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Jennifer Tamas, *Au* NON *des femmes: Libérer nos classiques du regard masculin*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2023. 336 pp. Appendix. €23.00 (pb). ISBN 9782021514292; €16.99 (eb) ISBN 9782021514308.

Review Essay by Rebecca Wilkin, Pacific Lutheran University

By zeroing in on the "no" of fictional female characters, Jennifer Tamas seeks to reinvigorate the study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French literature with the fire and fury of the #MeToo movement. She calls for a reset in established interpretations of classics—classics insofar as they have been staples of France's centralized education system (i.e. taught in class) and classics insofar as they were structured according to classical aesthetics (e.g. Aristotle's *Poetics*). Her aim is to spare these texts, their authors, and especially their heroines from cancelation by overzealous culture warriors on both sides of the Atlantic: feminists in France who, post #MeToo, see the celebration of a specifically French *galanterie* as cover for rape culture, and students and professors in the United States whose shame at the nation's segregationist past leads them to reduce the French seventeenth century "à une culture d'hommes blancs royalists dont l'enseignement serait superfétatoire" (p. 313, also p. 33). Tamas's response is to redefine these texts, authors, and heroines as immediately relevant, even urgently necessary, in the post #MeToo era. Her claim is that passive women are not a feature of original texts, but the result of a critical tradition in which "no," when uttered by women, means "yes" to male literary historians—or simply goes unregistered.

In the face of a person or system intent on compelling consent, saying "no" entails self-affirmation and courageous resistance.[1] Tamas's methodology thus involves reclaiming the "no" of female protagonists from centuries of distortion operated by "the male gaze" that Laura Mulvey theorized almost fifty years ago.[2] The purpose is to anchor the experiences of women of the present in a past that is familiar to a French public because taught in school. Tamas advocates for literary interpretation as a strategy of feminist recuperation: why write off culturally important texts, when you can "*lire autrement* et adopter un point de vue féministe" (p. 25, emphasis in Tamas)? Accordingly, in each chapter, Tamas turns a standard or commonplace interpretation on its head. The seventeenth-century ideal of *galanterie* was not rape culture, it offered a respite, co-created by women and men, from a culture in which rape was rampant. Little Red Riding Hood is not the wolf's helpless victim; by ingesting her grandmother's blood, she becomes a woman. The Beast does not coerce Belle; her consent is freely given. Andromaque is not passive; she practices passive resistance. Bérénice is not Titus's sad detritus; she is the grown-up in the room. *Dangerous Liaisons* is not a titillating libertine novel; it is a cautionary tale about the gamification of sex.

The boldness of Tamas's gesture—making a tabula rasa of past interpretations and starting over with "no" as a foundation of female agency—is reminiscent of another seventeenth-century French classic. Descartes threw out patched-up, worked-over arguments based on authority and riddled with prejudice in one fell swoop, and started the search for truth over with, at its base, the

unassailable intuition *cogito*, *sum*. Making the "no" of female protagonists the cogito of a new interpretive tradition is an arresting move conveying vitality and hope. With virtuosic versatility, Tamas connects classic works of French literature to political anecdotes, child sex-abuse scandals, and medical procedures to engage a literate French public in a rediscovery of the texts they thought they knew. Though I am an outsider to the educational system that Tamas seeks to reform and am not part of the "us" that is her intended audience, I identified with Tamas's passionate reflections on teaching in the North American context. *Au* NON *des femmes* raises important questions about how we decide which texts to teach, as well as about the political potential of literary interpretation.

