

Woman to Woman: Mentorship in the French Belle Époque

Hope Christiansen
University of Arkansas

Mentors have long been central figures in French novels, particularly in those cut from classic Bildungsroman cloth: Crébillon fils's *Versac* (*Les égarements du cœur et de l'esprit*, 1736), Balzac's *Vautrin* (*Le père Goriot*, 1835), and Stendhal's *Abbé Pirard* (*Le rouge et le noir*, 1830) immediately come to mind. Examples of female mentors—especially those who mentor other women—are harder to identify, though they make a regular appearance in a spate of novels published during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹ What Juliette M. Rogers calls “novels of professional development” feature well-educated, independent-minded heroines who achieve success in professions that had always been the purview of men alone. But this New Woman² does not accomplish this on her own. Critics have underestimated the importance of the female mentor in providing assistance in navigating what is still very much a man's world, especially when it comes to balancing work and personal life.

In her study on Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays, Margaret Kathryn Sloan defines mentorship as “a pedagogical relationship between an older and a younger woman that is at once intellectual and affective,” noting that both writers “advocate mentors as replacements for inadequate mothers” (225); Wollstonecraft in particular, in her seminal *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), “locates the promise of reforming future generations,” Sloan goes on, “in the potential of the substitutes, the alternates, the mentors” (227).³ The mentors in Colette's *La vagabonde* (1910), Gabrielle Réval's *La bachelière* (1910), Marcelle Tinayre's *La rebelle* (1905), and Colette Yver's *Les dames du palais* (1909), all published within a five-year period, are older, experienced women who are not the

¹ See Ashlee S. Headrick's dissertation on women mentoring women in works by Mlle de Scudéry, Marivaux, and Graffigny, and my article on the same subject in two works by Marie d'Agoult. Women sometimes mentor men as well: Crébillon fils's Mme de Lursay is a key mentor figure for Meilcour, according to Katherine Deimling, and Mme de Beauséant provides essential survival skills for Rastignac. Less frequently, men mentor women; see Marcelle Tinayre's *Hellé* (1898) and Victor Margueritte's *Ton corps est à toi* (1927).

² For excellent discussions of *la femme nouvelle* and Belle Époque feminism, see Mary Louise Roberts and Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr.

³ According to Sloan, Wollstonecraft, outraged by how ill prepared women are for motherhood, portrays ignorant mothers as “agents of death, rather than life” (226).

heroines' mothers;⁴ as such, they conform nicely to Sloan's paradigm, playing a pivotal role at a transitional time in the lives of a new generation of women, whether they advance an overtly feminist agenda or a subtler message of empowerment.⁵

Colette's first-person novel, *La vagabonde*, provides an ideal point of departure for this study since the mentorship it depicts only partially fulfills Sloan's definition: the mentor skews her "pedagogy," in contrast to her counterparts in the other novels, toward the affective. The heroine, Renée Néré, is a divorced thirty-three-year-old erstwhile novelist who makes her living as a music hall performer. Still bruised from her marriage to an emotionally abusive man, Adolphe Taillandy, Renée has mixed feelings about her life as a single woman. Her unconventional work fulfills her in many ways, but it also leaves no time for writing, an activity which gave her profound satisfaction during her marriage. The novel's very structure, with alternating scenes in work and personal space, replicates the two directions in which Renée is pulled. When a wealthy suitor, Maxime Dufferein-Chautel, begins to pursue her, she finds her desire reawakening in spite of herself, every fiber of her being rebelling against the idea of re-assuming a submissive role with a man. She consults her ex-husband's sister, Margot, an eclectic figure whom Renée describes as "une Rosa Bonheur⁶ qui serait nihiliste" (65). Nearly twenty years Renée's senior, Margot began offering emotional and financial support when Renée's marriage dissolved, at which point she cut all ties with her brother, becoming "une alliée, une amie et un appui" (66). While not the most obvious role model, given that she has no professional life herself and, worse, allows herself to be victimized by nearly everyone,⁷ Margot plays a critical advisory role for Renée when the problem on which the whole narrative centers—what to do when acting on physical desire means losing independence and agency—comes to the fore.

