

*la rose* was a decisive moment in her establishment as a “credible, authoritative ‘other’ voice” (1). In fact, it is Christine’s defense of women that makes her retelling and re-working of history, myth, and allegory truly subversive.

One of the more explicit explications of the centrality of this motif in Christine’s writing is when she talks about the positions and conditions of those who are lodged in Fortune’s castle in book 3, where it “is told of the misfortunes of women” (107). It is clear that Christine makes use of the allegorical figure of Fortune that was so prevalent in medieval literature not in order to explain but to criticize the powers that be, as when she apologizes for not talking about the vices of women: “I did not do that because in my opinion, whatever women’s shortcoming may be (because there is no one without vice) their greatest misdeed or malice surely does little to worsen the state of the world” (103). As women are “little involved in the essential dealings of government” (103), the evil that happens in the world does not come from them—or from Fortune—but from those who actually have the power. This view is also what makes Christine’s retelling of the big narratives in the history of Western literature, especially the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* (books 6 and 7), so fresh. In fact, the medieval author anticipates a device used by the mid-twentieth-century novelist Jean Rhys responding to Charlotte Brontë’s story of the madwoman in the attic.

In Christine’s versions of the eternal histories of love and war and the power relationship between men and women, stereotypes oscillate. This is not a sign of mediocrity but of the relevance of this medieval author today, and thanks to Smith’s smooth translation of the book’s Middle French and helpful guide to the continually growing scholarly literature on Christine de Pizan, the mutability of her work will have good opportunities to live on in new ways.

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*Histoires de mariage: Le mariage dans la fiction narrative française (1515–1559).*  
Laetitia Dion.

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Among the several challenges to Catholic marriage traditions during the Reformation and Counter-Reformations, it can be argued that the changing role of parental consent had the deepest repercussions, at least in France. It became a touchstone in the crisis of authority between church and state, as demonstrated by royal edicts beginning in 1556. At the beginning of the Council of Trent in 1545, the church continued to insist that couples could form legitimate unions on their own, without the benediction of a priest or the publication of bans, let alone the consent of their parents. By the time the council ended its work in 1563, the church had to a large measure reversed course, under pres-

sure from the French Crown. French kings continued to legislate around marriage for the duration of the monarchy as control of the institution shifted away from the church, but the sixteenth century represented a dramatic turning point as both Henri II and Henri III issued edicts restricting clandestine marriage.

Other fraught questions about the institution in the sixteenth century include the relative importance of the reasons for marrying (procreation, the licit satisfaction of physical desire, the companionship of a helpmeet), the consequences of adultery, the status of widows, the indissolubility and sanctity of marriage, and its status as a sacrament. Reinforcement of the authority of families and stricter imposition of social norms resulted as these issues—and especially clandestine marriage—occupied a larger place in political, theological, social, and cultural debates of the time. Laetitia Dion's book shows how these preoccupations drove the creation of new forms of French narrative fiction.

In this thorough study emanating from her doctoral thesis, Dion begins by establishing the context with a useful hundred-page overview of the history of marriage through the sixteenth century. Part 2 explains the choice of her principal corpus of thirteen texts, which stand out in the rich vein of narrative fiction of the first two-thirds of the century: *Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles* (Philippe de Vigneulles, ca. 1515), *L'Histoire de Palanus, comte de Lyon* (anonymous, ca. 1511–20), *Le Grand Parangon des nouvelles nouvelles* (Nicolas de Troyes, ca. 1535), *Les Angoisses douloureuses qui procèdent l'amour* (Hélisenne de Crenne, 1538), *Les Contes amoureuses par Madame Jeanne Flore* (1542), *Philandre* (Jean Des Gouttes, 1544), *Discours des champs faëz* (Claude de Taillement, 1553), *Les Comptes du Monde aventureux* (A.D.S.D., 1555), *Melicello* (Jean Maugin, 1556), *L'Amant resuscité de la mort d'amour* (Nicolas Denisot, 1557), *Nouvelles Récréations et Joyeux Devis* (Bonaventure Des Périers, 1558), *L'Heptaméron* (Marguerite de Navarre, 1559), and, finally, *Histoires tragiques* (Pierre Boaistuau, 1559). These all make original contributions to the development of prose fiction thanks to their experimentation with themes surrounding marriage. The wedding night, adultery, and the ups and downs of married life—particularly that of mismatched couples—are motifs that recur, but it is the formation of the couple without parental consent that generates the most narrative tension in works published in the 1540s and 1550s—precisely the time when the church-state controversy on the subject was coming to a head. Where in earlier fiction clandestine marriage could result in a happy reconciliation with families, the later texts insist that only disaster can result from contesting social duty. Individual desire is repressed as these texts stage the triumph of social and political authority.

In part 3 Dion fleshes out her poetics of narrative fiction. Part 2 traces the evolution of the depiction of love outside marriage from foreign and French sources both comic (satirical, misogynistic) and serious (chivalric romance) toward the expression of individual sentiment using first-person narration. Increasingly these stories show the destructive power of amorous passion, a movement culminating in Boaistuau's influential *Histoires tragiques*. Yet some works also champion romantic love, even if senti-

ment must remain secret or internalized in the face of social constraints. The notion that love (though perhaps not passion) and marriage can coexist is hinted at, but the ideal of companionate marriage is not yet present in the 1550s.

Short-form fiction lengthens as plot and character development become more complex, while nonfiction explorations of marriage multiply throughout the century. Specialists in early modern France of all disciplines will benefit from Laetitia Dion's integration of many strands of analysis as her work opens a new chapter in the literary history of narrative fiction.

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*Rabelais et l'hybridité des récits rabelaisiens.* Diane Desrosiers, Claude La Charité, Christian Veilleux, and Tristan Vigliano, eds. *Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 570; Etudes Rabelaisiennes 56.* Geneva: Droz, 2017. 726 pp. \$105.60.

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The latest installment of the *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* presents an updated version of the proceedings of a conference held in 2006. From the outset, Diane Desrosiers sketches the scope of the enterprise by defining five forms of hybridization (material, linguistic, intertextual, generic, and intermedial). Yet probably the most productive distinction is brought into play by Edwin Duval in his opening remarks on the difference between the “composite” (understood as the juxtaposition of heterogenous elements) and the “hybrid” as an attempt to resolve, in a synthesis of opposing forces and forms, the conflicts at work in Rabelais. Most contributors agree that these tensions express (and sometimes even provoked) various enactments of a critical debunking of the discursive practices of his time.

A first section (“Generic Hybridity”) looks at the mechanisms of hybridization at play in Rabelais's text that, as Eva Kushner shows, have contributed to a history of interpretations that are themselves “hybrid.” Jean-François Vallée highlights the dynamics of dialogue, Claude La Charité and E. Bruce Hayes reconsider early modern comedies and farces, Mawry Bouchard and Bernd Renner revisit the satirical, while Pablo Péméja analyzes the insertion of poetic devices—often in the form of “text-monuments” (Valérie Nicaise-Oudart)—in Rabelais's prose, which, as Corinne Noirot argues, can be understood as an instrument of defamiliarization and which calls for a reevaluation of the legacy of the *Grande Rhétorique* (Michael Randall). Dorothy Stegman focuses on lists and Madeleine Jeay offers valuable input on the medieval legacy that informs them. Marie-Claire Thomine-Bichard analyzes the critical function of the harangue and Renée-Claude Breitenstein that of epideictic rhetoric, whereas Denis Bjaï revisits the strategic presence of prayers. While Florian Preisig highlights Rabelais's interest for the materiality of texts, Jelle Koopmans shows the importance of understand-