Yet precisely as a result of my experience teaching in the United States, I came away from Tamas's book feeling uneasy, for two reasons. First, Tamas narrowly frames the feminist lens that she urges her readers to adopt. Keen to portray the feminist interpretation of classic works of French literature as a win-win situation for all women and for the classics, she is not up front about where the imperatives of improving the lives of women and rescuing French literature conflict. In my view, Tamas diminishes feminism in tailoring it to prove that "la littérature d'Ancien Régime mérite de trouver une place dans nos existences" (p. 261). That is, the feminism she calls upon to rescue Old Regime literature from cancelation is primarily concerned with affirming the agency of fictional women in the face of the fictional men who oppress them, in a "combat singulier" that eclipses structural affinities between the *patrimoine* she takes on and the *matrimoine* she advocates for (p. 26). The unintended consequence of a diminished (instrumentalized) feminism is that it can more easily be dismissed along with the body of literature it is summoned to defend—to my mind, a lose-lose situation. Second, the story of victimization and rescue that runs throughout the book—the rescuing of classics from cancelation; the liberation of female characters from the male gaze; the freeing of female readers from centuries of gaslighting by male critics—places us (professors of early modern French literature) in the reactionary position of fighting a culture war, when in reality our students' struggles (and therefore our professional precarity) result mostly from being on the receiving end of an impossible situation in which a college degree is both a matter of compulsory consumption and a privatized good. This is a quintessentially American problem, as Tamas points out, but since the audience for her book is a French public that has had strong opinions about so-called "political correctness" emanating from American campuses since the 1990s (then it was mostly about feminism, now it is mostly about #BlackLivesMatter), it seems important to emphasize that it's not cancelation we're facing over here. Cancelation implies controversy, even celebrity. What we face is oblivion due to perceived irrelevance: collapsing enrollments, dwindling majors, eliminated departments. Uplifting the relevance of early modern French literature for today's hot-button issues (as Tamas proposes we do with #MeToo) is one tried and true tool for meeting students where they are at. But it is not enough. We've been trying it since the 1990s. We need a different frame for thinking about how to make ourselves useful to our students. A *patrimoine* made over into a *matrimoine* is not it.

I. Feminism to the rescue

Tamas envisions her work as the recovery of a *matrimoine*—of a femino-centric cultural inheritance that has been suppressed in favor of a patriarchally constituted *patrimoine*—the inherited assets that we identify as having value and that we hand down to the next generation. As in all transfers of generational wisdom and wealth, students have every right to question what

their professors value, why they value it, and whether they want to hold on to it, build on it, or lighten their load to make room for something of greater value to them. Tamas thematizes this appraisal beautifully through her account of the controversy over the inclusion of Chénier's poem "L'oaristys" in 2020's *agrégation*, the national French test for obtaining a teaching post. She comments, "il semble qu'il ne soit plus possible aujourd'hui d'accepter l'esthétisation des viols comme s'ils n'étaient que des objets littéraires. Les étudiantes et les étudiants ne le veulent plus. La femme que je suis devenue ne le peut plus" (p. 47). For similar reasons, I stopped teaching *Les Liaisons dangereuses 1960*—"that swinger movie" (as one student described it) adapted by Roger Vadim from the novel that, Tamas insists, does not aestheticize rape. Low-angle camera work around the armchair in which Valmont (Gérard Philippe) coerces consent from Cécile (Jeanne Valérie)—rapes her—attributes a highly voyeuristic gaze to the audience and made my students far too uncomfortable to warrant inclusion in a J-Term course that was too packed anyway. Too bad: I loved the Thelonious Monk soundtrack.

And yet I'm not about to shelve Louise Dupin's *Work on Women*, which my collaborator Angela Hunter and I just spent ten years reconstructing from manuscripts, even though Dupin's opulence derived in part from her father's early investments in the Compagnie de Guinée, which trafficked in enslaved Africans.[3] My students were highly interested in Dupin's documentation of "himpathy" in her chapter on rape, but did not fail to notice that she celebrates the strength of "women in the colonies" who go back to work immediately after giving birth,[4] with nary a nod to the violence extracting that labor, reproductive or otherwise. Anyone who teaches Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve's elaborate telling of *Beauty and the Beast* (1740), which Tamas urges us to do, encounters similar tensions. It begins as a story of pilfered assets. A ship is waylaid then plundered by unscrupulous underlings, dashing promises of exotic riches for Belle's father. The provenance of the ship is unclear, and assuredly not all trade in the eighteenth century involved raw goods produced in the Caribbean through the regime of terror that was chattel slavery. Still, at the Beast's castle, Belle is entertained by parrots and an array of primates—*singes*, *magots*, and *guenons*—dressed as humans who act in plays and serve her. Through the riches that the Beast bestows on Belle's father, the family is relieved of domestic chores, as slaves—not servants—of unspecified origin now perform the everyday labor that is accomplished at the Beast's castle by magic.[5] "La littérature incarne souvent un contre-pouvoir au régime de croyances en place: elle représente un monde parallèle où hommes et femmes peuvent négocier d'autres rapports," Tamas observes (p. 134). Yes it does. And fantasies also recapitulate regimes of power. Villeneuve lived her early adult life in La Rochelle, one of the main ports of the *commerce triangulaire* that flourished on the backs of enslaved Africans. She thematizes consent with regard to sex, but not in relation to slavery, which according to Dupin's secretary (Jean-Jacques Rousseau), cannot by definition involve consent.[6]

