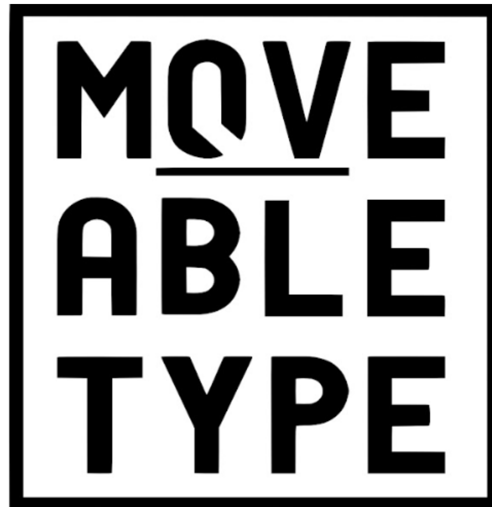

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"But within are secrets': Space in Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *The Changeling*'

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‘But within are secrets’: Space in Thomas Middleton and William Rowley’s *The Changeling*

Laura Thorn

> Serious-minded people may then say with the poet, ‘It’s a marquetry casket, and that’s all.’ Echoing this reasonable opinion, the reader who is averse to playing with inversions of large and small, exterior and intimacy, may also say: ‘It’s a poem and that’s all.’ ‘And nothing more.’ In reality, however, the poet has given concrete form to a very general psychological theme, namely, that there will always be more things in a closed, than in an open, box. To verify images kills them, and it is always more enriching to *imagine* than to *experience*.[1]

In his analysis of spatial imagery in poetry, Gaston Bachelard calls attention to the suggestiveness of an enclosed space that has not been opened yet. Using what he calls ‘topoanalysis’, he uses spaces and especially ‘the house as a *tool for analysis* of the human soul’.[2] *The Changeling* is a play full of enclosed spaces, many of which are strongly guarded. The reasons for this secrecy, however, are often complicated.

The play begins by a church outside Vermandero’s castle where Alsemero falls in love with Beatrice-Joanna. When she asks her father to grant Alsemero access to the castle, he replies:

> VERMANDERO With all my heart, sir.
> Yet there’s an article between: I must know
> Your country. We use not to give survey
> Of our chief strengths to strangers; our citadels
> Are placed conspicuous to outward view,
> On promonts’ tops, but within are secrets.[3]

From the very first scene, the ‘conspicuous’ exterior and the ‘secrets’ ‘within’ an enclosed space are set up as opposites which subsequently run throughout the play. Alsemero does not take his decision to enter the castle lightly: ‘How shall I dare venture in his castle | When he discharges murderers at the gate?’ He decides, ‘I must on, for back I cannot go’ (I. 1. 215-17), which sets off a series of inward movements from the open outdoors into the depths of the castle.

By considering the historical and metaphorical space of the closet as well as the textual space of the book, this essay will explore how spaces and the secrets that are contained within them function dramatically in *The Changeling,* and how Middleton and

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[1] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space,* trans. by Maria Jolas (New York: Penguin Books, 1958), p.108.

[2] Ibid., pp. 30, 21.

[3] Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling,* ed. by Michael Neill (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2006), I. 1. 152-58. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

Rowley's use of space takes part in wider discussions about concepts of space and privacy in the early modern period. The analysis rests on the premise that space has a social dimension. Henri Lefebvre argues that '*(Social) space is a (social) product*': 'in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power'.[4]

In a 2006 article, Donald Hedrick and Bryan Reynolds identified a conceptual shift in the understanding of place and space during the early modern period. With the onset of the Scientific Revolution, the idea of place departed from the Aristotelian notion of a local 'abstraction of containment', which in combination with Christian theology often granted places specific powers, towards an idea of place that is 'a mere location on the expanse of a grid' of infinite space which can be as expansive as the imagination allows.[5] This caused an anxiety of 'placelessness'. Hedrick and Reynolds identify this anxiety in *The Changeling,* particularly in the final scene in which De Flores and Beatrice-Joanna are in the closet: 'whatever happens there in effect happens in no place, unseen to the audience, so that undefinition of infinite space ultimately prevails'.[6]

