

Le Dictionnaire universel des Créatrices

DIRECTED BY
BÉATRICE DIDIER
ANTOINETTE FOUQUE
MIREILLE CALLE-GRUBER

DROP INITIALS BY
SONIA RYKIEL

ARTS GEOGRAPHY
EXPLORATION HISTORY
POLITICS ECONOMICS
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
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des femmes
Antoinette Fouque

Forty centuries
of women's creation
worldwide
in all the fields
of human history,
art, culture
and science.

A pioneering encyclopedia dictionary

Le **Dictionnaire universel des femmes créatrices** (The Universal Dictionary of Women Creators) evolved from the desire to highlight women's creation throughout the world and in history, to make visible their contribution to civilization. Thought of as a novel contribution to the world's cultural heritage, it was made possible by over four decades of commitments and work in France and in every other country, which enabled the recovery of a genealogy hitherto deprived of memory. Its intention is to present the known or still little-known women creators who, individually or together, have marked their time and opened new paths in one of the fields of human activity. Its scope covers every continent, every period, the entire traditional range of disciplines (artistic, literary, philosophical as well as scientific) and extends from women athletes to politicians through women in the performing arts, storytellers and craftswomen, even if they are anonymous.

Creator, every woman who is at work.



A novel contribution to the world's cultural heritage

- 3 volumes of 1,600 pages each, paperback, boxed, 17 x 24 cm format
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- Nearly 1,600 authors from every continent
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8 major fields identified by a color code

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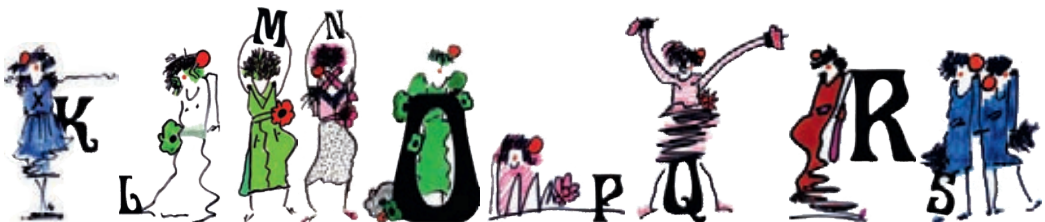
■ Literature and publishing

■ Science and technology

■ Humanities and social sciences

■ Sports

Drop initials by **Sonia Rykiel**



The Scientific Board



Béatrice Didier, professor at Paris 8 University, which she contributed to create, then at the École Normale Supérieure where she ran the Literature and Languages Department, and where she is currently holding a seminar, “Literature-Music”, is the author of *L'écriture-femme* and published a *Dictionnaire universel des littératures* at PUF. She is specialized in 18th and 19th century French literature (Stendhal as an autobiographer; and George Sand as a writer). She is in charge of the publication of the complete works of George Sand (H. Champion).



Antoinette Fouque cofounded the French Women's Liberation Movement (MLF) in 1968. A psychoanalyst, a theoretician of the difference of the sexes, she founded the research group “Psychoanalysis and Politics” within the MLF in 1968, the Institute of Feminology in 1978, the publishing house *Des femmes* in 1973, several newspapers and various NGOs including the Alliance des femmes pour la démocratie. A research director in political sciences at Paris 8 University, she was a Member of the European Parliament from 1994 to 1999. She is notably the author of three feminology essays, including *Il y a deux sexes* (Gallimard).



Mireille Calle-Gruber is a writer and a literature professor at the Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3 University where she is the head of the Research Center for Women's and Gender Studies and Francophone Literatures, after having steered a research program on women's studies in Canada and having headed the Center for Women's Studies of Paris 8 University. Her work focuses on literature, the arts and philosophy. She is notably the author of *Histoire de la littérature française du xx^e siècle* and published *La différence sexuelle en tous genres* (collective issue of *Littérature*, 2006).


The Editorial Board

By creating *Des femmes* publishing house in 1973, Antoinette Fouque wished, she said, “to stress the creative force of women, to bring to light the fact that they enrich civilization”. Her ambition was to “create an ensemble, in the musical, mathematical and convivial meaning of the word, in which the individual finds fulfillment also in a group, in which a singular destiny echoes with a community of women's destinies”. *Des femmes* therefore had, from its very beginnings, the vocation of welcoming this historic project.



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In *Le Torchon brûle*, Women's Liberation Movement newspaper (n° 6, 1973).

Excerpts from the Dictionary's prefaces

This *Dictionnaire des femmes créatrices* is a work that will be a landmark, through its ambition and its determination to shed light on the women actors of creation throughout history and the world. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is proud to support this work and the values it contains. [...] A work like this one was needed to pay tribute to the diversity of women creators and to hail their contribution to civilization and world culture.

Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO

Today, we have become poets and we are writing our condition ourselves. Here, we sing gestation and fertile women, the movement par excellence that displaces lines, that weeps, that laughs, that sings and that comes to life, the desire for permanent creation in every woman's body - a piece of needlework or a work of genius, in a petit point tapestry as in pregnancy. Accomplishment - endless incompleteness. Half-epic, half-history, may this *Dictionnaire universel*, this gesture to the glory of women, take part in the education of posterity.

Antoinette Fouque

Not only do the synthetic articles restore a creator in her context, in a literary or artistic movement, within a literary genre, consequently making it possible to better understand the meaning of her work, but they present the interest in also making a place for anonymous creators such as African weavers, storytellers whose names are unknown, or an entire laboratory of scientists, in which a single name can be difficult to isolate since a discovery had genuinely been the result of teamwork.

Béatrice Didier

Rehabilitating what had been despised because it was done by women, we have seen come to light, with their works, the marks of remarkable intellectual, political or scientific courage. We need only think of the difficulties that girls [...] have had to overcome to attain education, study, go to College, enter certain sectors, such as medicine, which was prohibited for them, publish, go into politics, as well as the family obstacles and all the affective disruptions that these paths brought about.

Mireille Calle-Gruber

In the media

On the 40th anniversary of its creation, *Des femmes*-Antoinette Fouque publishing proposes a never-before-published universal inventory of women who have made the world. [Livres Hebdo, November, 2013](#)

Antoinette Fouque is more than ever in sync with our period. Her new manifesto, the *Dictionnaire universel des créatrices*, spotlights more than half of humanity. [Madame Figaro, December, 2013](#)

This total of 5,000 pages is a ‘moment of the French Women’s Liberation Movement [MLF]’, stresses in her preface Antoinette Fouque, cofounder of the MLF who was in charge of the work’s direction with Béatrice Didier, scholar, and Mireille Calle-Gruber, writer and teacher. [AFP, Paris November, 2013](#)

An exceptional contribution to the world’s cultural heritage. (...) A titanic work, illustrated by the great French creator, Sonia Rykiel. [artéMédia, November, 2013](#)

5,000-page dictionary to learn what humanity owes to women. [Femme actuelle, November, 2013](#)

This 100% womanly Encyclopedia lists the figures that have mattered since the birth of humanity. A fighting stand against obliteration and oblivion. [Le Soir \(Belgique\), November 2013](#)

It is a work that should become a reference not only in France, but also in the world. [Challenges.fr, November, 2013](#)

A great work that will become a landmark. [Le Point, November, 2013](#)

Talented women from A to Z. [Paris Match, December, 2013](#)

An Herculean task. [L’Express, December, 2013](#)

The first real encyclopedia of women. [Elle, December, 2013](#)

Articles...



Abdi, Hawa

[Mogadiscio 1947]

Somalian gynaecologist.

She was only 12 years old, when her mother's death in a hospital for a gynecological complication, made Hawa Abdi decide to become a doctor. The eldest daughter, she had to raise her four sisters under terribly poor conditions but she never gave up her dream and had her father's support. Awarded a scholarship, she left for the Soviet Union to study and became the first woman gynecologist in Somalia. She began law studies. In 1983, she opened a small clinic on family land, 30 kilometers from Mogadiscio. Civil war arriving with its murderous violence, especially against women, she turned her 26 hectares of land into a refuge for the displaced and destitute populations. Over 90,000 people, 75% of whom were women and children, built their house on it. The clinic became a 300-bed hospital with free care for everyone. With limitless devotion, five doctors, including Dr. H. Abdi's two daughters, Deqo and Amina, and 16 nurses, see 400 patients each day and perform numerous surgeries. A primary school welcomes 850 children, most of them girls. What is now called "Village Hawa Abdi" provides

the region's only source of free drinking water. It has developed a sustainable agriculture program to create self-sufficiency and fight against famine and global warming, which should become a model in the country. Called with her daughters the "Saints of Somalia", H. Abdi has instituted two urgent rules in this society of peace she has created: the prohibition of clan and political divisions, and the prohibition of violence against women under penalty of banishment. For H. Abdi, women can be leaders and run communities; they must be given the power to do so. Their strength is Somalia's hope whereas, for so many years, men have done nothing but kill. She is personally, and in great part because she is a woman, exposed to increasingly pressing violence and death threats from the Shabaab, Islamist militia connected to Al Qaida. The kidnappings of several hundred children occurred in the camp; a part of the Village's land was seized; she herself had to temporarily leave the Village. However, she has not given up and continues to develop her undertaking with intelligence and humanity. She has received great honors and was one of the nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012.

C. FERNANDEZ

[...]

Agnesi, Maria Gaetana

[Milan 1718 - Milan 1799]

Italian mathematician.

In 18th century Europe, during the Enlightenment, access to higher education remained prohibited for women, except in Italy where "girls of good family" could receive the same education as boys and be admitted to university. At this period, the University of Bologna*, the oldest

in the Western world, was distinguished by its number of women students and teachers. Among them was Maria Gaetana Agnesi, appointed to the mathematics chair in 1750. M. G. Agnesi was born into an upper middle-class Milanese family. Her father, an amateur of the arts and sciences, offered his 21 children the best private tutors. She turned out to be particularly brilliant as, when she was very young, she mastered Latin, Greek and Hebrew as well as French, German and Spanish. She was 15 when her father started to invite her to his salon attended by Italian and foreign intellectuals, where she debated, often in Latin, philosophical or scientific subjects. In 1738, she published a collection of 191 essays on these two fields, *Propositiones philosophicae*, bringing together hundreds of theses that she had defended during her oratory jousts, among which were recent scientific theories, including that of Newton. In it, she also treated the question of women's education. In 1739, tired of society life, she showed her desire to devote herself to spiritual life and meditation and entered a convent. After long discussions with her father, she arrived at a compromise: staying home but living a retired existence and as the eldest child, taking care of her brothers and sisters. In 1740, the monk and mathematician Ramiro Rampinelli became her teacher. With him, she studied *Analyse démontrée* (1707) by Charles René Reyneau and came in contact with the period's mathematicians, who were working on infinitesimal calculus, in particular, Jacopo Riccati. She undertook the writing of *Analytical Institutions*, which she submitted to him. A productive correspondence then began, which lasted from 1745 to 1749. Pope Benedict XIV, who had studied mathematics, personally congratulated her and appointed her "reader in analysis" at the university of Bologna. Appointed to the mathematics chair in 1750, she never taught at the university but was the first woman to have had the opportunity to do so. The empress Maria Theresa of Austria, to whom she had dedicated her book, rewarded her by offering her jewelry. After her father's death in

1752, she interrupted her mathematics activities, left the family home, renounced her worldly goods and moved to the Ospedale Maggiore in Milan. In 1768, the archbishop of Milan appointed her head of Christian doctrine, and on her request, in 1771, she took over the women's department in a newly created charitable institution. She died there, destitute.