By what criteria do we bracket aestheticized rape from a teachable *patrimoine* while inducting (would-be) beneficiaries of slavery into a long overdue *matrimoine*? In the epilogue to her book, Tamas acknowledged the need to reconsider French colonialism. "Pour guérir des blessures du passé, rien ne me semble plus efficace que d'offrir aux enfants d'immigrés—dont je suis—l'opportunité de comprendre d'où ils viennent" (p. 312). To refer children of immigrants to where they came from is to compartmentalize colonialism from feminism, as if their histories did not intertwine, and as if bettering the lives of women and people of color were distinct imperatives. To my students, the early modern French women authors I teach look very much like part of the *patrimoine*. And they are not wrong. The *matrimoine* did not bloom fresh and

pure like Belle's rose many magic miles away from the ship that her merchant father lost. Women's dependence on men and thus their investment in the patriarchy was a structural fact. Dupin deplores married women's legal and economic disenfranchisement in her chapter "On the Power of Husbands," yet her vision of the equality of women and men was tempered by a strong commitment to hierarchy of rank. As for Villeneuve, she was granted a *séparation de biens* (the early modern equivalent of a divorce) from her abusive husband, and then lived "by her pen," as they say,[7] after he died—the pinnacle of autonomy in the eyes of frazzled academics like myself. Yet this was no doubt a very hard life, and as we have seen, she fantasized domestic arrangements that included slave labor.

Tamas proposes to send feminism to the rescue of seventeenth-century French literature. The rescue squad must be up to the task. In *L'autre langue des femmes* (2021), Cameroonian author and essayist Léonora Miano rejects feminism as a feature of the "épistémicide interminable" unleashed by colonialism, accusing it of cutting the wings off African women by portraying all women—but especially African women—as "victimes de la domination masculine."[8] She goes on to construct a sub-Saharan *matrimoine*. The feminism that Miano rejects wholesale resembles what Rafia Zakaria has analyzed as "white feminism," whose practitioners accept "the benefits conferred by white supremacy at the expense of people of color, while claiming to support gender equality and solidarity with 'all' women."[9] My point is not that teaching the classics of French literature is an act of white supremacy. To the contrary, I believe we can engage Old Regime literature in vital conversations that complicate the intellectually impoverishing dialectic of cancelation and rescue if we are willing to problematize manifestations of white supremacy. In any case, a feminism that does not engage in its own process of analysis, excision,[10] and rebuilding has been and will be written off as an extension of the *patrimoine.*

II. *Quel matrimoine?*

As for who or what is being rescued in *Au* NON *des femmes*, Tamas explains her contribution thus: "si le travail pionnier des *gender studies* mené aux États-Unis pour réévaluer notre compréhension du Grand Siècle a montré la nécessité de sortir les autrices de l'ombre, je cherche à actualiser la réception des textes classiques en examinant comment *l'acte de refus* a été invisibilisé, y compris dans les œuvres des grands auteurs" (p. 35, emphasis in Tamas). In other words, while feminist scholars in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s concentrated their efforts on reforming the canon of French literature to include women authors, Tamas focuses on rehabilitating the reputations of fictional female characters, including those imagined by canonical male authors. Tamas devotes little space to the feminist forerunners whose scholarship made her and my work possible,[11] so I will spell out what being a student in that environment meant to me. Feminist interpretations of canonical works of early modern French literature, together with new editions and translations of works by women authors (notably, the MLA's dual language editions and Chicago University Press's "Other Voice in Early Modern Europe" series) and the vast seam opened by the digitization of books on Gallica (the online repository of the Bibliothèque nationale de France), transformed syllabi and added pounds of paper to the giant course packs I carried around in boxes or binders for courses with Lewis Seifert, Domna Stanton, and a radiantly pregnant Faith Beasley—#MyDixseptièmisteMatrimoine.[12] I felt like I was witnessing the (re)making of history. Admittedly, the project of granting women *droit de cité* in national canons of literature now appears a relic of a simpler era, in which the nation-state was still a self-evident topic of humanistic study, surviving preprofessional makeovers of liberal arts

colleges was not an all-consuming preoccupation, and machine learning was not cheapening the transferable skills that are our bread and butter. Nevertheless, I can't help but see the privileging of fictional characters as a retreat, and therefore as a regression. This is a bias, if you wish, born of my North American education and of the historical and philosophical frameworks I favor.