⁴ If there are mothers at all in this type of novel (they are absent from *La vagabonde* and *La rebelle*), they tend to be very traditional women who focus solely on their households, socializing, and especially furthering their husbands' careers. Yver's mothers are particularly striking in this regard.

⁵ Woman-to-woman mentoring is so ubiquitous in novels of this period that including it as a plot element could justifiably be considered a pattern. To cite just two examples: the heroine of Réval's 1900 novel, *Les Sévriennes*, Marguerite Triel, is disappointed that her school's headmistress, Mme Jules Ferron (a thinly disguised Mme Jules Favre, the director of the École normale supérieure de jeunes filles of Sèvres for fifteen years), is not the motherly type, instead cultivating her students' intellectual development, independence, and self-sufficiency. Another mentor, the tutor for first-year students, Mlle Vormèse, encourages the girls to think for themselves and to rely on each other. In Louise-Marie Compain's *L'un vers l'autre* (1903), the heroine, Laure Deborda, leaves her husband to pursue a career as a teacher. She finds a mentor in Mlle Germaine Lachaud, the headmistress of a regional *école normale* for women, who chooses her work over marriage and family. Nearly two decades later, Léontine Zanta includes, in *La science et l'amour* (1920), a female mentor who fits the Belle Époque model: Mlle Claire, nicknamed "la Lampe," shares her wisdom, primarily where love is concerned, to Madeleine Hastier, a philosophy student at the Sorbonne who aims to teach in a boys' school. For my corpus, I chose novels showcasing professions (music hall performing, archeology, journalism, law) that were at once more cutting edge and controversial than teaching, which, as an extension of the maternal, was seen as appropriate for women.

⁶ Bonheur (1822-99) is widely recognized as the most famous woman painter of the nineteenth century. She was also known for her liberal ideas about sex and for wearing men's clothing and smoking cigarettes. The fact that Colette chose to compare Margot to her—and especially with the qualifier "nihiliste"—suggests that the latter is more invested in the intellectual side of mentorship than her comments to Renée indicate.

⁷ "Dépouillée par son mari, tapée par son frère, volée par son avoué, grugée par ses domestiques," Renée explains, "Margot s'est embastillée dans une sérénité funèbre, faite de bonté inguérissable et de silencieux mépris" (65-66).

Renée's first encounter with Margot takes place, significantly, just after Max's overtures begin to simultaneously annoy and entice her; the detached tone of her observation that sets up the scene—"Il n'y a rien de nouveau dans ma vie, qu'un homme patient qui me guette" (64)—says it all. Just how desperate Renée is for advice becomes obvious when she comments that she is not likely to get much consolation from her ex-sister-in-law, but is nonetheless willing to subject herself to scrutiny and judgment because she knows she can count on Margot to love her "à sa découragée et décourageante manière, tout en pronostiquant pour moi la plus fâcheuse fin" (66). An important facet of Margot's mentorship involves playing caregiver to Renée: in their first scene together, she takes her pulse and examines her tongue and the whites of her eyes. Her appraisal of the physical, in fact, serves as a springboard for that of the psychological; Margot has an uncanny ability to read Renée's thoughts and feelings. Hence her ability to sense, without a single cue from Renée, that the latter is about to "retombe[r] . . . dans un beau collage, avec un monsieur genre Adolphe" because, after all, Renée is "faite pour être mangée" like herself; "[c]hatte échaudée," Margot predicts confidently, "tu retourneras à la chaudière" (66-67). As Julie Solomon affirms, Margot is "the voice of Colette's theory of 'the female,' according to which 'biological' urges make women naturally disposed to accept their submissive relationship to men" (172).