In 1748, M. G. Agnesi published the two volumes of *Istituzioni analitiche ad uso della gioventù italiana* ("Analytical Institutions for the Use of Italian Youth"). This work was an enlightened and pedagogical synthesis of knowledge in a recent area of mathematics in full development. The work was characterized by its progressive structure and contained many illustrations. The first mathematics text published by a woman, it became the reference for studying analysis and infinitesimal calculus during the second half of the 18th century in Europe. To make it more accessible, she wrote it in Italian, unlike her contemporaries, who were still publishing in Latin. She used Leibniz's language: "differential", "infinitesimal", still in use today, rather than Newton's "fluxions". The second volume was translated into French by Anthelmi in 1775 with the title *Traité élémentaire de calcul différentiel et intégral*. The first volume ended on three curves that prepared the introduction to infinitesimal calculus developed in the second. One of these curves, Agnesi's cubic, became famous under the name of "Witch of Agnesi", probably due to an error of translation into English by Colson, who in all likelihood confused *veriera* ("to turn") with *avversiera* ("witch"). Once *Analytical Institutions* was published, M. G. Agnesi increasingly devoted herself to religion and aid for the poor and sick, especially women. However, her renown and solicitations continued to grow.

A. BOISSEAU

■ Dubreil-Jacotin M.-L., "Figures de mathématiciennes", in *Les Grands Courants de la pensée mathématique*, F. Le Lionnais (dir.), Paris, Hermann, 1962.

■ "Maria Gaetana Agnesi", in *Revue de la Société mathématique européenne*, Newsletter no. 31, March 1999.

[...]

Agnodice

[4th century B.C.]

Greek doctor and gynecologist.

In ancient Greece, before the 5th century, women were not authorized to practice medicine and childbirth was handled by relatives or neighbors. Some of them, who were particularly skillful, were the *maia* or midwives; they had knowledge and experience, not only about childbirth, but also about all women's illnesses. At the end of the 5th century, this tradition disappeared and gynecology was taken over by men exclusively, because, it seems, of their worries about paternity. We know very little about Agnodice's life. Most of the information comes from the 1st century Latin author Hyginus. Legend has it that to be able to study medicine with Herophilos, Alexandria's famous doctor, Agnodice cut her hair and wore men's clothes. Once she had finished her studies and wanted to help a woman who was giving birth, the woman refused, thinking that she was dealing with a man. Agnodice then lifted her robe to show that she was a woman, and she was accepted. She ended up being venerated, women even pretending they were ill, it was said, in order to receive her care. A victim of her success, she attracted the jealousy of her colleagues and was put on trial, where she revealed her identity and was given the death penalty. Faced however with a wave of protests from women, the magistrates acquitted her. The next year, the Athenian council authorized the study and practice of medicine by women. After *Antiqua Medicina*, it is highly unlikely that Hyginus' account was based on real facts. It is possible that Agnodice was a resurgence of the myth of Baubo, many images of which exist in terra-cotta. These figurines represent a woman with a figure painted on her stomach, who is lifting her skirts above her head while dancing, with the aim of entertaining Demeter, the Greek goddess of fertility, showing her her genitals. Despite doubts about her existence, she remains the first female figure of gynecology in history.

Y. SULTAN

[...]

Arden, Elizabeth

(born Florence Nightingale Graham)

[Woodbridge, Ontario 1878 - New York 1966]

American-Canadian entrepreneur.

Elizabeth Arden was the founder of a cosmetics empire. She grew up in poverty in a family of five children and could not finish high school. After brief training in nursing, she had various jobs before following her older brother to New York in 1908. Hired as a bookkeeper for the Squibb Pharmaceutical Company, she learned a little about cosmetology there. She next worked for Eleanor Adair, who had one of the first beauty salons, then with the cosmetologist Elizabeth Hubbard, with whom she opened a salon in 1909. Their collaboration did not last long and the creator, borrowing 600 dollars, soon after opened her own salon on Fifth Avenue, to which she gave the commercial name Elizabeth Arden - taken from the first name of her former partner and a poem by Tennyson, "Enoch Arden". She took part in the suffragettes' march in New York in 1912, and "Every woman has the right to be beautiful" became her slogan. That same year, she traveled to Paris to get information on beauty trends and new facial massage techniques. When she returned to New York, she marketed modern makeup that she had created and innovated by proposing makeup lessons to her customers. She worked with the chemist A. Fabian Swanson to develop revolutionary creams, the products of the latest research in cosmetics. Assisted by her husband Thomas Lewis, she had her own factories. In 1915, the Elizabeth Arden brand became international, and a first salon was opened in France (1922). Creating in 1934 the perfume Blue Grass and launching herself into fashion in 1943, the entrepreneur succeeded in developing a complete coordinated offering for a select clientele. She was also the first to propose foundations adapted to her customers' skin shades. When she died, she left behind her an empire worth over 40 million dollars, including a hundred or so salons throughout the world.

A. WYDOUW

[...]

Ashrawi, Hanan

(born Mikhail)

[Nablus 1946]

Palestinian politician.

Hanan Ashrawi studied literature at the American University of Beirut, then at the University of Virginia, before returning to the West Bank in 1973 and creating the English Department of the University of Birzeit. Very involved in the Palestinian national struggle, she has had many political functions in her country's governing bodies. From 1991 to 1993, she was the official spokesperson of the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace process and a member of the delegation's governing council. From 1993 to 1995, after the signature of the Oslo Peace Accords, she directed the Preparatory Committee of the independent Palestinian Commission for the Rights of the Citizens of Jerusalem. In 1996, she was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council as a deputy from the district of Jerusalem. In 1996, she was appointed minister of higher education and research of the Palestinian Authority before resigning in 1998, in protest against the Arafat administration's political corruption. In 1998, she founded Miftah (Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Worldwide Dialogue and Democracy). She is active today in many initiatives for peace and the defense of human rights. She received the Franco-Arab Friendship Prize in 1996 and the Palestinian Mamhoud-Hamchari Prize in 1997.

É. MARTEU

■ *Palestine-Israël, la paix vue de l'intérieur, témoignage* (This Side of Peace: A Personal Account, 1995), Paris, Des femmes-Antoinette Fouque, 1996.

[...]



Benga, Sokhna

(born Mbengue)

[Dakar 1967]

Senegalese writer.

Sokhna Benga is the author of novels, poems, screenplays, children's books and a play. In the early 1990s, she studied law at the University of Dakar and then at the University of Brest, with a specialization in maritime law. She was very young when she published her first novel, *Le Dard du secret* (1990), which already contained the two genres in which she excels, the novel of manners and the detective novel. Encouraged by her father, the journalist and writer Ibrahima Mbengue, she started to pursue a dual career. From 1997 to 2000, she also got involved in academic assistance (schools, youth and culture centers) and helping people in difficulty (youth and culture centers, prisons) through writing workshops organized in Essonne, in the Paris region. When she returned to Dakar, from 2002 to 2005, she headed Nouvelles Éditions africaines du Sénégal (NEAS) and was appointed, in 2006, administrator of African affairs at the Merchant Marine Department (DMM).

S. Benga believes in the power of writing, in the denunciation of the social and political drifts that not only Senegal but every country must face. In her novel *La Balade du sabador* (2000), she deals with Senegalese mysticism and beliefs that lie somewhere between the marvelous, the unreal and the real. Through the story of twins, Mayé the rebel and Ngoye the submissive one, she denounces social situations and brings up the question of the different behaviors of the African woman today faced with the demands of Senegalese society. The novel *Bayo* (2007) continues the question of the woman's position and more specifically the relationship between the generations in a constantly changing world. On a backdrop of political and social life in Senegal since 1940, we follow the character of Sabel, the mother of a happy family firmly decided to offer her children a household full of life and to spare them the difficult childhood that she had. She therefore doesn't understand their choice when, as they become adults, they reject what was given to them to follow more twisted paths. With

the trilogy *Le Temps a une mémoire* (2007), composed of short novels, S. Benga returns to the detective novel genre, in a more oral style closer to her screenplays. F. DONOVAN

■ *Le Dard du secret*, Dakar, Khoudia, 1990; *La Balade du sabador*, Dakar/Corbeil-Essonne, Le Gai Ramatou/S. Millet, 2000; *Bayo*, Abidjan, NEA/CEDA, 2007; *Le temps a une mémoire - Le médecin perd la boule*, Dakar, Oxyzone, 2007; *Le temps a une mémoire - Les souris jouent au chat*, Dakar, Oxyzone, 2007; *Le temps a une mémoire - La caisse était sans proprio*, Dakar, Oxyzone, 2007.

[...]

Bhatt, Ela

[Ahmedabad, northwest India 1933]

Indian attorney.

A pioneer in microfinance in India, born into a family of Brahmins, Ela Bhatt was 12 years old when India gained its independence. Marked by her maternal grandfather's commitment to the independence movement, she very early on adopted Gandhi's principles on rural development and improvement in the situation of the poor. As soon as her law studies were completed, she became involved in the trade union movement, working as an attorney for a textile workers union. Courageously standing up to class and caste obstacles, she was deeply concerned about the absence of legal and economic structures that could promote independent work and make "informal" employment more secure in a country where it is a vital source of the production of goods and services. In 1970, she became the head of the women's section of the Indian National Trade Union Congress; women's condition, their role in the country's development then became her major preoccupation. In 1972, she founded the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), which was both a union and a cooperative for independent women workers that brought together several activities: embroiderers, street sellers, rag collectors, porters, incense and *bidi* rollers, garbage collectors. The following year, SEWA acquired a cooperative bank that financed the independent workers' activities. The members of SEWA, all women, now have a recognized status, can have access to training and medical coverage and can borrow and subscribe to

savings funds. In 1979, with Esther Ocloo and Michaela Walsh, E. Bhatt created Women's World Banking, intended for women with low incomes, and was president from 1980 to 1988. Despite illiteracy and the weight of certain prejudices, she has succeeded in mobilizing Indian women. Structuring and organizing their actions, she has concretely worked on their emancipation and has seen their aspirations grow. A deputy to the Indian Parliament from 1986 to 1989, in 1987, she chaired the National Commission on women working in the independent sectors without unions. Although she has received many honors for her actions, E. Bhatt has nevertheless remained simple, modest and above all driven by a genuine faith in the strength and determination of Indian women. J. PICOT

■ *We Are Poor but So Many: The Story of Self-Employed Women in India*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006.