What seems incontrovertible to me, though, is that Tamas's choice to focus on fictional characters is in tension with the premise of her book. Tamas's premise is that thanks to the #MeToo movement, certain aspects of women's lived experience that had been ignored have now been heard (p. 30). And yet I found myself wondering how much the lived experience of women mattered while reading *Au* NON *des femmes*. On the one hand, she purports to reveal the inner lives of fictional characters as if they were real people. Madame de Clèves experienced conversion and was touched by grace (p. 269). Andromaque experienced "le *traumatisme de guerre*" (p. 147, emphasis in Tamas) and wields "une agentivité extrême" (p. 159). On the other hand, real women become characters. Helen of Troy, like Marilyn Monroe, was reduced to "[un] symbole sexuel au point qu'on ne voit plus la réalité qu'il recouvre" (p. 189), but Monroe's historical reality evaporates one more time as Tamas reads her like a book: "Instrumentalisées au nom de l'amour, utilisées pour leur beauté, l'une et l'autre sont en quête de sens" (p. 191). Even the lived experience of female readers is enveloped in this logic of legibility, their unconscious laid bare by a feat of empathic omniscience: "Les femmes ne souhaitent pas *consciemment* effacer l'exemple de leurs devancières ni enfouir leurs œuvres sous une gaine d'oubli. Mais, comme le dit Pierre Bourdieu, la reception des œuvres, même quand elle est érudite et qu'elle repose sur des choix méthodologiques apparemment objectifs, résulte d'une forme d'endoctrination invisible qu'il nomme 'domination masculine'" (p. 25, emphasis in Tamas). In other words, women readers who write off classical heroines are themselves the victims of gaslighting by men. Yet isn't telling women what they unconsciously want one of the most insidious forms of gaslighting?

Meanwhile, the agency of the creators of these "personnage[s] de papier" is nearly invisible (p. 247). Rarely naming names, Tamas casts authors—several of whom were after all quite particular about the reception of their work—as magnanimous hosts of texts for the taking: "Il suffit pourtant de lire les textes selon le point de vue des femmes, ce que les grands écrivains ont toujours invité à faire" (p. 135). Ever since Proust took on Sainte-Beuve, Tamas declares, literary studies have been founded "sur cette distinction sacro-sainte entre l'œuvre et son auteur" (p. 281). To be sure, Barthes killed the author one more time, but four decades of feminist scholarship have shown the author function (Foucault) to be quite resilient.[13] The author's agency would seem to matter in a framework that so heavily foregrounds lived experience. Most of all, the author's gender would seem to matter in a book that foregrounds gender as a formative facet of lived experience. Gender matters selectively in *Au* NON *des femmes*. It is the key criterion for assembling the fictional *matrimoine*. It is also the key to establishing Tamas's project as an intervention in a hegemonically masculine tradition of literary interpretation. The men she takes on include not just literary historians and critics, both scholarly and popular, but also filmmakers who adapted literary classics to the silver screen—arguably creating new classics. Even Jean Cocteau (who was gay) gets lumped into the lot of nefarious male gazers, despite the fact that in *La Belle et la Bête*, Cocteau's lover Jean Marais (as la Bête) has to avert his eyes twice from Josette Day's (Belle's) burning (female) gaze: "Belle, il ne faut pas me regarder dans les yeux…il ne faut pas me regarder dans les yeux… Votre regard me brûle."[14] Given the extent to which Tamas foregrounds the masculinity of critics, her discretion about the

gender of authors—especially when they happened to be male—is surprising. Yes, Madame de Merteuil's letter 81 is a kick-ass feminist manifesto. But just as the titillation of Cécile's letter, dictated by Valmont on her hindquarters, comes from its double entendres, so in letter 81 do we savor the ultimate authorial power play: Laclos celebrates his own status as plot-master through the backstory of his most complex character, his virtuosity all the more impressive because he wrote her to be a woman. If Tamas laments that Laclos's works have been "minorés" in literary history (p. 212), what does it mean for the *matrimoine* she proposes that not one but two of its freshest inductees (Andromaque, Bérénice) were conceived by the undisputed *crème* of the *patrimoine*? Racine as the *poteau mitan* of the *matrimoine*? Am I missing something?

