being chosen to replace the soul as the site of the emotions.

Scudéry's mapping of the emotions for the post-seditious age thus definitively establishes the heart as their control center. Her cartography also establishes the emotional hierarchy that is evident in all the new vocabulary: love is without contest the central emotion; it is defined by distinguishing it from friendship; other emotions find a place only in relation to these two. Like Descartes, Scudéry's first objective is to find a replacement for *passion*, in particular in its function as a synonym for »love«: she hesitates between two idiosyncratic options, and ends up promoting a term that has long since virtually been written out of the history of the emotions, but that was for decades in the aftermath of *Clélie* in English as well as in French the dominant synonym for amorous

affection, *tendresse*. One of the map's primary functions is to link *tendre* and *tendresse* to more familiar affective terminology. To do so, Scudéry invented a technique, a type of semantic clustering, subsequently used by all those who continued her reinvention of the emotions. In clustering, new words are first linked to already familiar terms and then to each other, and finally each use of a new term is contextualized within a piling up of related vocabulary both old and new. As a result of clustering, these reinvented linguistic emotions were able to circulate in French well before their initial appearances traditionally have been dated by scholars. A writer who wanted to integrate the innovative vocabulary but was afraid that its meaning might not be accessible to readers could cluster together related terminology so that the simple accumulation could suggest connotations for the new usage. And, once literary figures had put the new emotional vocabulary into active circulation, a rather strange breed of medical theoreticians – whose work should probably be situated somewhere between medicine and the most scientifically inclined psychology – took the rewriting of the emotions initiated by Descartes and Scudéry to its logical conclusion both in medicine and in psychology. The influence was felt first in the domain of medicine, where the new emotional structure with all its ramifications played an essential role in the most fundamental shift in medical philosophy in the early modern period.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, the basic theory governing medicine's view of the body was revolutionized. At this time, the process was initiated by which medicine ceased viewing illness as tumultuous agitation, as upheaval within the bodily space – as *émotion* – and began instead to view the body as more interactive, both inside and outside its space. The new medicine was a medicine based on attraction – of one organ for another, of one body for another; it was a medicine of fibers and of nerves. The medicine of *émotion* was being supplanted by the medicine of *sentiment*, tenderness or *sensibilité*. By the end of the process, illness was portrayed, no longer as the result of excessive violence, but as the result of excessive feeling. The new medicine, like the new emotionality, like the new literature created in Scudéry's wake, was governed by the moral philosophy of *sensibilité*.

Like Scudéry's affective cartography, the new medicine attributed increasing centrality to the role of the heart. In this respect, it was participating in one of the age's major cultural enterprises, the process by which, simultaneously in several different domains, an image was constructed that portrayed the heart as the principle control center of various manifestations of interiority. Here's a very quick look at two of these cardiac constructions:

In June 1675, a French nun, Marguérite-Marie Alacoque, had a vision of Christ. He appeared as the Sacred Heart, that is, displaying his heart as burning »because it has loved men so much«, and he asked the young nun to establish a cult devoted to the veneration of his heart (Le Brun, p. 33). Alacoque was so successful in honoring this request that the entire tradition in modern Catholicism of devotion to the Sacred Heart is commonly said to have originated with her efforts.

Devotion to Christ as divine incarnation of the loving heart had existed, of course, at earlier periods. In 1675, however, there were clear indications that the way had been