■ Collectif, March 8, 1990, *Hommage à des femmes exceptionnelles*, Paris, *Des femmes*-Antoinette Fouque, 1991; Høltgen D., *Inde, la révolution par les femmes*, Arles, P. Picquier, 2010; Sreenivasan J., *Ela Bhatt. Uniting Women in India*, New York, The Feminist Press, 2000.

■ Sengupta S., "Voir les femmes en grand", in *Courrier international*, no. 960, 23-3-2009.

[...]

Bi Shumin

[Yining 1952]

Chinese novelist and psychologist.

Born into a family of military officers, Bi Shumin did her secondary studies in Beijing, joined the army in 1969 and was sent to Tibet where, as a nurse, then a doctor, she stayed for 11 years. Married and back in Beijing, she worked as the head of a clinic in a factory hospital, but the need to relate her experiences in Tibet encouraged her to write, at the age of 34, her first short story, *Kunlun shang* ("Death in Kunlun"), whose publication in 1987 caused an immediate sensation. In it, the author traces a terrible military march on the Kunlun mountains, glorifying the fortitude of the young soldiers. She continued to publish short stories in this same idealistic and heroic register, then, in 1991, she started to exclusively devote herself to writing. Between time, she studied Chinese literature and psychology at Beijing

Normal University, and started a practice as a psychologist. The winner of 30 or so literary prizes, an influential writer, she is currently vice president of the Beijing section of the Chinese Writers Association. This novelist has produced a prolific body of work through which she casts an original glance at the world, bringing into play her triple competency and especially her experience in the hospital milieu. Full of compassion for others, with a sense of justice and responsibilities, she has succeeded in merging the doctor's clinical observations with the writer's humanism, which gives her writings a marvelous dimension and a positive realism, very different from the plaintive or accusatory literature of her time. Consequently, the short story *Shengsheng buyi* ("A Life Ever Reborn", 1995) that the author calls "a tale about life", describes the maternal instinct of a young woman who manages to conceive a new life by risking her own. In another short story, *Yuyue siwang* ("Rendez-vous with Death", 1994), that the critics situated in the trend called the "new experience", and that contributed to her first national renown, she treats, like a reporter, the taboo subject of patients at the end of their life and their family. She attempts to show that you can prepare yourself for death and mourning with dignity. The same is true for her novels, which are more elegies of life than scientific descriptions of often fatal illnesses. Her first novel, *Hong chufang* ("Red Prescription", 1997) describes drug abusers in a detox center. The writer continued her humanitarian and cathartic mission with *Zhengjiu rufang* ("Saving the Breast", 2003), a contemporary reflection on female identity. Since the publication of this novel, described as "psychotherapeutic", Bi Shuman has given her work an orientation that is more psychological than medical. Her psychologist practice, which appears in a tale titled *Nü xinlishi* ("Woman Psychologist", 2007), inspired her to publish a large number of texts that are especially liked by her female readership. As a practitioner, she expresses herself on the daily problems that generate people's malaise, and sets out, as her most recent publications clearly indicate, to "prescribe remedies for the heart" and to "decipher the code of happiness".

QIN H.

■ *Bi Shumin wenji*, Pékin, Qunzhong chubanshe, 1996;
Bi Shumin zuopin jingxuan, Wuhan, Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 2005; *Bi Shumin wenji, changpian xiaoshuo*, Guilin, Lijiang chubanshe, 2008.

■ Wang M., "Bi Shumin, wenxuejie de baiyi tianshi", in *Beijing wenxue*, no. 10, 2002.

[...]



Campion, Jane

[Wellington 1954]

New Zealander film director.

Originally from New Zealand and trained at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) in Sydney where Gillian Armstrong* studied before her, today, Jane Campion is the most famous Australian film-maker. Since her first feature film, *Sweetie* (1989), a comedy-drama on the complex relationship between two sisters - the apparent physical and psychological "abnormality" of the younger one affecting the "normality" of the elder one -, the director has built a specific universe in which the female characters take the lead. *An Angel at My Table* (1990) is a sensitive portrait, the adaptation of the autobiography of Jane Frame* who, a young author, only escaped a lobotomy because the surgeon had read a newspaper article mentioning a prize her poetry had won. Taking place in the 19th century, *The Piano Lesson* (1993) treats the sexual seduction and awakening of a mute woman pioneer, played by Holly Hunter. The film won the Palme d'or (shared) at the Cannes Film Festival, a first for a woman since this event was created. If it contributed to her international renown, this award also made the film-maker a source of inspiration for many younger women creators. J. Campion had

already received the Palme d'or for short films with *An Exercise in Discipline - Peel* (1982). After an adaptation of Henry James *The Portrait of a Lady* (1996), a period film with sumptuous sets and costumes, the film-maker tried her hand at thrillers (*In the Cut*, 2003), before returning to the 19th century with *Bright Star* (2009), in which she deals with the pure and idealized love, as though it were timeless, that linked the romantic English poet John Keats and a young girl from a good family, but with a rebellious spirit and a fantastic imagination, Fanny Brawne. Filmed, produced and financed in countries sometimes far from the antipodes, J. Campion's fictions reveal the complex effect of globalization on national identity. D. SHEPARD

[...]

Chicago, Judy

(born Cohen)

[Chicago 1939]

American visual artist.

In 1964, Judy Cohen received a Master of Fine Arts from UCLA. She became known through works close to minimalism, like *Rainbow Pickets*, shown for the first time during "Primary Structures" (exhibition, Jewish Museum, New York, 1966), a reference event for minimal art. She is recognized today as one of the founders of the artistic feminist movement in the United States. Challenging the language of minimalism, which she considered too exclusively formalistic, she then devoted herself to exploring women's experiences. In 1969, she created the first feminist education program in California, the Feminist Art Program, at the California State University, Fresno, then continued this experience from 1971 to 1973 with the artist Miriam Shapiro (1923-) at CalArts (California Institute of the Arts). The two women encouraged students to express themselves on their experiences and supported their aspirations. In the famous *Womanhouse* (exhibition, 1972), 17 projects illustrated women's experiences in a discriminatory society (domestic chores, construction of femininity), echoing Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). The two artists theorized a specific representation of women, based on the image of a vaginal centrality. This assertion was very much debated in feminist

circles: some criticized its essentialism - you are born a woman, you don't become one -, setting the biological determination of these images against a cultural and social construction. In 1973, J. Chicago founded, with Sheila Levrant de Bretteville (1940-) and Arlene Raven (1944-2006), the Woman's Building in Los Angeles, a complete exhibition and artistic training space reserved for women. She became a celebrity with *The Dinner Party* (Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1974-1979). The 39 place settings of this gigantic triangular Last Supper pay tribute to major female figures in history and mythology. The work, done in ceramics, porcelain and fabric, with the collaboration of a hundred women, became an icon of feminist art in the 1970s, but was also contested. In the 1980s, several realist pictorial series presented specific protests. *Birth Project* (1980-1985) represents the experience of maternity, oscillating between pain, realism and spirituality. *Powerplay* shows masculine construction and abuses of power. In her autobiography, the creator explains the driving force of her art: her battle to have a specific women's culture recognized, while plastically enhancing work considered "feminine". She admits that she is aware of the simplifications of her discourse and assumes this limit, which she believes necessary to insert women's experiences into art, changing the way that reality is perceived and transforming culture. C. ALVES-SECONDI

■ *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (1975), New York, Authors Choice, 2006; *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage*, Garden City, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979; *Judy Chicago* (exhibition catalogue), Sackler E. A. (dir.), New York, Watson-Guption Publications/Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation, 2002.

■ LEVIN G., *Becoming Judy Chicago: A Biography of the Artist*, New York, Harmony Books, 2007.

[...]

Coralina, Cora

(born Ana Lins dos Guimarães Peixoto Bretas)

[Goiás 1889 - Goiânia 1985]

Brazilian poet and pastry chef.

Considered one of Brazil's greatest poets, Cora Coralina was known as the "pastry chef poet". From a very modest background, she was a self-taught writer who

produced her first texts when she was 14, publishing them very quickly in local newspapers. Throughout her life, she continued to compose poems and columns in a recognizable style, marked by simplicity, humility and strength of character. An excellent cook and a professional pastry chef, she specialized in making glazed fruit, which the Portuguese term *doceira* evokes. In 1910, she moved with her husband, the attorney Cantídio de Figueiredo Bretas, to the State of São Paulo. Nevertheless, her texts are mostly about her birthplace, the city of Goiás, where she went back to live in 1956, surviving through the sale of her glazed fruit. The first actual publication of her poems did not take place until 1965, when she was already 76 years old. Her literary recognition is due to the discovery of her texts by the great Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade, and many of her works were published posthumously. Several of them are dedicated to the art of sweets, one of the most famous being *As cocadas* ("Glazed Coconuts"), published in 1989 in the work *O tesouro da la casa velha* ("The Treasure of the Old House"). Other texts are devoted to the Brazilian gustatory imagination, with poems like "O poema do milho" ("The Corn Poem") and "Oração ao milho" ("Prayer to Corn"), published in 2005. In 1983, C. Coralina was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Federal University of Goiás and was the first woman elected Intellectual of the Year by the Brazilian Writers Union. Her first work, *Poemas dos becos de Goiás e estórias mais* ("Poem of the Narrow Streets of Goiás and Other Stories", 1965), is considered by the newspaper *O Popular* one of the most important Brazilian works of the 20th century. When she died, her daughter, Vincência Bretas Tahan, devoted herself to publishing *Doces histórias e receitas de Cora Coralina*, an invaluable notebook of traditional pastry recipes. C. ALVES-SECONDI

■ *Doces histórias e receitas de Cora Coralina*, São Paulo, Global, 2009.

[...]



Devi, Phoolan

[Gorha Ka Purwa 1963 - New Delhi 2001]

Indian warrior and political activist.