Renée's second consultation with Margot comes at an even more significant juncture in her relationship with Max, when she has begun to be physically intimate with him but has thus far resisted his attempts to make love. Fully aware of the potential for sexual fulfillment with him, she describes him with unabashed admiration as "un amant subtil, créé pour la femme, et si divinateur que sa caresse semble penser en même temps que mon désir" (148). This time, what compels Renée to seek out Margot is an urgent need to confess—the mentor-mentee dynamic dovetailing with the priest-penitent one—that in spite of her mentor's advice, the "[c]hatte échaudée" is in fact in the process of returning to the "chaudière." Renée's initial, rather resigned "Mais... il va falloir que j'avertisse Margot !" (148) metamorphoses into the more urgent "J'avouerai donc tout à Margot : ma rechute, mon bonheur, le nom de celui que j'aime..." (149), the noun "rechute" echoing Margot's verb "retombe[r]." As in the earlier scene, she knows that her confession will come at a price—not only a lack of consolation, but worse, Margot's disappointment in her. If, as Holmes observes, Colette portrays sexual desire "as a mortal danger for Renée's freedom" (*Romance* 40), it is also something of a threat to her relationship with her mentor, whose unquestionable authority is expressed visually when she casts on Renée "un de ces regards qui la font paraître très grande, qui ont l'air de tomber de si haut !" (67).

One of Renée's obsessions is her fear of aging; she consults her mirror so often that it nearly becomes a character in its own right. Hence, when Margot merely glances at her and blurts out—even though Renée closes her eyes, as if to keep her mentor from reading her—that she has aged, it cuts into Renée's principal source of insecurity.⁸ Struck by the harshness of Margot's appraisal, Solomon writes that "Only a woman who is beyond sexuality could note such a loss calmly. The sexual woman needs the (impossible to maintain) narcissistic assurance that she is a beautiful picture" (172). Margot tries to

⁸ Margot's visual acuity is reminiscent of that of Vautrin, whose powerful *regard* penetrates other characters' thoughts and motivations.

comfort Renée, with little success, underscoring the fact that Renée will always be able to count on her for “toute espèce de secours, même le plus cuisant de tous : la vérité” (151). Margot’s talent for anticipating the vagaries of Renée’s emotional state is obvious when Renée mentions the imperative to be pretty, young, and happy—a sure indication, for Margot, that she has a lover. The narrator, reflecting on this encounter, recalls her hope of being able to “bavarder ma joie, raconter tout de mon ami, la couleur de ses yeux, la forme de ses mains, sa bonté, son honnêteté...” (152)—in other words, to slip into the stereotypical behavior of a woman newly in love. But, cowed by Margot, the former writer finds herself strangely at a loss for words, only able to say—and timidly, at that—that her friend is very nice. Anne Callahan accurately sums up Renée’s situation by affirming that her “impasse is a double bind: She is torn between the conventional happiness she feels when in love with a man and the self-loathing she feels when she plays the role of the woman in love” (161). I would add to that, the self-loathing that arises from seeing herself mirrored in Margot’s eyes.

Margot’s distaste, when she asks if this man—whose name, tellingly, Renée never discloses—will be joining Renée on her upcoming tour, is palpable: she refers to him as “ton individu” (153), with “une discrétion dégoûtée, comme si elle parlait de quelque chose de sale !” (153). She resurrects the term “collage” in an effort to understand Renée’s intentions, setting it in opposition to the other option, marriage, asking “Est-il question d’un mariage, ou d’un collage ?” (153). To Renée’s assertion that she and her friend are still learning about each other, Margot can only smirk, “la bouche pincée, avec une cruelle gaieté dans ses petits yeux lumineux,” and retort, “c’est la période où l’on parade l’un pour l’autre, hein ?” (153). Challenged yet again, Renée denies this by, ironically, using her advanced age as a defense, claiming that such behavior is only befitting of young lovers. That Margot deems marriage “une chose si monstrueuse” (154) while also criticizing “un collage” suggests, in a nutshell, that no form of involvement with a man is acceptable.

The effect of this conversation on Renée is undeniably negative: while obviously relieved to have made her confession, she is so troubled that she hastens, uncharacteristically, to Max’s side. From this point on, she will have to grapple on her own with her dilemma. She chafes against the plans Max has made for her: marriage, a child she has no interest in (“tu serais prise !,” he crows [173]), and a great deal of free time, since he does not intend for her to work. While there are no further references to Margot in the narrative, her influence on Renée cannot be overstated, since it is, in the end, her views that prevail: Renée’s physical separation from Max during a lengthy tour allows her to take stock of her situation and to see more clearly the kinds of sacrifices she would have to make were she to marry him. In the novel’s conclusion, she acknowledges the power that her desire for Max will always have over her while asserting once and for all her need to be free, the vagabond of the novel’s title.