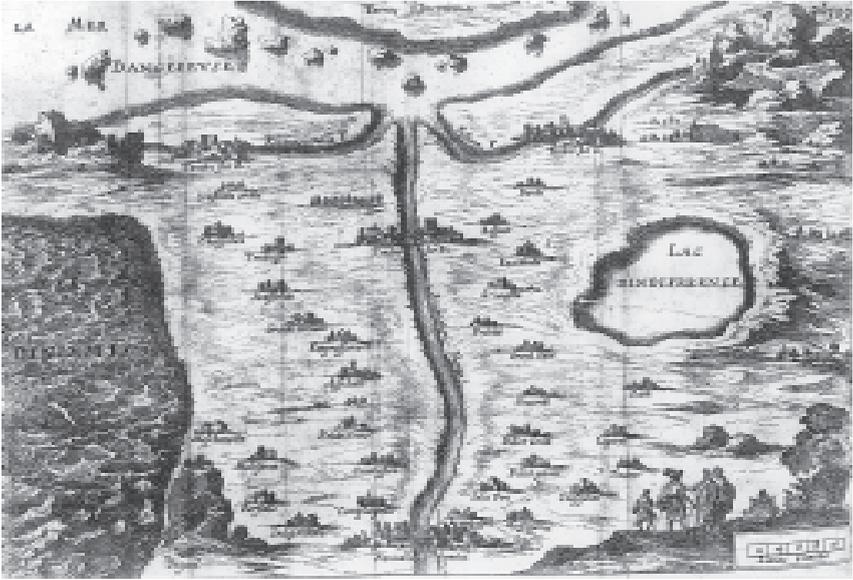


Fig. 1: La Carte de Tendre.
From: Clélie. Histoire romaine par Madeleine de Scudéry
(10 vols. Paris: Augustin Courbé) (1654-1660).

prepared for a true spiritual movement centered on Christ's humanity and in particular on his interior life. The same cultural climate that created the need for a new affective vocabulary and a revised vision of emotional structure similarly deflected the course of 17th-century spirituality onto the terrain of personal interiority. The modern tradition of devotion to the Sacred Heart was made possible by the surrounding atmosphere of heightened affectivity as much as its initial flowering contributed to the contemporary emotional outpouring. *Sensibilité* and the image of divine interiority can be considered parallel cultural constructions. A third image of the heart was also constructed in the course of the 17th century. William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood in 1626 was the foundation of our modern scientific anatomical vision of the heart. In Harvey's wake, a crucial period was inaugurated, as a result of which, by about 1670, by the time Scudéry completed her project and just after Alacoque had the vision of the Sacred Heart – a vast amount of new knowledge had become available about both the circulation of the blood and the structure of the heart. The key research was carried out in England, but new discoveries were quickly made available in France – mostly in Latin and also in translation so this information circulated outside the scholarly community as well. The 17th-century medical heart, or at least the vision of it that filtered down to a broad audience – the heart as the control center for the circulation of the blood; the heart as pulsing mass of »movements«, nerves, and fibers – this heart was the perfect scientific counterpart to both the sentimental heart, site of new emotions, and the devotional heart, guiding principle of spiritual life.

The convergence of discourse from domains as radically different as cardiology and mysticism guaranteed that the heart would be promoted as universal metaphor for interiority. In the final analysis, the heart was the only representation of interiority desired by the nascent age of *sensibilité*.

More clearly than any other text, Charles Perrault's *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes* illustrates the heart's unrivalled status in the late 17th century as cultural pivot able to facilitate connections among various discourses. In the *Parallèle* – the work that truly launched the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, and a founding text for the Enlightenment, the work in which, for example, the first major formulation of the doctrine of progress is laid out – Perrault claimed that the clearest proof that Moderns were superior to their Ancient counterparts was offered by their superior knowledge of both the medical heart and the heart that had been constructed to represent the new interiority.

Just as anatomy has discovered in the heart valves, fibers, and movements of which the ancients had no knowledge, in the same manner moral philosophy has discovered attractions, aversions, desires and repulsions unknown to the ancients.²

By the time Perrault proposed this comparison in 1688, he was surely aware that anatomy and moral philosophy were already collaborating in the creation of a new vision of medicine. The work that first makes clear both this emerging conception of medicine and its dependency on the revision of emotionality is Guillaume Lamy's treatise *Explication mécanique et physique des forces de l'âme sensitive, des sens, des passions, et du mouve-*

ment volontaire (1678). Part scientific treatise, part psychological speculation, Lamy's treatise is typical of the new type of French medical text. Note his definition of the »sensitive heart«:

We have to realize that the sensitive soul perceives its objects; that it leans toward them, or turns away from them, according to whether or not they are attractive to it; and that it moves the body either to unite with these objects or to reject them. (p. 4-5)

Note first of all the new relation between the heart and sensitivity or sensibility. No longer simply the passive receptor of sensory impressions, »the sensitive heart« is now portrayed in an active role: it »perceives its objects«; »it leans toward them«. Note also that this perception, true to the nascent medicine of *sensibilité*, is a drama of multiple levels of attraction. Finally, as Lamy soon makes clear, this »qualité sensible« is a two-way street: we are moved and therefore formed in a certain way by the object of our emotions, and that object, in turn, »is shaped« so as to move us (p. 11-13). Thus, Lamy lays the foundation for the most radically relational definition of the emotions yet, the first definition that allows us to understand how the reinvented emotionality could become the basis for a new vision of human subjectivity, a vision that, in turn, would prove to be the origin of the modern »science« of psychology.