At the same time as the concept of space shifted, England also saw major architectural change. During 'The Great Rebuilding' between 1570 and 1640, the manor house became separated from the surrounding communities, larger living spaces were divided into individual rooms and galleries, and a new kind of room – the closet – became popular in domestic spaces.[7] The closet was a small room which had a range of different functions. The *OED* lists a variety of uses for the term, including a 'space devoted to private study or speculative thought', 'a private chapel', 'a repository of curiosities' and 'a hidden or secret place, […] a place in which to hide, or in which to conceal something, esp. a secret'.[8] These varying functions of the closet depended on the user's social status and gender. Not only did closets contain secrets, but they were often also themselves hidden inside walls, at the centre of houses or in basements.[9]

In her study on boxes in the early modern period, Lucy Razzall argues that it is important to study the material environment depicted in literature, especially the various forms of containers:

> Containers and receptacles are important because they are associated with so many human activities, including 'opening, closing, pouring, filling, emptying, wrapping,

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[4] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p.26.

[5] Donald Hedrick and Bryan Reynolds, 'I Might Like You Better If We Slept Together: The Historical Drift of Place in *The Changeling*', in *Transversal Enterprises in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries,* ed. by Reynolds (London: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 112-123 (p.122). See also, Koen Vermeir and Jonathan Regier, 'Boundaries, Extents and Circulations: An Introduction to Spatiality and the Early Modern Concept of Space', in *Boundaries, Extents and Circulation:. Space and Spatiality in Early Modern Natural Philosophy,* ed. by Vermeir and Regier (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), pp. 1-32 (p. 9): 'And the less material a place was, the more powerful. This meant that incorporeal places were more powerful than the physical objects inside them. Objects therefore got their power to a great extent from the places they occupied in a hierarchised cosmos.'

[6] Hedrick and Reynolds, p. 122.

[7] Melissa Auclair, 'Coming into the Closet: Spatial Practices and Representations of Interior Space', *Shakespeare* 13.2 (2017), 147-154 (p. 148).

[8] 'closet', in *OED Online*. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/34625?rskey=ZnlVET&result=1&isAdvanced=false>[accessed March 15, 2023].

[9] Alan Stewart, 'The Early Modern Closet Discovered', *Representations* Spring 50 (1995), 76-100 (p. 80).

> regulating, maintaining the envelope or the limits, removing the blockages that prevent the transit of substances, mending leaks, forming a queue'[10]

Bachelard interprets the poetic image of 'small boxes, such as chests and caskets' as 'very evident witnesses of the *need for secrecy*, of an intuitive sense of hiding places'.[11]

Scholars have associated the privacy that spaces like the closet created with an increase of individual subjectivity, which could be observed around the same time. Mark Girouard, for example, has argued that the closet constituted the only space where people could be entirely on their own. Others however, including Patricia Fumerton, have refuted this idea, asserting that 'privacy could never be achieved'.[12] Mary Thomas Crane offers an alternative reading, suggesting that privacy was most likely attained outdoors. Open-air spaces, such as cultivated gardens, resisted an absolute distinction between indoors and outdoors. She speaks of an 'exteriority' or even "outdooriority" of the self' that relocates private and especially illicit activities to the outdoors.[13] In her analysis of Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania,* Helen Hackett sees Pamphilia's withdrawal to her closet or to secluded places in nature as a prerequisite for her literary activity. The 'creation of an intellectually and socially respectable persona for a female writer' ultimately leads to 'the enabling of psychological interiority and subjectivity' in the heroine.[14]

Like other texts of its time, including some by Lady Mary Wroth and Margaret Cavendish, *The Changeling* is interested in questions of privacy and, particularly, how privacy should be reflected in domestic spaces. However, early modern understandings of the terms 'private' and 'public' differed from their usage now.