A young illiterate woman born into a low caste, Phoolan Devi was barely 17 years old when she rebelled against her fate and became a genuine living legend in Uttar Pradesh, one of the most densely populated regions in northeast India. Married at 11 to a man three times her age, she was treated like a slave, beaten, raped and abandoned. When she fled, she lost all status in Indian society. It was at this point that she was kidnapped by a gang of outlaws, the Dacoits, whose leader she eventually became. The bandit queen became very popular in the 1980s because she mostly attacked the Thakurs, the warrior caste, the dominant class composed of rich landowners who exploited the peasants of lower castes, especially those of the Mallahs, the caste from which she came. Stealing not to get rich but to give her booty to the most destitute, she also wanted to incarnate, through her actions, the revolt of women faced with men's brutality and society's iniquity. Finally arrested and imprisoned for 11 long years, the rebel was freed in February 1994 thanks to popular pressure and the mediation of the prime minister of Uttar Pradesh, from the same low caste as her. Laying down her arms once and for all, she joined the Socialist Party and thanks to her personality was elected to the national Parliament. She then undertook a new battle against child labor in carpet factories and founded an organization offering

self-defense courses to citizens from low castes. In addition, the activist, who was still illiterate, wanted to bear witness. To do so, she confided her memories to the international editor of the Fixot company: in 1996, *I, Phoolan Devi (Moi, Phoolan Devi)* was published. In this work, she described her itinerary and explained everything that led her to become a woman at war against her country's society. In 1994, a Bollywood film had already come out on her story: *Bandit Queen*, by Shekhar Kapur. Her enemies however never pardoned her and she was assassinated in front of her house in New Delhi in July 2001.

E. LESIMPLE

■ Frain I., *Devi*, Paris, LGF, 1994; Mouchard C., *Bandit aux yeux de fille*, Paris, Flammarion, 2010.

[...]



Front - Designers

[Sweden 2003]

Sofia Lagerkvist, Charlotte von der Lancken, Anna Lindgren and Katja Sävström met at Konstfack, the art, crafts and design university in Stockholm. The four students began to work together. In 2003, they created the group FRONT. One of the first projects, *Design By*, is based on the involvement of animals in the process of creating objects: the line of flight of a fly around a light bulb becomes a lampshade, the galleries of wood-boring insects become the decorative motif of a table, wallpaper motifs are determined by rodents (*Wallpaper By Rats*). They used dynamite exploding in the snow to create *Chair By Explosion*. In 2005, they explored stereolithography: using

a pen equipped with a movement sensor and rapid software prototyping, they gave shape to objects drawn in space. In 2006, they became more widely known thanks to the *Animal Thing* project, which grew out of accounts on the relationship of people to their objects, produced by Moooi. The standing lamp *Horse*, a black life-size representation of the animal in fiberglass topped by a lampshade, became the group's flagship object. Later came *Rabbit Lamp* and *Pig Table*. By questioning how other activities (magic, for example) transform existing objects, they created the piece of furniture *Vanishing*, presented at Design Miami in 2007. They designed the piece of furniture *Divided* (whose drawers are separated out and positioned in space), the *Leather & Plastic Chair* (combination of a simple plastic chair and a leather back), the *Confetti Light* lamp (assembly of faceted balls in several sizes) and the *Shade* collection (furniture penciled with shadows, to propose "materialized illustrations"). While questioning the designer's place in creation, the group has built a fantastic and dreamlike universe. Representatives of a new generation of women creators who want to use fantasy in a practice, they query the limits between art and design by using and abusing technologies.

M. DAVAILT

■ Dixon T., *EFork*, Paris, Phaidon, 2007; Klanten R. et al., *Desire, The Shape of Things to Come*, Berlin, Gestalten Verlag, 2008.

■ Vignal M., "Au féminin pluriel", in *L'Express*, 8 janv. 2008.

[...]



Gbowee, Leymah

[Liberia 1972]

Liberian pacifist, Nobel Peace Prize 2011.

The pacifist activist Leymah Gbowee helped put an end to the civil wars that devastated Liberia until 2003. Inverting the references that other activists had used, she stated in *Jeune Afrique*, in 2011: “Don’t wait for a Mandela, don’t wait for a Gandhi, don’t wait for a Martin Luther King, but be your own Mandela, your own Gandhi, your own Martin Luther King”. From the Kpelle ethnic group, with a pharmacist mother and civil servant father, she is nicknamed “peace warrior” on the international scene. Her main weapon, however, is prayer - to which she added, in 2003, a sex strike, which forced Charles Taylor’s regime to bring women into the peace discussions (he was forced to leave the country shortly afterward). A social worker, L. Gbowee was in close contact with child soldiers during the war. She described their condition, which was worse than wretched - drugged, armed - in a documentary on Liberian women’s fight for peace: *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*. To talk about her fight and the gigantic sit-in that she organized in the capital, Monrovia, she wrote in her autobiography: “It is about an army of women dressed in white, who rose when no one wanted to, without fear, because the worst things imaginable had already happened to us”. She herself is the mother of six children and dedicated her Nobel prize to African women, who from now on will “have a say”. “Violence has never settled anything”, she also says. She shared the 2011 Nobel prize with the president of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf* and the Yemeni Tawakul Karman*. In February 2012, she created a foundation for educating girls that gives scholarships for primary and secondary school as well as university.

N. CASANOVA

■ *Notre force est infinie (Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War, 2010)*, Paris, Belfond, 2012.

[...]

Gentileschi, Artemisia

[Rome 1593 - Naples ca. 1654]

Italian painter.

The eldest daughter of the Tuscan painter Orazio Gentileschi, whose creations are marked both by a purity of drawing inherited from the Florentine masters - like Agnolo Bronzio and the naturalism of Caravaggio, whose disciple he was, Artemisia Gentileschi was trained in her father’s studio. The artist quickly diverged from her father’s style by assimilating and adopting Caravaggio’s drama and theatricality. In 1610, she painted her first picture that was long attributed to her father but that was entirely hers, *Susanna and the Old Men* (Graf von Schönborn art museum in Pommersfelden). She studied with a colleague of her father’s, Agostino Tassi, a landscape painter, specialized in false architectural compositions or *quadratura*, a pictorial technique based on the use of perspective and *trompe l’œil*. A. Tassi, known for his bursts of violence and already sentenced for murdering his wife, was accused of raping his young student. The trial, whose proceedings have been conserved, ended in his being sentenced to eight months in prison, while the young woman was subjected to painful interrogations and proof by torture. When this grim and humiliating adventure ended, she married the Florentine painter Pietro Antonio Stiattesi and moved to Florence. A canvas painted shortly before her departure and depicting *Judith and Holofernes* (Museo nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples, 1612-1613) marked her recognition on the artistic scene. In the Medici city, protected by the grand duke Cosimo II de’ Medici and his wife Maria Magdalena of Hapsburg, she was a great success. In 1616, at the age of 23, she became the first woman admitted to the renowned Accademia del disegno, founded circa 1562 by Giorgio Vasari. In 1617, she took part in the decoration of the Casa Buonarroti. When she returned to Rome, she entered the Accademia dei desiosi, a mecca of thinking and science. Shortly after her father died, she was still receiving commissions from major collectors like don Antonio Ruffo di Messina.

According to the Florentine art historian and biographer Filippo Baldinucci (1624-1696), A. Gentileschi was especially known, particular during the first Roman period of her career, for her portraits, which were only however a small part of her body of work. She painted many pictures with religious, mythological or allegorical subjects, during a period when these genres were reserved for men. She also received several commissions for self-portraits, like the *Allegorical Portrait of Painting*, executed circa 1638-1639 for Charles I (The Royal Collection, Windsor castle). She chose illustrious biblical heroines several times as subjects: Judith, Susanna, Bathsheba, Ester or Mary Magdalene. Her striking manner of treating the female nude deeply affects the viewer and quickly introduces her into the heart of the drama depicted. The artist attains a new expression of physical pain as much as the torments of the spirit. The same fascination and the same interest appear with *Death of Cleopatra* (private collection, circa 1632-1634), a recurring theme according to a tradition introduced in Neapolitan painting by Caravaggio. Her art is however not simply the painting of these strong female personalities. Apart from different figures of saints - St. Cecilia, St. Catherine of Alexandria - her religious pictures, on the theme of the Adoration of the Magi or the Annunciation (Museo nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples, 1630) show that she asserted her talent on the same subjects as her male colleagues, the greatest painters from the different artistic and intellectual circles that she frequented.

A.-S. MOLINIÉ

■ With Gentileschi O., *Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi* (exhibition catalogue), Christiansen K., Mann J. W. (dir.), New York/London, The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Yale University Press, 2001; *Artemisia Gentileschi, ce qu'une femme sait faire!* (exhibition catalogue), Lapiere A. (dir.), Paris, Gallimard, 2012.

■ Martinetti L., Toledano M.-A. (dir.), *Actes d'un procès pour viol en 1612 (Atti di un processo per stupro)*, Edizioni Delle Donne, 1981), Paris, *Des femmes*-Antoinette Fouque, 1983; Garrard M. D., *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (1989), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999; Id., *Artemisia Gentileschi around 1622: The Shaping and Reshaping of an Artistic Identity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001.



Hasegawa, Itsuko

[Shizuoka 1941]

Japanese architect.

The first Japanese woman architect to have founded her own agency and executed many major buildings, Hasegawa Itsuko is internationally renowned. Graduating from the architecture department of Kanto-Gakuin University in Yokohama in 1964, she worked for the Kikutake Kiyonori (1928-2011) agency until 1969. From 1969 to 1971, she did research in the architecture department of the Tokyo Institute of Technology (TIT) and, until 1978, studied under the direction of Shinohara Kazuo (1925-2006). In 1979, she opened an agency in Tokyo. Her numerous and very diverse projects, including individual homes and large public buildings, have been distinguished on several occasions. She received the prize of the Architecture Institute of Japan in 1986 for Bizan Hall (Shizuoka 1981-1984) and the Japan Cultural Design Award for her residential projects. She has also won many competitions, among them the one for the Shonandai cultural center, executed immediately afterward (Fujisawa 1986-1990), and that of the Living Arts Center of Niigata and the development of its site (1993-1998). The latter is composed of a 1,900-seat concert hall, a 900-seat theater, a Noh theater for 375 spectators and is surrounded by a 8-hectare park. Located in a drained arm of the Shinano river and inspired by the idea that the new city should fit into a natural environment, the main building uses the design of a *manmaku*, a temporary screen installed

[...]

in the festivals to delimit the spaces, in this way composing a sort of open space in the center of the city, like a *barrapa* ("open terrain"). Among her major works are the Sumida community center (Tokyo 1994), the Shiga medical university (Otsu 1995), the Namekawa public housing of the Ibaragi prefecture (1997), the Miura Art Village (1997), the Suzu Living Art Center (Ishikawa 2006) as well as the Taisei middle school and high school (Shizuoka 2004). Elected honorary member of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) in 1997 and the AIA (American Institute of Architects) in 2006, Hasegawa Itsuko has also had a long teaching career: since 1988, in Tokyo at the Waseda and Hosei universities as well as at the TIT, but also at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She has been teaching since 2001 at the Kanto-Gakuin University.