Actually, I don't think so. If the emperor's new clothes look a lot like the old ones, it is because Tamas is operating under a constraint that she gestures towards in her epilogue: the die has been cast, the *patrimoine* is a given. In the centralized system that is *l'éducation nationale*, literature is taught (among other reasons) to instill a common frame of reference—one that contributes to shaping a collective national identity. For this very reason, *pace* Descartes, you can't throw the baby out with the bathwater. What you can do is drain the bathwater very emphatically, draw a new bath, and maybe add a new baby. Ultimately, Tamas takes an appropriately pragmatic approach to a practical problem, having accepted the constraints in advance. Developing a new canon of literature from scratch would defeat the benefits of having a tradition in the first place. It would be onerous and contentious to implement and would necessitate some kind of *morale par provision*. In contrast, extracting a *matrimoine* out of a pre-existing *patrimoine* by reinterpreting the classics in a feminist light costs nothing (except perhaps to the feminist movement, as I argue above) and can be done by individual teachers. Tamas hopes that the work of enlightened feminist hermeneuts will bring seventeenth-century French literature off "le banc des accusés" (p. 32)—accused of being too old, too male, and too white—thereby allowing women to anchor their struggles in a long-lost *matrimoine* of reinterpreted texts. In turn, this reinterpreted body of literature can make feminists struggles "plus efficaces" by exposing "l'inaccomplissement des revendications anciennes" and "[le] mirage d'une révolution toujours espérée et toujours reconduite" (p. 310). Writing from the land of no traditions, very few constraints, and a bleak future when it comes to the teaching of French literature, I have to wonder: whether we skew revolutionary or incrementalist, is becoming more *efficaces* the best we can aspire to as feminists? And, even if we accept that the quarry is finite, is this the best *matrimoine* French literature has to offer? Madame de Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*: sign me up, again and again—along with Nancy K. Miller on plots and plausibilities, Joan DeJean on ellipses, and Domna Stanton on *repos*.[15] But a Little Red Riding Hood who cannibalizes her grandmother out of female rivalry; a Marilyn Monroe crooning about diamonds; a Bérénice wielding "*un pouvoir décisionnel*" (p. 297, emphasis in Tamas); and, well, an Andromaque "seen only in tears and on her knees pleading for mercy"?[16] #NotMyMatrimoine.

III. A Manifesto?

And I guess this is okay, because I take it that Tamas's purpose is not to build an impermeable and non-negotiable City of Ladies, but to model the feminist interpretation of literature as a political act—a project to which I am deeply sympathetic and have advocated for in my scholarship on Descartes.[17] Reading *Au* NON *des femmes* as a manifesto—a political genre—helps me understand some of the features that initially perplexed me. It explains, for example, why Tamas does not flesh out the shoulders of the scholarly *matrimoine* she stands on: a

manifesto is less concerned with establishing solidarity that already exists, than with creating new solidarities by rallying readers to the cause. It explains why she identifies a single hegemonic adversary to take on: the struggle must be clear-cut in order to appear accessible to new recruits. Anybody can sit in a hot room and cogitate, and anybody can take their #MeToo chops to Nicolas Sarkozy's withering comments on *La Princesse de Clèves*. It explains the book's prescriptive rhetoric, since compulsory language—persuasion's uncouth cousin—is the manifesto's call to action: "Il faut *lire autrement* et adopter un point de vue féministe" (p. 25, emphasis in Tamas). "Qu'on le veuille ou non, Bérénice est une héroïne du refus" (p. 296). "Le roman de Laclos doit …être compris et interprété à la lueur de ce monde inégalitaire qu'il dénonce" (p. 212). Finally, it explains Tamas's gesture to liberate women readers "des *écrans* masculins dont nous avons été trop longtemps prisonnières," even though characterizing them as captives to male jailers is a strange way to dispel the specter of feminine passivity that is ostensibly the purpose of the book (p. 25, emphasis in Tamas). After all, readers of manifestos often find themselves summoned to wake up (implying that they have been asleep), to open their eyes (implying that they have been blind)—in short, to be people instead of sheeple. Tamas highlights this rhetoric when she situates her efforts to lift "une amnésie volontaire" shrouding "notre *matrimoine* depuis des siècles" in the wake of the French Revolution's most outspoken feminist: "'Femme, reveille-toi', disait déjà Olympe de Gouges, bien avant que Marcus Garvey ou Martin Luther King [Jr.] n'enjoignent aux Noirs américains de sortir de leur torpeur ('Wake up!')" (p. 309).