> [W]e should understand the public sphere in the sixteenth century principally in terms of office-holding. […] It is this sense of the public which defines its opposite, the private, not so much in the specific economic terms of private possession as in the broader social terms of an absence of public duties and responsibilities.[15]

'Public' thus does not necessarily denote the opposite of 'domestic' but is mainly defined through its association with official duty, implying that the 'public' was not exempt from private households. In fact, closet activities are sometimes described as acts of 'public privacy': The closet is 'a place of utter privacy, of total withdrawal from the public sphere of the household – but it simultaneously functions as a very public gesture of withdrawal, a very public sign of privacy'.[16] The early modern house, through its 'semi-public nature',

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[10] Lucy Razzall, *Boxes and Books in Early Modern England: Materiality, Metaphor, Containment* (Cambridge: University Press, 2021), p. 13.

[11] Bachelard, p. 102.

[12] Stewart, pp. 80-81.

[13] Mary Thomas Crane. 'Illicit Privacy and Outdoor Spaces in Early Modern England', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 9.1 (2009), 4-22 (pp. 5, 17).

[14] Helen Hackett, 'A book, and solitariness': Melancholia, Gender and Literary Subjectivity in Mary Wroth's *Urania*', in *Renaissance Configurations: Voices, Bodies, Spaces, 1580-1690,* ed. by Gordon McMullan (New York: Palgrave, 1998), pp. 83, 64.

[15] Neil Rhodes, 'Versions of the Common', in *Common: The Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 3-27 (pp. 14-15).

[16] Stewart, p. 81.

adopted an increasingly public nature in which the microcosmic home mirrored the macrocosmic state, ultimately becoming 'an index for an ordered State'.[17]

In many ways, the indoor spaces of *The Changeling,* especially the castle in the main plot and the madhouse in the sub-plot, are paradigmatic early modern domestic spaces which also invite thoughts on contemporary debates surrounding these spaces. When Alsemero enters the castle, he is provided with a closet. This private space is mirrored by Lollio's wardrobe in the sub-plot. In the first production of *The Changeling* at the Cockpit/ Phoenix theatre, a small indoor theatre in London, both the wardrobe and the closet would have probably been represented by the same discovery space at the end of the stage or by the same stage-door, further connecting the two enclosed spaces in performance.[18]

Alsemero's closet is an important space in the play, being both the site of the virginity test in scene 4.1 and the room where Beatrice-Joanna and De Flores are locked up at the end. Even though critics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been somewhat ill at ease with the virginity test, it is central in the context of early modern discussions about the role and allocation of privacy in the early modern household.[19] Alone in Alsemero's closet, Beatrice describes her surroundings:

> BEATRICE here's his closet,
> The key left in't, and he abroad i'th'park –
> Sure, 'twas forgot; I'll be so bold as look in't.
> Bless me! A right physician's closet 'tis.
> Set round with vials, every one her mark too.
> Sure he does practise physic for his own use,
> Which may be safely called your great man's wisdom.
> (IV. 1. 17-23)

Noticing the medical equipment and its systematic placing, Beatrice-Joanna calls attention to the fact that this closet is being used by a man. Apart from their everyday work, men in the period were mainly depicted as using their closets for religious practice and scientific experiments. 'Indeed, private architectural spaces, reserved for the business of men, are given a special kind of prominence in Middleton and Rowley's play'.[20] This gendered use of the closet emphasises that Beatrice-Joanna is trespassing by being in Alsemero's closet. However, her understanding of medicine, which has been hinted at earlier in her conversation with De Flores when she offers to make him a 'water' to 'cleanse' 'the heat of the liver' (II. 2. 80-86), also implies that she has previous knowledge that is not necessarily considered typical of an aristocratic woman.