TANAKA A.

■ *Itsuko Hasegawa*, Londres/Berlin, Academy Editions/Ernst & Sohn, 1993; *Itsuko Hasegawa. Island Hopping*, Rotterdam, NAI, 2000; avec Schéou A., *Réalisation et projets récents/Recent Buildings and Projects*, Paris/Bâle/Boston, Institut français d'architecture/ Birkhäuser, 1997.

[...]



Inanna-ama-mu

[19th century B.C.]

Mesopotamian scribe.

Writing was invented circa 3500-3200 B.C., in the region between the Tigris and the Euphrates, the cradle of Mesopotamian

civilization. The art of this cuneiform writing was long reserved for scribes, among them a large number of women, as was shown by the tablets discovered by the archeologists in Sippar, a city some 30 kilometers southwest of Baghdad. The best-known of these women scribes, Inanna-ama-mu, whose name in Sumerian means "the goddess is my mother", is the one who left the greatest number of documents: she was the author, authenticated by researchers, of at least 19 tablets found in Sippar. Having lived and worked in the temple dedicated to the god Shamash in the service of the *naditum* ("women priests"), it is very likely that she learned her profession in the family setting, from her father, a scribe identified under the name of Abba-tabum. The documents she wrote concerned accounts of trials, tenant farming contracts, a purchase of a slave and the settlement of a dispute that ended in the recovery of a field by a woman. Their study has provided little information on the scribe herself; it is more about an account of the life of the *gagum* ("cloister"), which more specifically provides us with information on the role and status of the woman at the beginning of the Paleo-Babylonian period.

G. ARTIN

■ Gadaut G., "Les femmes dans les inscriptions royales de Mésopotamie III^e-I^{er} millénaires av. J.-C.", in *Topoi*, Suppl. 10, 2009; Lion B., "Dame Inanna-ama-mu, scribe à Sippar", in *Revue d'Assyriologie*, vol. 95, no. 1, 2001; Id., "Les femmes scribes de Sippar", in *Topoi*, Suppl. 10, 2009.

[...]



Kuznetsova, Valentina Mihailovna
[Russia 1937]

and Kuznetsova, Irina Mihailovna
[Moscow 1961]

Russian explorers.

When she was a child, Valentina Mihailovna Kuznetsova narrowly escaped being executed along with her mother by the German Army when it invaded the USSR. Traumatized by this event, she was considered too fragile by the doctors to have a normal education. This in no way stopped her from throwing herself into her passion, skiing, at a very young age. Taking part in hikes then in increasingly long treks (notably a seven-day endurance course whose average legs were 100 kilometers), she imagined crossing the Antarctic on skis with a totally female team. She needed 14 years to convince the Soviet authorities (who prohibited women researchers' stays in their station in Antarctica) and to successfully carry out this feat, finally accomplished in 1988, in 30 days. Her daughter, Irina Mihailovna Kuznetsova, one of the participants, has since taken up the torch. Her intention is to circumnavigate the Arctic, with stops in each coastal country, and taking scientific samples. C. MOUCHARD

■ Polk M., Tiegreen M., *Women of Discovery*, New York, Clarkson Potter, 2001.

[...]



Langer, Marie

(born Glass)

[Vienna 1910 - Buenos Aires 1987]

Argentine doctor and psychoanalyst.

Born into an upper middle-class Viennese family, cultivated and progressive, Marie Langer was, from her childhood, faced with the harsh realities of the war causing the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had reached its heyday at the end of the 19th century. She studied in a private school, where, thanks to the principal who had frequented exiled Russian revolutionaries in Zurich, she had access to Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud's thinking. After her medical studies and a specialization first in anesthesiology, then in psychiatry, she began her analytical training and took part in the meetings of the Viennese Psychoanalysis Society, without however being a member because of her political activities. In 1932, she joined the Austrian Communist Party, which had just become clandestine, and from this point on never stopped fighting every form of dictatorship. She went to Berlin where she completed her training with Helene Deutsch* and Jeanne Lampl-de Groot*. Forced to leave Germany with the rise of Nazism, she arrived in Spain in 1936, enrolled as an anesthesiologist in the International Brigades and met Max Langer, a military surgeon. The victory of Francoism forced them to emigrate to Montevideo, in Uruguay, where she gave lectures for the Spanish Republican support committee. In 1942, she moved to Buenos Aires where she joined the group that founded the Argentine Psychoanalytical Association, while keeping secret links with the Argentine Communist Party. Her interest in women's condition led her to publish, in 1951, *Maternidad y sexo*, which would mark a milestone in the study of the complex relationship between sterility, maternity and women's sexuality. She was co-founder of the Plataforma group whose objective was to modify in depth the politics of psychoanalysis and the training methods for analysts. This movement had major repercussions on the future of Argentina as well as Brazilian psychoanalysis societies. After the lecture "Psycoanálisis y/o revolución social",

which she gave in Vienna, in 1971, during the International Psychoanalytical Association Congress (and which was published in issue I of the review *Cuestionamos*, in Buenos Aires in 1972), she resigned from the Argentine Psychoanalysis Association, as she felt that the political situation already showed signs of a military takeover. Threatened by a death squad after the return of Juan Perón to power, she emigrated to Mexico City where she continued the fight. After the terror imposed by General Videla in 1976, she founded, in Mexico, the Mexico-Nicaragua brigade to promote therapies inspired by psychoanalysis. She continued to work on the psychological effects of exile and repression. A year before her death, she organized in Cuba the first psychoanalysis colloquium on the theme of suicide. A woman of conviction, seeing her commitments through to the end, she took part in every battle, putting all her courage and determination not only in promoting psychoanalysis but also in fighting social injustice and all forms of barbarism, whether state or institutional.

C. TALAGRAND

■ *Procréation et sexualité (Maternidad y sexo, 1951)*, Paris, *Des femmes*-Antoinette Fouque, 1988.

[...]

Laouadi, Naïma

[Tizi Ouzou 1976]

Algerian football player.

Naïma Laouadi founded the national women's football team of Algeria. The history of women's football is part of women's fight for their freedom. Up against the prohibition in Europe in the early 20th century against women playing this sport reserved for men, they responded by creating women's leagues and organizing competitions. It was not until the late 1960s that this practice was recognized, and until 1991 for the International Football Federation (FIFA) to organize the first women's world cup. It took courage for girls in the Maghreb, once they were past the age of children during which they played football with boys, to be able to keep putting on the "crampons of freedom". In Algeria, clubs with girls' sections, organizing popular but unoffi-

cial friendly tournaments, were rare. An athlete and judoka in a country where sports at school was optional for girls, N. Laouadi formed a women's football team in the club of her home town, with the support of the director of Jeunesse sportive of Kabylia. Algeria then went through a decade of civil war between the national army and Islamist groups, and many women were attacked or assassinated. Hassiba Boulmerka*, the Olympic champion, was threatened for having run in shorts. N. Laouadi did not give in to terrorism and continue to go out to train. Supported by the Ministry of Youth, she succeeded in creating, in 1997, the first national women's football team, whose captain she became. For the first time an Arab, bareheaded women's team reached the quarter finals of the Africa Cup in 2004 and won the Arab Cup in 2006. The great talent of this pioneer opened a professional career to her in France and Germany. She has played in many international competitions and is devoting herself today to Algerian women football players. If she is delighted with the increasing number of women's teams in Algeria, she regrets the inadequate investment in infrastructures and the absence of women at the head of sports bodies. She denounces the misogyny of the media and their lack of consideration for the undeniable talent of women football players.

J. PICOT

■ Afaspa, *Femmes d'Afrique, bâtisseuses d'avenir*, Paris, Tirésias, 2010.

[...]



Ma Ma Lay

(born Ma Tin Hlain)

[Karmaklu 1917 - Yangon 1982]

Burmese writer and journalist.

Born into a family of bankers, Ma Ma Lay was one of five children. She debuted in the literary world under the pseudonym of Ya Wai Liang, publishing articles and short stories. In 1939, she founded *The Journal Kyaw* with her husband U Chit Maung, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Myanma Alin Maily*, in which she had already written an article in 1936, "Being an Educated Woman", and adopted the nom de plume Ma Ma Lay. Considered one of the greatest Burmese writers of the 20th century, she was the author of over 20 works and short stories published in monthly reviews. Known for her art of showcasing modern society in a simple and clear style, she attracted readers of all ages. In 1946, she launched *Pyith Hittaing* ("The People's Voice"). A few years later, her printing company was destroyed by students hostile to her tendencies that were considered too left-wing. She published *Thu lo lu* ("A Person Like Him", 1947), a bestseller that traces the story of her late husband and evokes the complementarity of the couple, a very popular theme in Myanmar. In 1950, she once again managed a printing company, but one that was on a smaller scale. She was the first woman to chair the Authors Association in 1948. Observing the limits of Western medicine following the unexplained death of her husband and the failure of an operation performed on her daughter's leg by a British surgeon, she studied traditional medicine for 15 years before opening a clinic in Yangon. She traveled throughout the country to care for patients with serious pathologies (tuberculosis, cancer, hepatitis B, leprosy, elephantiasis) free of charge. *Not out of Hate* (1955) and *A Slow Stream of Thoughts and Burmese Medicine Tales* (1963) received literary prizes. The first, translated into English, French, Uzbek, Russian and Chinese, denounced the domination of British culture endangering her country's traditions. In 2006, the novel *Blood Bond* was adapted for the cinema by the Japanese director Chino Koji; the film, shot almost entirely in Myanmar (a rare

event under the military government) was presented outside competition during the 17th Tokyo International Festival.

S. SHWE DEMARIA

■ *Le Mal Aimé* (Mone ywé mahu, 1955), Paris, L'Harmattan, 1994; *Thway, le sang*, La Courneuve, Éd. AkR, 2006.

■ Sah M. N., *Myamma ab myo the mi*, Rangoon, Pi thauk lyain sapa, 2000.

[...]

Marie de France

[England? 12th century]

French writer.