These historical allusions lead me back to the same question: if *Au* NON *des femmes* is a manifesto, what is the cause it champions? Olympe de Gouges rang a *tocsin* in her "Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne" urging Frenchwomen to take stock of the rights slipping from their hands: "O femmes! femmes, quand cesserez-vous d'être aveugles? Quels sont les avantages que vous avez recueillis dans la révolution? Un mépris plus marqué, un dédain plus signalé."[18] Garvey's epigram, "Wake Up Ethiopia! Wake Up Africa!" was about willing a new Black nationalist homeland into being: "Let us work towards the one glorious end of a free, redeemed and mighty nation."[19] Dr. King delivered his "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution" speech to graduating seniors at Oberlin College in June 1965 and then at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. in March 1968.[20] Through references to fairy tales (Rip Van Winkle) and to French literature (Victor Hugo), King was not setting an alarm clock for snoozing Black Americans (it is terribly misleading to suggest that he believed fellow Black Americans to be in a state of torpor at the height of the Civil Rights movement), but needling white Americans—left-leaning college students and Christians—for being comfortably numb to the economic injustices suffered by Black Americans, just four days before he was assassinated.

Tamas's fondest wish is to "réapproprier notre culture à travers une école qui soit à la fois universelle et multiculturelle" (p. 316). I am not French, do not work in France, and therefore do not share this quest. Still, the means Tamas proposes to that end—uncovering role models of "refus féminins" and forgotten female authors—seems unlikely to support the flourishing of French multiculturalism, unless the feminist gaze shaping this work becomes more self-reflective, more intersectional, and less universalizing (p. 318).[21] As modeled in *Au* NON *des femmes*, the project of deriving a largely fictional *matrimoine* from a preexisting *patrimoine* seems less about transforming French education than about shoring up the classics. From the point of view of American higher education, where language programs and humanities departments dangle as so many expendable fruits in times of financial exigency; where the

accumulation of cultural capital is a dead letter to students who work twenty to forty hours a week to minimize debt; and where professors of French literature have no project of national identity to advance or fall back on and devote an increasing portion of their teaching load to general education courses, rousing prescriptions about how to read Racine differently—whether from a feminist point of view or simply more intuitively or empathically—are not much of a lifeline.[22] If interpreting classic works of French literature from a feminist perspective were all we had to do transform students' experience of their education and thus preserve our own professional possibilities, we would have saved ourselves a long time ago. But Tamas, who is at her best when she describes literary interpretation in terms of collaboration with her students at Rutgers University, is not speaking to professors of French literature in the United States (p. 49). She is speaking to a French public, many of whose members have recognized themselves in the "us" for whom she imagines a more inclusive embrace. Whatever happens in French schools or doesn't happen in American universities as a result of her book, Tamas's ardent wish "que nous reconquiérions et que nous regardions nos classiques autrement" has gotten ordinary French people talking about literature: a huge accomplishment, *dis-je*, an exemplary feat—*et c'est assez* (p. 318).[23]

NOTES

[1] As Pierre Bayle reflected in a very different context in his *Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de Jésus-Christ: Contrains-les d'entrer* (1686).

[2] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16 (1975): 6-18.

[3] *Louise Dupin's Work on Women: Selections*, ed. Angela Hunter and Rebecca Wilkin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023). See Frédéric Marty's separate French reconstruction of this work: and, Louise Dupin, *Des femmes: Observations du préjugé commun sur la différence des sexes*, ed. Frédéric Marty (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2022).

[4] A term coined by Kate Manne in *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 196.

[5] Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve, *La Belle et la Bête*, in *La jeune Amériquaine et les contes marins* (The Hague: aux dépens de la Compagnie, 1740), vol. 1, p. 51-188. "Perroquets" (p. 138); "Singes à faces humaines" (p. 140); "deux grandes Guenons vêtues en habit de cour, qui sembloient n'attendre que ses ordres" (p. 141); "Un Magot plaisant, mis en Seignor Escudero" (p. 141-142); "J'ai des éclaves qui nous dispensent des travaux ausquels la necessité nous assujetissoit" (p. 181).