In Alsemero's closet, she discovers a book:

> BEATRICE: What manuscript lies here? *'The Book of Experiment,*
> *Called Secrets in Nature'* – so 'tis, 'tis so:
> 'How to know whether a woman be with child or no' –
> I hope I am not yet – if he should try though!

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[17] Robert W. Daniel and Iman Sheeha, 'Door-Bolts, Thresholds, and Peep-Holes: Liminality and Domestic Spaces in Early Modern England', *Early Modern Literary Studies,* 29 (2020), 1-8 (pp. 1-2).

[18] Neill, *The Changeling,* 92n44-47.

[19] Ibid., p. 110.

[20] Bruce Boehrer, 'Alsemero's Closet: Privacy and Interiority in *The Changeling*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 96.3 (1997), 349-368 (p. 356).

Let me see: folio forty-five – here 'tis,
The leaf tucked down upon't, the place suspicious:
[…]
Ha! That which is next, is ten times worse:
'How to know whether a woman be a maid, or not.'
If that should be applied, what would become of me?
Belike he has a strong faith of my purity,
That never yet made proof; but this he calls
'A merry sleight, but true experiment' –
The author 'Antonius Mizaldus'.

(IV. 1. 24-45)

The book seems to be a manuscript compilation owned by Alsemero. Although there is a text by the French scholar Antonius Mizaldus entitled *De Arcanis Naturae,* the content of this entry points more towards his *Centuriae IX. Memorabilium.*[21] Beatrice-Joanna opens this particular page because she finds 'the place suspicious'. This page is the culmination of her personal inward movement in the play, from the outdoors into the castle, into the closet, to the book and finally to this page and the texts it contains. Here, at the centre of these nesting enclosures, Alsemero has hidden his suspicion against women. His 'pretty secret', as he refers to it when talking to Jasperino, is his supposed ability to gain insight into women's secrets (IV. 2. 111).

Bruce Boehrer argues that the '"imagery of enclosure" lends geographical expression to masculine efforts to control the female body'.[22] In this play, the female body is fraught with secrets which must be concealed, both because their value is at stake and because they are perceived as dangerous. '[W]hat is hidden is at one moment a source of contamination that must be contained, and at another a treasure or "relique" that needs to be protected'.[23] In a trope deriving from medieval allegory, Beatrice-Joanna's body is figured as a castle to be conquered and closely associated with Vermandero's real castle.[24] When she falls in love with Alsemero, she immediately asks her father to grant Alsemero access. Conversely, the men who are in love with women in *The Changeling* seem to aspire to enclose them.

ALSEMERO My Joanna,
Chaste as the breath of heaven, or morning's womb
That brings the day forth, thus my love encloses thee!
[*Embraces her*]

(IV. 2. 147-50)

Alsemero describes Beatrice-Joanna as a 'womb', a spatial enclosure in herself, but he also thinks his 'love' encloses her in turn, possessing her and whatever secrets she may contain. Similarly, Alibius tells his love, 'In my arms and bosom, my sweet Isabella | I'll lock thee up most nearly' (IV. 2. 240-41). Keys symbolise 'significant practical control over domestic

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[21] Neill, *The Changeling,* 76n24-25.

[22] Boehrer, p. 356.

[23] Neill, '"Hidden Malady": Death, Discovery, and Indistinction in *The Changeling*', *Renaissance Drama* 22 (1991), 95-121 (p. 102).

[24] Neill, *The Changeling,* p. 9n68.

space'[25] and the ritualistic passing over of keys between men can be found both in the main plot when Alsemero asks Jasperino to fetch the test, and in the sub-plot of the play when Isabella is given the key to Lollio's wardrobe to change into the costume of a madwoman. Beatrice-Joanna only gains access to the closet because Alsemero has forgotten the key in the lock.