The name "Marie de France" was coined in the 16th century by Claude Fauchet from a verse of the epilogue of her *Fables*: *Marie ai nom, si sui de France* ("I have for name Marie, and I come from France"). In reality, we only know her first name, Marie, indicated in the three works that have been generally attributed to her since the 18th century: the *Lais* (circa 1170), the *Fables* (circa 1180) and the *Espurgatoire seint Patris* (after 1189). At the end of the 12th century, a certain Denis Piramus, a cleric who condemned the immorality of certain secular works, put forward the fame of "lady Marie" and the success of her *Lais* with the aristocratic public, adding that counts, barons and knights liked to have them read and reread to them and that the work was particularly appreciated by the ladies (*Vie de saint Edmund*, ca. 1180). On the other hand, nothing is known about the writer's identity, except perhaps that her works reveal her culture and environment. Painted over a century later, a few miniatures supposed to depict her in two manuscripts of the *Fables* are in no way portraits. The "noble king" to whom she dedicated her lays is in all likelihood king Henri II Plantagenet. The very language of the text (with its Anglo-Norman characteristics), the fact that it includes Breton and English words, the reference to "Breton" oral traditions and her culture (she was familiar with Ovid and the first "antique novels": *Novel of Thebes* and the novel of *Aeneas*, 1150-1160) fit in well with the milieu of Henri II's court. Her collection of *Fables*, translated from an English work that "King Alfred" was said to

have translated from Latin, was dedicated to a “count Guillaume” who could have been Guillaume de Mandeville, Henri II’s companion. The first example conserved of “*ysopet*” in French or a collection of fables like those of Aesop, it inaugurated a genre that was clearly attested in the Middle Ages and provided the first French version of fables some of which are still well-known today thanks to La Fontaine (“The Wolf and the Lamb”, “The Crow and the Fox”). The *Espurgatoire*, a fairly faithful translation of a Latin text by Henri de Saltrey, an English Cistercian monk, is a tale of a journey to the beyond; totally penetrated by Celtic traditions, in the line of *Voyage of Saint Brendan* (early 12th century), it also contains one of the first representation of purgatory, unknown by earlier authors. Marie’s best-known work is without question the *Lais*, which is composed of 12 lays, preceded by a prologue according to the most complete version (conserved in a single manuscript). They are brief tales of love and adventure in octo-syllables, inspired by Breton musical “lays”. Several of them are tinged with the marvelous of Celtic origin and all of them are anchored in the folklore of Brittany and England, as shown by the onomastics. However, they are also marked by the ideology of courtly love, then in full development. The author reinterpreted these elements in a very personal way: each lay is a new variation on love, an idealized love that can only be achieved in another world reserved for lovers. These tales, in which there is little mention of knightly feats, often give unusual space to women’s words. Long considered a minor work by critics, the *Lais* by Marie de France enjoy great prestige today and appear as one of the greatest narrative and poetic successes of the 12th century.

A. PAUPERT

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Matto de Turner, Clorinda

[Cuzco ca. 1852 - Buenos Aires 1909]

Peruvian author.

A widow at the age of 29 of an English merchant and doctor, childless, and stripped of her inheritance by corrupt judges, Clorinda Matto de Turner devoted herself to journalism to earn her living and held a literary salon starting in 1886. She was the author of a varied body of work including “Traditions” (historical short stories), a play (*Hima Sumac*, 1884), a textbook on rhetoric, translations into Quechua of the Gospel, chronicles and literary essays, as well as three novels that made her famous: *Aves sin nido* (“Birds without a Nest”, 1889), *Índole* (“Class”, 1891) and *Herencia* (“Inheritance”, 1893), the sequel of the first novel. *Aves sin nido* earned her a place of choice in the history of Latin American literature, as the founder of indigenous literature. Using naturalistic codes, she presented Indians for the first time, denouncing the abuses they were the victims of, notably from large landowners and priests. If this first novel is set in an imaginary village of southern Peru, the other two take place in Lima, but denouncing as virulently civil servants and corrupt clergy. With Mercedes Cabello and Teresa González de Fanning, she was part of the first circle of enlightened women in Peru. Faced with many criticisms and aggressions of all kinds, she was excommunicated and forced into exile in 1895, moved to Argentina, and devoted the end of her life to her many trips to Europe, where she formed ties with women’s and feminist organizations.

K. BENMILOUD

■ Denegri F., *El abanico y la cigarrera. La primera generación de mujeres ilustradas en el Perú*, Lima, Flora Tristán/IEP, 1996; Tauro A., *Clorinda Matto de Turner y la Novela Indigenista*, Lima, UNMSM, 1976.

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[...]

[...]

Mendelssohn, Fanny

[Hamburg 1805 - Berlin 1847]

German composer.

"I am reasonably alone with my music", the most prolific creator of the 19th century confided. The eldest of four children, Fanny Mendelssohn belonged to one of the most celebrated families in Prussia. Her father Abraham was the son of the German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. Her mother Lea was the granddaughter of Daniel Itzig, Frederick II's banker and the first Jewish citizen to enjoy the same rights as Christians. Her aunts Fanny Arnstein and Sarah Levy held renowned salons. Her aunt Dorothea Schlegel*, the mother of the painter Philipp Veit, participated in literary romanticism alongside her second husband, Friedrich Schlegel. Her uncle Jakob Bartholdy, consul of Prussia in Rome, was the patron of the Casa Bartholdi. A year spent in Italy led to the conversion of several members of the family to Christianity. In 1816 in Berlin, Abraham and Lea Mendelssohn had their four children embrace Lutheranism in order to facilitate their assimilation. Fanny's younger brother was the renowned composer Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847). In 1829, Fanny married Wilhem Hensel, a painter at the court of Berlin, with whom she had a son, Sebastian Hensel. She opened the way to her brother Felix's career by building her own. In Berlin, they benefited from an exemplary education with Ludwig Berger for the piano, Friedrich Zelter for counterpoint and theory, and were admitted in 1820 to the Singakademie, a temple to the glory of Johann Sebastian Bach, honored by the entire Mendelssohn family. Goethe thought that "the sister was as gifted as the brother", in whom he saw "the sublime child". However, whereas Felix traveled throughout Europe and built a magnificent career, Fanny had to content herself with a more modest one. Apart from two extended trips to Italy (1839-1840, 1845), her anchoring point remained Berlin throughout her life, where she continued the family's *Sonntagsmusiken* (Sunday musical mornings), assiduously attended by the local and international intelligentsia. An enlightened spirit, highly

cultivated, she knew every eminent figure in Prussia. She composed over 400 works, most of them unpublished. Her many pieces for piano (*Lieder ohne Worte*, *Das Jahr*, 1840), constituted the most completed part with her 300 or so lieder, only about 30 of which were published in her lifetime. To this must be added a capella choruses (*Gartenlieder*), cantatas (*Lobgesang* and *Hiob*, 1831), dramatic scenes (*Hero und Leander*, 1832), an oratorio (*Oratorium nach Bildern der Bibel*, 1831), which did not conceal Bach's influence, and a few pages of chamber and orchestra music. A style does not emerge out of these rather diverse works, marked one after the other by Bach, Beethoven and Ignaz Moscheles, but they demonstrate sometimes complex, innovative and always personal research that, in addition to the surrounding romanticism, swung between post-classicism and what was already post-romanticism, intellectualism and expressionism. This catalogue reveals the affinities of Fanny and Felix, the latter however hindering the publication of his sister's works. Although the brother was very attached to his sister, whom he admired to the point of not surviving her, he believed it his duty, after their father, to not encourage her gifts considered incompatible with her obligations of a wife, mother and society woman. So the first six lieder by Fanny that were published, were inserted, without mentioning her name, in Felix's *Gesänge* opus 8 and 9. It was only in 1846 that the younger sibling finally reluctantly gave in. Fanny had the time to publish 12 *Lieder* opus 1 and 7 and pieces for piano before she had a fatal stroke. After her death, her family had *Lieder ohne Worte*, her recent and magnificent *Trio with Piano* opus 11 and 12 *Lieder* opus 9 and 10 published. Marked by a bursting lyricism that enchanted Goethe, her lieder drew, with perfect good taste, inspiration from Goethe, Schiller, Ludwig Tieck, Ludwig Uhland, Joseph von Eichendorff, Heinrich Heine and Nikolaus Lenau. Playing, directing: everything that she didn't have the right to do in public, Fanny accomplished in the Mendelssohn residence in Berlin. She was thus the only woman *Capellmeister* (conductor and chorus director) of the century. In Rome, warmly welcomed at the Villa Medici by Ingres, the

painter and violinist, and by the residents, including Gounod, she played entire scores by Bach, Mozart and Beethoven and some of her own by memory. Gounod called her “an outstanding musician, a remarkable pianist, a woman of superior spirit, gifted with rare faculties as a composer”. B. FRANÇOIS-SAPPEY

■ François-Sappey B., *La Musique dans l'Allemagne romantique*, Paris, Fayard, 2009; Hensel S., *Die Familie Mendelssohn 1729-1847, nach Briefen und Tagebüchern*, Berlin, B. Behr, 1879; Tillard F., *Fanny Mendelssohn*, Paris, Belfond, 1992; Weissweiler E. (dir.), *Fanny Mendelssohn, ein Portrait in Briefen*, Frankfurt, Ullstein, 1985.

[...]



Novelists

[Sub-Saharan Africa since 1960]

The period from 1960 to 2010 - the 50 years of postcolonial independence for the former French territories - for the most part corresponds to the birth and development of women's writing in Sub-Saharan Africa. Whereas a number of women writers from the Maghreb, the Mashriq and Egypt wrote at the start of the 20th century and during the 1940s - the Algerian Marguerite Taos Amrouche* published *Jacinthe noire* in 1947, the Syrian Ulfat al-Udilbi* published *Al Qarar Al Akbeer*, distinguished that same year, the Egyptian Nawal el-Saadawi* and the Lebanese Etel Adnan* published articles and texts during the 1950s -, it was only at the beginning of independence that Anglophone women writers came to the fore alongside their male colleagues. The

Kenyan Grace Ogot* with *The Promised Land* (1966), the Nigerians Flora Nwapa* with *Efuru* (1966) and Buchi Emecheta* with *In the Ditch* (1972), the South African Bessie Head* with *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968) were pioneers, B. Emecheta publishing six novels in the 1970s including *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979). For the Francophone women writers, it was not until the end of the 1960s that what is considered the first novel appeared, *Rencontres essentielles* (1968) by the Cameroonian Thérèse Kuoh Moukouri* (right after an autobiographical account by her compatriot Marie-Claire Matip*) and especially in the 1970s during which a few names, mainly Senegalese, appeared, with, alongside the Malian Aoua Kéita* with *Femme d'Afrique, la vie d'Aoua Kéita par elle-même* (1975), Aminata Sow Fall*, with *Le Revenant* (1976) and *La Grève des battù* (1979), Nafissatou Diallo* with her autobiography *De Tilène au Plateau, une enfance dakaroise* (1975), Mariama Bâ* with *Une si longue lettre* (1979), and the sociologist Awa Thiam*, also Senegalese, with *La Parole aux Négresses* (1978). What characterizes these first works - apart from those by A. Sow Fall for whom being a woman is only one component, like being a Senegalese citizen - was the choice of an autobiographical or semi-autobiographical narrative form in order to avoid any risk of censorship in presenting politics as personal. In a certain way, it was about correcting, from within, the portraits of African women in which the colonial novel like the African novelists and poets had shut them in: emerging from the image of the woman-mother-Africa, guardian of traditions, or her antithetic counterpart, the prostitute, a metaphor of the consequence of colonialism, especially in the urban milieu.