[6] In *Du contrat social* (1762), I:4.

[7] Geoffrey Turnovsky explains that this was rarely possible in "'Vivre de sa plume': réflexions sur un topos de l'auctorialité moderne," *Revue de synthèse* 6 (2007): 51-70.

[8] Léonora Miano, *L'autre langue des femmes* (Paris : Grasset, 2021), p. 13, p. 23. African women's impatience with the universalizing impulses of European feminism has deep roots.

Miano cites a dispute at the "Women and Development Conference" held at Wellesley College in 1976.

[9] Rafia Zakaria, *Against White Feminism: Notes on Disruption* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2021), p. x.

[10] A term I borrow from Zakaria, p. x.

[11] "[C]itation is feminist memory. Citation is how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our way when the way was obscured because we deviated from the paths we were told to follow." Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), p. 15.

[12] Among their pioneering works, I note Domna Stanton's seminal essay "The Fiction of Préciosité and the Fear of Women," *Yale French Studies* 62 (1981), 107-134; Faith Beasley, *Revising Memory: Women's Fiction and Memoirs in Seventeenth-Century France* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990); and Lewis Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France, 1690-1715: Nostalgic Utopias* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[13] I refer to Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," trans. Richard Howard, *Aspen* 5/6, item 3 (1967) and Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" (1969). See Dinah Ribard, *1969: Michel Foucault et la question de l'auteur. "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" Texte, presentation, et commentaire* (Paris: Champion, 2019).

[14] *La Belle et la Bête*, directed by Jean Cocteau (DisCina, 1946), 36:12-36:44, 56:10-56:20.

[15] Nancy K. Miller, "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction," *PMLA* 96 (1981): 36-48; Joan DeJean, "Lafayette's Ellipses: The Privileges of Anonymity," *PMLA* 99 (1984): 884-902; and, Domna Stanton, "The Ideal of *repos* in Seventeenth-Century French Literature," *Esprit Créateur* 15 (1975): 79-104.

[16] Dupin, *Work on Women*, p. 267.

[17] Notably in my *Women, Imagination, and the Search for Truth in Early Modern France* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008); "Descartes, Individualism, and the Fetal Subject," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 19.1 (2008): 96-127; "Making Friends, Practicing Equality: The Correspondence of Elisabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes," in *Men and Women Making Friends in Early Modern France* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015), pp. 161-87; and, "Gender Equality in Cartesian Community: Descartes, Poulain de la Barre, Fontenelle," in *Towards an Equality of the Sexes in Early Modern France*, ed. Derval Conroy (New York and London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 39-59.

[18] Olympe de Gouges, "Déclaration de la femme et de la citoyenne" in *Les droits de la femme: à la Reine* (n.p., 1791), 12.

[19] Amy Jacques-Garvey, ed., *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey or, Africa for the Africans*, vol. I, second edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

[20] Martin Luther King Jr., "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution," Commencement Address, Oberlin College, June 1965. https://www2.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/BlackHistoryMonth/MLK/CommAddress.html consulted 10/13/2023. On the same speech at the National Cathedral, see Essau McCaulley, "The Kind of Revolution that Martin Luther King Jr. Envisioned," *The New York Times*, January 15, 2023.

[21] See Flavia Dzodan's 2011 manifesto, "MY FEMINISM WILL BE INTERSECTIONAL OR IT WILL BE BULLSHIT!" published on the site *Tiger Beatdown*, and archived at *The Research Papers*, https://theresearchpapers.org/my-feminism-will-be-intersectional-or-it-will-be-bullshit/, consulted 10/15/2023.

[22] In opposition to the clinical pedagogical exercise of the *explication de texte* formalized by Gustave Lanson (28). On the mismatch between intuitive identification with fictional characters and technical literary interpretation, see Geoffrey Turnovsky's analysis of Régis Sauder's 2011 documentary, *Nous, Princesses de Clèves*, in "Reading Exercises: French Literature in the Classroom," *Romanic Review* 112:2 (2021): 213-234. DOI: 10.1215/00358118-9091117

[23] Pierre Corneille, *Médée*, Act I, scene 4, verses 320-21.

Rebecca Wilkin
Pacific Lutheran University
wilkinrm@plu.edu

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