While Beatrice-Joanna's movement can be described as a relatively straightforward path towards interiority, De Flores' movement is more complicated. Early in the play, he is described as 'out of his place' (I. 1. 137). This is a reference to class: originally a 'gentleman', 'hard fate has thrust [him] out to servitude' (II. 1. 48-49). Sometimes, however, he is also more literally *out of place*. This is particularly obvious in the stage direction for the interval just after scene 2.2: '*In the act-time* Deflores *hides a naked rapier'*. This very unusual stage direction demonstrates De Flores' ability to move around the castle freely and even break out of the act-time and stage space in order to prepare his ensuing murder. As a private indoor theatre, the Cockpit/Phoenix would have had instrumental music during the act breaks, indicating that De Flores might have also broken the aural atmosphere of the interval.[26] Throughout the rest of the play, his spatial movements follow an inwards and downwards path towards locations of intimacy, ultimately transforming them into sites of violence.

De Flores uses his knowledge of the castle to lure Alonzo into a place where he can murder him, using the labyrinthine paths themselves to entice him: 'And if the ways and straits, | Of some of the passages be not too tedious for you, | I will assure you, worth your time and sight, my lord' (II. 2. 158-61). The 'ways and straits' of the castle foreshadow the mental 'labyrinth' Beatrice-Joanna finds herself in at a later point in the plot when she realises that De Flores will not be contented with money alone (III. 3. 72). The labyrinth is part of a series of motifs that invoke the labyrinth in Greek mythology which was built by Daedalus for King Minos of Crete to hold the Minotaur. The sub-plot uses the same reference in a more comical setting:

> [Antonio *falls*]
>
> ISABELLA He's down, he's down! What a terrible fall he had!
> Stand up, thou son of Cretan Daedalus,
> And let us tread the lower labyrinth;
> I'll bring thee to the clew.
>
> (IV. 3. 97-100)

Isabella's exaggerated reaction to Antonio's fall entangles Icarus' fall with Theseus' escape from the Labyrinth using the 'clew', a ball of thread given to him by Minos' daughter, Ariadne.[27] It could be speculated that the difference between the labyrinths of the main plot and the sub-plot is the lack of this guiding thread in the main plot, which might have helped the protagonists find their ways out of the labyrinth again.

Isabella employs language that emphasises the downward movement of the fall when she speaks of the 'lower labyrinth', repeats 'He's down, he's down' and stresses that the 'fall'

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[25] Razzall, p. 12.

[26] Lucy Munro, 'Changing Musical Practices in the Shakespearean Playhouse, 1620-42', in *Shakespeare, Music and Performance,* ed. by Bill Barclay and David Lindley (Cambridge: CUP, 2017), pp. 99-113 (p. 101).

[27] Neill, *The Changeling*, 95n100.

is 'terrible'. This imagery appears throughout the play: Franciscus, disguised as a madman, sings 'Down, down, down a-down a-down', and in the last scene Alsemero accuses Beatrice-Joanna: 'A ground you cannot stand on, you fall down | Beneath all grace and goodness' (IV. 3. 148 and V. 3. 45-46). The 'fall' recalls the Fall of Man, a Christian doctrine that is repeatedly referenced throughout the play. However, the fall is also interesting as a spatial downward movement. Hedrick and Reynolds have attempted to trace Beatrice-Joanna's moral movement, concluding that she progresses from 'a traditional moral movement of descent or decline' to a kind of 'morally *exploratory'* wandering in the later part of the play which links place to 'moral decay and ambiguity'.[28] While Beatrice-Joanna is falling both morally and mentally, De Flores leads Alonzo downwards into the depths of the castle, allowing us not only to explore the descent itself but also the space that can be found at the end of it.