All these definitions are firmly in place when, in 1704, Father Etienne-Simon de Gamaches published his *Système du cœur*. In this work, Gamaches finally completes the affective reinvention initiated by Descartes and Scudéry. At his work's center is an extended theory of the functioning of *sensibilité* that demonstrates that it is precisely because the new emotions are relational, according to Scudéry's directive, that the fundamental Cartesian distinction between the real world and the perceived world is essential to their comprehension. According to what Gamaches terms »the law of reciprocal commerce« (p. 250), »if external objects seem to us to be adorned with affective qualities (*qualités sensibles*), this is the case because [...] we attribute to them the different impressions that they make on us, or the different feelings (*sentiments*) that they awaken in us by their presence« (p. 178-179).

Gamaches's »system of the heart« is in effect an extended demonstration of how we transform the objects of our desire by our desire for them, and of how we are likewise transformed by these objects and by the displacement of our desire. The emotionality of *sensibilité* exists solely in the world of perceptions – and, furthermore, to the extent to which we are what we feel, we, too, are constructions of perceptions. It is a logical result of the attraction theory that subjectivity would be implicitly defined as a process of mutual attraction: we become ourselves in the eye of the other and through the other's perception and that perception »originates« in our perception of the other.

Perceived or imagined selves housed inside imaginary bodies – such was the long-term legacy of this process which unfolded over some sixty years. In it, medicine was only slightly out of step with the realignment initiated by moral philosophers as a result of which perception came to dominate reality in their sphere: just a few years behind psychology, medicine, aided and abetted by the new affective terminology, was increas-

ingly focusing attention on what could be termed perceived bodies, that is, bodily images or fictions that became, rather than any actual bodies, the site of medical speculation or theorizing. I would never argue that the perceived body as a concept was invented by late 17th-century medicine – each medical theory more or less successfully conceals its own fiction of the body within its speculation. The perceived body that allowed the school of medical *sensibilité* to flourish represents, however, a special case. To begin with, this fiction of the body as dominated by nerves and fibers and the »sensitive« interaction between like-minded parts was more intensely personified than other such images. Another contemporary medical commentator, Henry de Boulainvillier speaks, for example, of the »secret sympathies« that cause one organ »to take pleasure« in another (vol. 2, p. 253). In addition, because it was totally dependent for its existence upon a vocabulary created by moral philosophy, this perceived body was by its very nature far more open to speculation and the different projections of *mentalité* that had created it than is usually the case with such medical fictions. Theoreticians from domains as diverse as psychology and philosophy had a far greater investment in the sensitive body than in its precursors, as treatises such as those by Lamy and Gamaches prove. As a result, the sensitive body was endowed with more interiority, with more affect than other medical fictions of the body.

By the time this half-century of linguistic creativity was over, the language and the constructions of *sensibilité* were fully operational. The emotions would never have been reinvented in French without a number of intense complicities, in particular that between scientific and moral discourses. As I retraced the history of these complicities, I became convinced that the common thread binding the reinvention of the emotions to contemporary scientific revisions to contemporary changes in the literary world was that these were all individual scenes in a drama with truly vast implications: this same period witnessed at the very least a radical redefinition of subjectivity – a redefinition so radical that it might be more correctly termed the invention or the formation of what we think of today as subjectivity.

In the case of the affective revolution, it is crucial to note that the development of a culture of interiority did not, as Habermas' influential theory claims, have primarily English and bourgeois origins. The wide-scale implantation of the new interiority in domains from medicine to literature was perhaps the most impressive of all Modern victories in the French conflict between the Ancients and the Moderns. This means that, interiority's initial class politics were far more varied, more aristocratic in particular, than is generally recognized. It also means that gender politics played a dominant role in the creation of the culture of interiority. In addition, because this culture first came into its own in the shadow of a *fin de siècle*, those gender politics were more intensely convoluted than has been the case at any time between the 1690s and our current sexually complicated decade. In a variety of ways, the developments that culminated in the creation of modern subjectivity were vastly more tumultuous and unsettling than the relatively tranquil image of a bourgeois desire for privacy has led us to expect.