The 1980s brought with them a new generation of rebellious writers, focused on a more directly critical approach to postcolonial African societies, and who would shake up the norms of the novel. Through, notably, writing dealing with physical abuse, writers like Ken Bugul*, Angèle Rawiri (with *G'amarakano, au Carrefour*, 1983 and *Fureurs et cris de femmes*, 1989)

and Calixthe Beyala acquired the means of tackling the question of women's status as wives, mothers, daughters, daughters-in-law, etc., within their community, and what maternity, the polygynic marriage, sterility, etc. represented in this context, whether in the rural or urban milieu (in which Anglophone writers like F. Nwapa tended to favor shedding light on the rural milieu). M. Bâ, who was awarded the Japanese literary prize Noma in 1980 for *Une si longue lettre*, given for the first time to an African writer, was one of the authors who succeeded in giving new visibility to novels written by women. The same is true for the poet, novelist and playwright Werewere Liking* with *Elle sera de jaspe et de corail, journal d'une misovire* (1983); Véronique Tadjo* with *Latérite* (1984) and *À vol d'oiseau* (1986); Tanella Boni* with *Une vie de crabe* (1989); Ken Bugual who, with *Le Baobab fou* (1983) and what composes with *Cendres et Braises* and *Riwan ou le Chemin de sable* an autobiographical trilogy, imposes the writing of the "I"; or C. Beyala, who with her first three novels (*C'est le soleil qui m'a brûlée*, *Tu t'appelleras Tanga*, *Seul le diable le savait*) appropriated a language and a sphere that was until that point exclusively a male prerogative. Each of them helped impose writing that was no longer on the fringes, for a mostly female readership, but on the contrary, visible and a part of the central literary landscape. The authors of children's literature like Fatou Keïta*, Justine Mintsä* and V. Tadjo also pushed this inclusion even further. Alongside these authors, writing mainly from the African continent (apart from C. Beyala), a certain number of critics and authors must also be mentioned. They are also key in terms of the path they chose to follow in African literary creation: Lyliane Kesteloot*, based at the Cheikh Anata Diop University in Dakar, the author of many seminal critical works on African literature, with a rewriting of *Soundiata*, children's stories; Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, author of *Re-Creating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations* (1994); Irène Assiba d'Almeida who, with *Francophone African Women Writers: Destroying the*

Emptiness of Silence (1994) opened the way to a feminist analysis of African women turning to writing: Annette Mbaye d'Erneville*, the first woman radio journalist, who launched in 1957 the review *Femmes de soleil*, founder of the Women's Museum in Gorée in Senegal; or Odile Tobner, founder with her husband Mongo Beti of the review *Peuples noirs, peuples africains*, to which she regularly contributed, co-author of the *Dictionnaire de la négritude* (1989) with M. Beti, also author of several essays, including *Du racisme français, quatre siècles de négrophobie* (2007). Themselves creative, they have, all of them, each in her field, excavated and carved a space of recognition for women creators and African literature. The novelists of the 1990s to the present day have continued the movement and turned to writing that compelled recognition, no longer marginal but central, visible, without favoring one readership over another, including political aspects through experimentation with aesthetic forms. To those already mentioned of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, Monique Ilboudo*, Michèle Rakotoson*, themselves followed by Bessora*, Nathalie Etoké*, F. Keïta, then Fatou Diome*, Léonora Miano*, Zoë Wicomb*, Amma Darko* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie* can be added.

Forty years after G. Ogot and F. Nwapa, 20 years after M. Bâ, "the commitment to women is shown first by an increase in the scope of the questions asked by the writers as well as their vision, faced with the globalization phenomenon, questions on armed conflicts, power and human rights, or in the confrontation of the past and the inhuman". The theme became diversified and went beyond women's status in the family and social setting and included the urgency of bearing witness, of writing against forgetfulness, of reappropriating history, of reappropriating one's own history for oneself. This is the approach that is found for example in *Lalana* (2002) by M. Rakotoson, in *La Mémoire amputée* (2003) by W. Liking, in *Reine Pokou, concerto pour un sacrifice* (2004) by V. Tadjo, in *Inyenzi ou les Cafards* (2006) and in *La Femme aux pieds nus* (2008) by Scholastique Mukasonga.

Recounting the inexpressible and pondering the question of its implications in ethical and aesthetic terms is found in Goretti Kyomuhendo* in *Secrets No More* (1999), or in V. Tadjó in *L'Ombre d'Imana, voyage jusqu'au bout du Rwanda* (2000); recounting armed conflicts and depicting "the terror of violence" to use Dominique Baqué's expression, recounting and bending before what cannot be represented as with Ananda Devi in *Pagli* (2001), *Soupir* (2002) or *Indian tango* (2007), in A. Darko with *Faceless* (2003), in L. Miano notably with *Tels des astres éteints* (2008); also recounting the immigration experience, including under cover of humor, as is done by C. Beyala in her "Parisian" novels, Bessora in *53 cm* (1999) or *Deux bébés et l'addition* (2002) or F. Diome in *La Préférence nationale* (2000). All these authors invite us today to rethink the inclusion of politics in a diversified artistic expression that uses polyphony, the fragment and a burst of narration, but also a rich and complex imagination. O. CAZENAVE

■ Cazenave O., *Femmes rebelles, naissance d'un nouveau roman africain au féminin*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1996; Davies C. B., *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*, Londres, Routledge, 1994; Harrow K., *Less than One and Double, A Feminist Reading of African Women's Writing*, Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2002; Lee S., *Les Romancières du continent noir*, Paris, Hatier, 1994; Mohanty C., *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Durham/ Londres, Duke University Press, 2003.

[...]



The UN and women's rights

There were four women among the delegates of the 50 countries that signed the United Nations charter in San Francisco on June 26, 1945: Virginia Gildersleeve (United States), Bertha Lutz (Brazil), Wu Yi-fang (China) and Minerva Bernardino (Dominican Republic). Their determination permitted the inclusion of the principle of "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion [...]".

UN Commission on the Status of Women (1946)

During the inaugural meeting of the General Assembly in London in February 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt*, a United States delegate, read an open letter to "the women of the world". Written on the initiative of Marie-Hélène Lefaucheur, a member of the French delegation, this letter called on "the governments of the world to encourage women everywhere to take a more active part in national and international affairs [...] and to share in the work of peace and reconstruction as they did in war and resistance". The newly created UN Commission on Human Rights, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, created the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women. The debate was heated: didn't this specific body risk marginalizing women by creating standards contrary to the principle of the universality of human rights? The Danish woman Bodil Begtrup*, the first chairperson of the Sub-commission, maintained that "women's problems have now for the first time in history to be studied as such internationally and be given the social importance they ought to have". On June 21, 1946, the Sub-Commission became the CSW, Commission on the Status of Women, responsible for "the preparation of recommendations and reports [...] on the promotion of women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields". Other texts detailed the scope of these rights: the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949); the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), which confirmed their right to vote and to be elected;

the first Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1967).

The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985)

In response to the demands of the women's movement, which had become worldwide and whose contribution, both theoretical and practical, had intensified and become richer, the Commission recommended making 1975 the "International Year of the Woman" and to accompany it with an international conference in order to raise awareness in the international community on the necessity of fighting extremely deep-rooted discrimination. Out of the 133 governmental delegations present in Mexico City, 113 were led by women. The gap between the proclaimed principle of equality and reality was so wide that a first World Plan of Action for the advancement of women was adopted and the decision was made to transform the International Year into a United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985), presented as an "international effort at correcting the errors of history". Created in this framework were the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-Outstraw) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW*) asserted that sex-based discrimination "is incompatible with human dignity [...] that it prevents [women's] participation, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries and is an obstacle to the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity". Strikingly modern, the CEDAW is still, today, the most important declaration of women's rights and an invaluable support for action. The two evaluation conferences (Copenhagen, 1980; Nairobi, 1985) demonstrated the inadequacy of the progress achieved. With the adoptions of Forward-Looking Strategies of Nairobi for the advancement of women by 2000, 127 member states established national institutions and mechanisms intended to ensure the participation of women in the decision-making, development and policy-management processes,

research and programs aiming at promoting their rights.

The 1990s

The publication, in 1992, of the first compilation of statistical data on the role of women and their contribution to humanity radically changed global consciousness: women appeared in it as the first producers of wealth at the same time as the first victims of a world that excluded them. Without counting the energy devoted to the tasks connected to caring for and educating children, they accomplished two thirds of human labor (most of non-market production and the lion's share of activities in the informal sector), but only received 10% of the available income and only owned 1% of all property. They played a central role in the improvement in the health of communities, in the feeding and education of children, in the protection of the environment, but represented 70% of the human beings living below the poverty line and two thirds of the people deprived of any education. In her study used in the report of the UNDF (United Nations Development Fund) in 1993, the economist Amartya Sen estimated at 100 millions the number of women missing from the global population due to the discrimination they were subjected to: abortions of female foetuses, the infanticide of girls, discrimination in access to food, selective medical care, genital mutilation and other violence, pregnancies and childbirth under poor conditions... This reality would be placed in the heart of the UN conferences in the 1990s, all focused on development, the survival of the planet and the human species. In Rio (1992), women's skills in managing natural resources were recognized; the Vienna Declaration (1993) stated for the first time that "the human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights"; the International Conference on Population and Development of Cairo (1994) made the right of women to control their fertility and their "reproductive health" fundamental, as well as their equal participation in the world's affairs, the conditions of human development; in Copenhagen (1995), their role in the elimination of poverty was recognized; in Beijing,

finally, at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the declaration made women the principal actors of development and of the democratization process. The international community chose as a priority goal the strengthening of their power of action in every field and at every level.

A renewal of the vision of the world of this scope, undoubtedly never before seen in the history of thought, was made possible through the fertile encounter between a dynamic and creative global women's liberation movement and the UN, which supported it by mobilizing all its resources. For the first time, women organized in NGOs by the tens of thousands on the four continents - they were 12,000 in Nairobi and 35,000 in Beijing - made the voice of civil society heard on the international stage, civil society becoming a genuine partner of UN institutions. The NGOs benefited from the presence of the states' women delegates, who constituted a majority among the official representatives and who became increasingly involved in the defense of women's rights and the action of the European Union, which appeared as a flagship continent in this respect.