In his analysis of the space of the house, Bachelard maps out the vertical polarity of cellar and attic:

> Indeed, it is possible almost without commentary, to oppose the rationality of the roof to the irrationality of the cellar. […] As for the cellar […] it is first and foremost the *dark entity* of the house, the one that partakes of subterranean forces.[29]

De Flores seems to be attuned to the 'irrationality of the cellar'. This is the place he chooses for the murder, putting himself in the spatial position of the Minotaur before committing his crime. He promises Alonso: 'My lord, I'll place you at a casement here | Will show you the full strength of all the castle' (III. 1. 16-17). A casement is a 'vaulted chamber built in the thickness of the ramparts of a fortress, with embrasures for the defence of the place'.[30] It is interesting that De Flores murders Alonzo in a room with a vaulted ceiling because, according to Bachelard, 'a vaulted ceiling […] is a great principle of the dream of intimacy. For it constantly reflects intimacy at its centre'.[31] De Flores chooses a room which is not only in the depths of the castle, but also spatially reflects back to him: he chooses a space of intimacy for his act of violence. This is repeated in Diaphanta's murder. After taking Beatrice-Joanna's place during the wedding night, Diaphanta stays too long in Alsemero's bed which leads Beatrice-Joanna and De Flores to set fire to her 'lodging chamber'. This pattern of connecting violence with intimate spaces could be seen as the spatial equivalent to Christopher Rick's 1960 reading of the double meanings of words such as 'act' and 'deed' which conflate the language of intimacy with violence.[32]

This fusion of spatial intimacy with violence seems to suggest a desire in De Flores, if not in the play, to disturb privacy and to uncover secrets through violence, making these intimate spaces very vulnerable. In the course of *The Changeling,* the role of the closet changes from a place that grants Alsemero privacy to the location of murder and potential rape. This could be seen as a reflection of the broader cultural change in the understanding of space that has been described earlier. Rather than holding power inherently through their enclosure, places are now merely a section of infinite space, defined through the

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[28] Hedrick and Reynolds, p. 117.

[29] Bachelard, p. 39.

[30] Neill, *The Changeling*, p.49n16.

[31] Bachelard, p. 45.

[32] Christopher Ricks, 'The Moral and Poetic Structure of *The Changeling', Essays in Criticism* 10 (1960), 290-306 (p. 299).

action that happens within them rather than their particular, local purpose. De Flores, as someone who is *out of place* from the outset, is able to make use of this, redefining places in ways that suit him. The consequence of this understanding of place is that spaces such as the closet which hold secrets are no longer inherently protected by their function.

This pattern of newly defining spaces and violently revealing their secrets does not only have architectural consequences but also leads to changes in the understanding of textual space and *The Changeling* as a printed play. These changes can be explored via the book found by Beatrice-Joanna in Alsemero's closet. It is a kind of commonplace book, 'a collection of recipes and remedies designed for household use, culled from various sources, and supplemented with the user's own observations', which was often called 'a closet'.[33] A popular format in the seventeenth century, titles include *The Queens Closet Opened* (1683), *The Closet of Sir Kenelm Digby Opened* (1669) and *The Accomplished Ladies Rich Closet of Rarities* (1687).

One early example is *The Treasury of commodious Conceits, and hidden Secrets: Commonly called The good Huswyves Closet of provision for the health of her housholde*, which was published anonymously in 1586. Although it is aimed at 'wives' and 'maydes', it shares several elements with Alsemero's book.[34] Like his miscellany, *The Treasury*'s subtitle claims that it is 'Gathered out of sundrye experyments, lately practised by men of great knowledge'. Alsemero too, wishes to develop a 'great man's wisdom' and is considered by Beatrice-Joanna to be a 'master of the mystery' (IV. 1. 38). *The Treasury* contains a variety of recipes, such as 'To make a conserve of Strawveries, with the vertue of the same'[35], which always include a purported special power. In his preface to the reader, the printer promises that this 'closet' will provide information about remedies for housewives, regardless of social status:

> Good Huswives here you have a Iewell for your ioy,
> A Closet meete your huswivery to practise and imploy.
> As well the gentles of degree, as eke the meaner sort,
> May practise here to purchase helth, their household to confort
> And as the proverbe proveth true, to remedy each griefe,
> Amonst the rest of Phisicks helps, the huswives help is chefe
> [...]
> Good medcines for present helth, in closet here you have
> To maintaine life, & keep ye yong the chefest thing ye crave[36]

The book claims to hold solutions to a wide variety of domestic issues. Not all of the printer's promises can actually be found in the book, however. Located between 'To keepe Damasines in sirop' and 'To make a Barren woman beare Children', there is 'To know

[33] Boehrer, p. 354.