I would argue that it is in literature that the gender politics of the new interiority become most evident. In Lafayette's novel *La princesse de Clèves*, published the same year as

Lamy's treatise on the sensitive heart, the 17th-century construction of the heart first came into its own in literature. The novel makes the construction synonymous with a woman's discovery of her self – that is, with her discovery of her emotions. Because of the generic role played by Lafayette's novel, this discovery of the emotions as an inherently female process can be said to be at the origin of the modern novel. In addition, the affective exploration that Lafayette built into the center of her work can be said to inscribe in complex fashion, at the origin of the novel, the bond between women and the sentimental that became such a commonplace of cultural thought in the 18th century.

In key scenes of the novel, we watch as the princess acquires, truly in slow motion, affective depth. And, each step of the way, the narrator names the discovery, the newly charted place on the map of her heart – for example, at the end of an important interior monologue of the ties that bind her to the man she secretly loves, the duke of Nemours, the princess suddenly puts a name to what has been troubling her: »It was jealousy.« In effect, Lafayette equated the acquisition of a space for interiority, the acquisition of a heart, with the acquisition of an increased emotional range. Her novel further suggests not only that the acquisition of increased interior range is an inherently female concern, but that this acquisition is the essential measure of subjectivity. Lafayette's novel can therefore be seen as an inaugural moment in the tradition of speculation that became widespread by the early decades of the 18th century – in which the key question asked was whether women, to the extent to which they were more knowledgeable in the new language of the heart, were therefore not only the best judges of the new subjectivity, but also the fullest, the most complete, modern subjects.

This first modern crisis in subjectivity forces us to return to the eternally vexed question central to the relation between words and things: can, as Lafayette's novel implies, phenomena exist before the words to describe them? In this case, we must ask if the French *felt* differently once they had access to *émotion*, *sentiment*, and *sensibilité*. Evidence from domains as disparate as medicine, literature, and theology indicates that either this was the case, or at the very least that individuals became able, as we would now say, to access previously unrecorded affective possibilities.

No sooner was its construction completed, indeed, than it seemed as if nothing could stop the spread of the image of the heart as the full measure of identity. From the first classic of *sensibilité*, Anne Bellinzani Ferrand's *Histoire des amours de la jeune Bélise et de Cléante* (1689) to Gamache's »system of the heart« (1704), in which *sensibilité* is pronounced »the foundation of all the qualities we want to find in others« (p. 52), to the first novel of *sensibilité*'s most nuanced portraitist ever, Pierre Carlet de Marivaux, *Les Effets surprenant de la sympathie* (1713-1714) – by the end of the period that witnessed the rewriting of the emotions, it was widely accepted that, in the emotional exchange that was the essence of the affective revolution, each sensitive heart recognized simultaneously its own emotions and those of its partner heart. This was the dream of transparency, an idealized vision of identity politics according to which perfect self-knowledge was synonymous with perfect knowledge of the other, this was the dream whose wide dissemination helped the French across the first *fin-de-siècle* divide.

It may be possible to conclude from the *fin de siècle's* fascination with what Scudéry termed »anatomies of the amorous heart« that it was an age like ours, desirous of interiority and engaged in the collective creation of an obsession with affective precision because it was terrified of emotional emptiness, of the possibility that many people who resemble Lafayette's princess of Clèves existed – individuals not fully in touch with their hearts and so frozen by affective paralysis that they only realize what they are/were feeling after the fact. No matter what its origin, once it had been implanted, the desire for interiority did not disappear, even in the face of the triumph of other forces originally more commonly associated with the Enlightenment project, such as reason and progress. Indeed, just as *sensibilité* was reaching its full glory in Marivaux's novels of the 1730s, commentators were already beginning, by complaining that the French no longer had a heart, to reveal a longing for a resurgence of emotionality. I will close with the example of René-Louis de Voyer, Marquis d'Argenson, who in his *Essais* (1736) records a dire vision of a nation increasingly dominated by individuals who no longer value the heart:

The heart is a faculty of which we are depriving ourselves more every day because we do not use it, and all the while we are sharpening our minds and wits (l'esprit) [...] Today, we are losing that most beautiful part of ourselves that is called *sensibilité*. Love, and the need to love, are disappearing from the earth [...] This is what I observe in those of my age and those born after me. The heart is being overcome by paralysis.

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Notes

- 1 This article reproduces the text of a lecture given at the Einstein Forum in Potsdam in June 1999. A more detailed version of this material is included in: DeJean, Joan: *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin-de-Siècle*. Chicago 1997. I thank the University of Chicago Press for the permission to reproduce parts of the chapter »A Short History of the Human Heart«.
- 2 Perrault, Charles: *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes, en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences*. Paris 1688-97, vol. 2 1692, p. 29-30.