The 2000s: a nuanced observation

This new awareness of the challenges, the progress made, the many laws on equality and emancipation adopted on every continent were not enough however to transform the world order. Under the triple effect of the crisis, religious fundamentalist movements and the absence of the heads of states' political determination, women were still the victims of poverty, exclusion and violence. Too few governments honored their commitments, and resistance to a budding egalitarian democracy was considerable. Despite the request of many NGOs, the Fifth World Conference has still not been scheduled. However, the Beijing Platform for Action remains, today, the surest support for women in the world and, since 2000, an optional protocol at the CEDAW permits those who are individually or collectively victims of discrimination to bring their case before the Commission on the Status of Women. In 2010, the Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), created out of the

merger of two existing bodies, set the goal of working toward accelerating the improvement in women's status in the world. It has been headed, since January 1, 2011, by the former president of Chile Michelle Bachelet*.

C. BRELET ET M. IDELS

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[...]



Weavers

[Tibet]

Women, wives and daughters of craftsmen, certainly play a role in the creative process of most craft fields, but this role remains limited to that of assistants for the preparation of materials or the less complex processes, while the craftsman himself uses his skill in highly specialized creative activities. Women, however, almost entirely control textile crafts: weaving, preparing wool, dying and making carpets.

In certain parts of the Himalayas (Ladakh, Bhutan), weaving is assimilated with conceiving a child: the warp symbolizes the mother, the shuttle the father and the result (the cloth) their child. The loom and the materials are generally identified with the female sphere. In Mustang and

Nepal, weaving implements can be used to push away demons. Apart from central Ladakh and a few regions in central Tibet, weaving is a woman's activity that could perhaps be related to the rules of patrilineal affiliation. Although a wife (or a daughter) practically gives up her lineage when she marries or has her first child, she still remains connected to her family of origin by a tenuous but very real link through the maternal line. This can be seen for example in the gift of textiles, made by the woman herself, and that she distributes in her family when she returns there. The analogy between textile production and maternity, as well as the "polluting" nature for men of weaving and implements, can evoke the difficulty and therefore the danger that the inclusion of an unknown (wife, daughter-in-law) from a foreign line represents for that of the future husband and his family.

The importance of weaving for the women of the sedentary communities in Tibet is shown by the emblem created in 1939 for the "Reformist Party of western Tibet": alongside mountains, a sickle and a sword, we can glimpse a loom. It seems obvious that the democratic and socialist visionaries and reformers were totally aware of the important role that women played and could be led to play in the politics of Tibet, hence this archetypal object that symbolized their presence in society.

V. RONGE

■ Ahmed M., *Living Fabric. Weaving among the Nomads of Ladakh Himalaya*, Trumbull/Bangkok, Wetherhill/Orchid Press, 2002.

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[...]

Woolf, Virginia

(born Stephen)

[London 1882 - London 1941]

British novelist and essayist.

Virginia Woolf spent her childhood in a rich intellectual and artistic circle. She learned Greek, Latin, German and history

in a London college (1897-1901), while suffering from several nervous breakdowns after the death of her mother and one of her sisters, but also following sexual abuse by her half-brothers. At the age of 22, she became the muse of the Bloomsbury Group and she married Leonard Woolf in 1912. Together they founded Hogarth Press, which published Forster, T. S. Eliot and, starting in 1921, Freud's complete works. In 1915, she published her first novel, *The Voyage Out*. In 1928 she started a love affair with Vita Sackville-West without however neglecting her husband. After her immense literary success, her mental health deteriorated and she drowned herself. She is certainly the greatest woman innovator of English literature, developing and refining, after Dorothy Richardson*, the "stream of consciousness" technique without separating it from a radical feminist and political commitment. In *Jacob's Room* (1922), her first masterpiece, the main character is a young man seeking the reality of things. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) blurs the edges between consciousness, moments and spaces, blending a direct and a free indirect style, omniscience and inner monologue, and, at the same time, a denunciation of economic and sexual oppression and the narcissistic middle class. Two years later, *To the Lighthouse* (1927) glorified woman's love, the woman as the creator of the meaning of things. In *Orlando* (1928), a light but brilliant narrative, a young man is transformed into a woman during a trip to Constantinople. *Three Guineas* (1938) is an engaged essay that examines the problems of women faced with male power and advocates a change in their education and social status. *Between the Acts* (1941) sums up her entire body of work, a symbolic, lyrical narrative of degradation and resurgence, a mixture of prose and poetry that encompasses the history of England, a meditation on time, sexual ambivalence and how life is transformed by art.

M. REMY

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[...]



Yonath, Ada

[Jerusalem 1939]

Israeli biologist, Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2009.

Born into a very poor Jewish family originally from Poland, having lost her rabbi father when she was 10 years old, Ada Yonath could however, encouraged by her family, continue her education under the difficult conditions of students who take any kind of job to subsist. The interest she showed from childhood in understanding natural mechanisms and her admiration for Marie Curie* inspired her to study science. In 1964 she obtained a master's in biochemistry and, in 1968, a doctorate from the Weitzmann Institute of Science, near Tel Aviv. She also studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Carnegie Mellon University. In 1970, she founded the first protein crystallography laboratory in Israel. Ten years later, the young scientist decided, despite her colleagues' skepticism, to decode the mechanism of the action of ribosomes. She discovered that these small structures, present in all living cells as well as in mitochondria, function like genuine "cell protein factories". By translating the information carried by the genes, she assembled amino acids to form the corresponding proteins. A. Yonath's work consequently concerns what characterizes life because, without ribosomes, DNA, responsible for heredity, cannot be expressed. Among other prizes and honors, she received the 2008 L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science. She was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry jointly with the American researchers Venkatraman Ramakrishnan and Thomas Steitz

for their work on "the structure and function of the ribosome". for which they established a detailed map, and for having opened the way to new antibiotics. The fourth woman Nobel prizewinner in chemistry and the ninth Israeli to be so honored, A. Yonath has been involved since the beginning in the project of opening in Jordan, in 2015, Sesame, the first synchrotron in the Middle East, which is uniting Turkey, Cyprus, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Iran, Bahrain and Pakistan.

N. CASANOVA

[...]

Yousafzai, Malala

[Mingora 1997]

Pakistani activist for girls' right to education.

Malala Yousafzai grew up in the valley of Swat where battles between government forces and the Taliban took place from 2007 to 2010. The Taliban destroyed girls' schools and in 2009 banned their education by religious decree. Backed by her family and her father, a teacher, secular activist and president of an association of private schools, Malala Yousafzai revealed this daily violence in her "Diary of a Pakistani Schoolgirl" on a blog hosted by the BBC. She then publicly appeared in the international media to defend girls' rights to an education and in 2011 received the first National Youth Peace Prize. In October 2012, she was the victim of an assassination attempt by Islamist extremists for her "pioneering role in secularism". The day after the attack, Pakistani schoolgirls and students took part in numerous demonstrations. The entire world then found out about Malala's battle. Gordon Brown, put in charge by the United Nations of a children's school registration program, paid tribute to her courage and Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the UN, proposed making November 10 an international "Malala" day. In January 2013, she received the Simone de Beauvoir Prize for Women's Freedom and, from Great Britain where she is convalescing, announced the creation of a fund bearing her name and intended for children's education.

J. PICOT

[...]



Zambrano, María

[Vélez-Málaga 1904 - Madrid 1991]

Spanish philosopher and essayist.

The daughter of teachers, María Zambrano Alarcón spent her childhood in Segovia where her father became friends with the poet Antonio Machado. In 1924, the family moved to Madrid. She studied philosophy under José Ortega y Gasset and Xavier Zubiri. In 1930, she published her first book, *Horizonte del liberalismo* ("The Horizons of Liberalism"). In 1931, as she was an assistant professor of metaphysics, she prepared her doctoral dissertation entitled *La salvación del individuo en Spinoza* ("The Salvation of the Individual in Spinoza"). Her first essay, *¿Por qué se escribe?* ("Why Does One Write?"), appeared in 1933 in *Revista de Occidente*. She then collaborated with other reviews, *Los Cuatro Vientos* and *Cruz y Raya*, and formed relationships with writers, including those of the "generation of 27". In 1936, she married the historian and embassy secretary, Alfonso Rodríguez Aldave; they left for Havana and Chile. They returned the following year in the midst of the civil war. They joined the army to defend the Republic; she was appointed "propaganda advisor" and "national advisor for evacuated children". In January 1939, she went into exile with her family in France, where she carried out an intense literary activity and published, that same year, *Pensamiento y poesía en la vida española* ("Thinking and Poetry in Spanish Life") and *Philosophie et poésie (Filosofía y poesía)*. Separated from her husband in 1948, she started to take care of her sister Araceli, whom she discovered in Paris

and who had been the victim of Nazi tortures. They lived together until Araceli's death in 1972. Then came years of a nomadic life in America (New York, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Havana), then in Europe (Paris, Rome, La Pièce in Jura, Geneva). She returned to Spain only in 1984, after 45 years in exile. Among her most important works are *Los sueños y el tiempo*, ("Dreams and Time". 1939), *El hombre y lo divino*, ("Man and the Divine". 1951), *Persona y democracia* ("Person and Democracy". 1958). She then moved toward mysticism, with *Claros del bosque*, ("The Clearings in the Woods". 1977) and *De la aurora*, ("Of Dawn". 1986). The author considered that philosophy starts with the divine and the explanation of daily things. This leads to two postulates: the creation of the person and poetic reason, both fundamental, both linked to the phenomenology of the divine and history. The creation of the person is the center of her thinking: the human being with his or her aspirations, nostalgia, hopes, failures and tragedies as the fundamental problem to be solved. The subject of poetic reason is one of the keystones of her philosophy. It is a question of instilling a "poetic thinking" able to go beyond the abyss between philosophy and poetry. In her work, these elements intertwine and blend. An article by the philosopher José Luis Aranguren in *Revisita de Occidente* in 1966 initiated the slow recognition of her work in Spain. In 1980, she was named "adoptive daughter of the principality of the Asturias". her first official recognition. In 1981, she was awarded the Prince of the Asturias prize and was named "favorite daughter" by her native city. In 1982, she became a doctor honoris causa of the university of Málaga; in 1988, she was honored with the Cervantes prize. A foundation is named after her, as is the library of the Cervantes Institute of Rome (she is the only writer to have deserved such an honor among the 47 libraries that exist around the world). Major philosophers founded, in 1997, the Asociación española de filosofía María Zambrano.

M. J. VILALTA

■ *Philosophie et poésie (Filosofía y poesía, 1939)*, Paris, José Corti, 2003; *L'Homme et le Divin (El hombre y lo divino, 1951)*, Paris, José Corti, 2006; *Sentiers (Senderos, 1986)*, Paris, *Des femmes*-Antoinette Fouque, 1992.

[...]

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