[34] *The Treasury of commodious Conceits, and hidden Secrets. Commonly called The good Huswyves Closet of provision for the health of her housholde*, published by Henrye Car (London: 1586), sig. A2v.

[35] Ibid., sig. C7v.

[36] Ibid., A2v.

whether a woman shal ever conceive or not'.[37] This test, as unlikely to yield accurate results as Alsemero's virginity test, points towards a general trend of men attempting to reveal women's secrets through domestic experiments, even if the women themselves could not possibly know the answer. There are parallels between the exposure of women's secrets in closet books and the violent desecration of secret spaces in *The Changeling*.

Razzall argues that there was a very clear connection between the box in its various forms and the book 'as objects that each have the capacity to contain and enclose, and to open and reveal', exposing an early modern anxiety for these closet books to 'bring order to its content'.[38] One part of the attraction of the closet is that it claims to reveal secrets and Alan Stewart, who considers it to be a transactional space between men, concludes that, rather than keeping contents secret, 'the closet paradoxically draws attention to those relationships and transactions and marks them off as socially and even ethically problematic'.[39] The closet book is the textual equivalent of this popular early modern process of publicly establishing something as a secret and then revealing it.

As a result of this, intimate knowledge is no longer protected in the world of *The Changeling*, neither in the closet nor in the closet book. Beatrice-Joanna's appropriation of Alsemero's secrets leads Boehrer to conclude that *The Changeling* as a text is Beatrice-Joanna's book of secrets and that by publishing the play, Middleton and Rowley reveal her secrets in turn.[40] He argues that, unable to hold any physical private space, Beatrice-Joanna's 'sense of self settles in an alternate territory: that of the figurative enclosures generated by language itself'.[41] The many asides in the play are also a visual and psychological testament to Beatrice-Joanna's innermost thoughts. However, these linguistic and textual spaces holding Beatrice-Joanna's sense of self become ineffectual when *The Changeling* is read as her book of secrets. Not only is the content of the asides revealed in a published and performed text, but considering that the original printed text of 1653 did not mark the asides, Beatrice-Joanna's supposed subjectivity has been dependent on editors' and readers' interpretations since its first publication.[42] What is revealed in this book can at most be somebody else's interpretation of her subjectivity.

Unlike in other Elizabethan tragedies, Beatrice-Joanna's murder in the final scene is not seen by the audience. She dies in Alsemero's closet, the enclosed private space she herself opened when she explored his experiments and books. Her exclamations '(*Within*) 'Oh, oh!' (V. 3. 142) are ambiguous, being potentially sexual or violent. They once again conflate intimacy with violence, but this time there is no revelation of secrets. Returning to Bachelard and the closed box that contains more than the open box, the desire to reveal the enclosed space is ultimately relegated to the audience. Beatrice-Joanna's murder remains a dramatic closed box, a final enclosure that points towards its own secrecy but questions the wish to reveal what is hidden.

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[37] *The Treasury,* C8v. The instructions are: 'Take of the ruine of a Haire, and having frayed it and consumed the hote water give it the woman to drink in the morning at her breakfast, then let her stand in a hote bathe: if there come a greef or pain in her belly she may conceive: if not, she shall never conceive.'

[38] Razzall, pp. 20-21.

[39] Boehrer, p. 355. Stewart, p. 93.

[40] Ibid., p. 355.

[41] Ibid., p. 359.

[42] Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The changeling as it was acted (with great applause) at the Privat house in Drury-Lane, and Salisbury Court / written by Thomas Midleton, and William Rowley, Gent.*, printed for Humphrey Mosely (London: 1653).

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