Réval’s *La bachelière* features a mentor who, like Margot, provides vital support to her protégée without the overt references to feminism⁹ of which her counterparts in the

⁹ The feminism portrayed in fiction of this period is rather different from that described in historical accounts. Real-life French feminists of the 1890s and 1900s were keenly interested in such causes as infant mortality, suffrage, and women workers’ rights, according to Rachel Mesch, in her commentary on the work of historian Karen Offen (18). The novelists in question deal only cursorily, if at all, with these issues. For our

Tinayre and Yver novels make liberal use. Its mentoring relationship conforms in many ways to a familiar nineteenth-century realist template, with the heroine leaving the province for Paris, where she encounters a world-wise mentor eager to enlighten. Réval tells the story of the intellectually gifted but innocent Gaude Malvos, who, from an early age, has assisted her archeologist father in his quest to unearth *la cité gallo-romaine* in a village named Sarlay. When financial problems get in the way of his attainment of glory (the term *gloire* figures prominently in the passages devoted to him), she concocts a radical plan that involves offering herself in marriage to the suitor with the most money so that she can then pour the funds into her father's research. Things go awry when Malvos takes her marriage idea as a personal betrayal, a problem exacerbated by Gaude's refusal to reveal that she is marrying out of love for him, not a rival for her affection. His intense jealousy leads to a fatal fit of apoplexy. Gaude, who now has no interest in going through with a marriage obviously destined to put her in a subservient position, survives a brush with suicide, then leaves for Paris in the hope of securing a secretarial position that will allow her time to complete Malvos's magnum opus, seeking refuge with a Polish cousin, Thaïda Oneska, whose youthfulness and femininity belie "une volonté de fer" (88).¹⁰ A physician for fifteen years, Thaïda had few real-life counterparts: Holmes quotes Maïté Albistur's and Daniel Armogathe's statistics in *Histoire du féminisme français* which show that there were but eighteen female medical students for 3,479 males in Parisian faculties of medicine in 1889-90; by nearly thirty years later, there were still only 454 (*French* 283-84). The struggle ultimately proves to be too much for Thaïda, as she explains to Gaude: "J'étais femme, sans prestige, sans protecteur et, par dessus le marché, sans ressources" (91); for every ten woman doctors who succeed, she insists, "mille crèvent à la tâche" (92).¹¹

Though Thaïda abandons the profession in which she hoped to make a name for herself, she puts her science to good use by establishing a business specializing in cutting-edge electrical treatments and massage that is not unlike the medical spas so popular today.¹² She clearly delights in exploiting the vanity of her clientele, whom she describes as Parisian dolls; her comment to Gaude that "jeunesse, beauté, amour, j'en tiens là, dans ma main,

purposes here, feminism should be taken to refer to the basic principle that women are the equals of men both socially and intellectually.

¹⁰ Rogers suggests that the inclusion of a Polish woman is likely a nod to Marie Curie, who moved to Paris in her twenties and made her groundbreaking scientific discoveries while in France. Rogers goes on to posit that foreign women may well have had more freedom to work "outside the traditional expectations for middle-class Frenchwomen," and references Roberts's observation that there are English and Russian "new women" in a number of Belle Époque novels, such as Yver's *Princesses de science*, Tinayre's *La rebelle*, and Marcel Prévost's *Les vierges fortes* (130).

¹¹ Yver offers an explanation, in her 1929 study of professions open to women, *Femmes d'aujourd'hui*, for the failure of so many women with medical degrees from the Faculté de médecine de Paris to establish a practice (only 243 out of the pool of 800-900), blaming "le mari français exclusif, absolu, qui, à l'orgueil de pouvoir seul aux charges du foyer, joint la faiblesse de son exigence sentimentale et le besoin de la présence perpétuelle et servile de l'épouse" (30-31). Though a husband cannot be blamed in Thaïda's case, he can in that of the heroine of Yver's own novel, *Princesses de science*.

¹² Though Thaïda is not in the same profession as Gaude, she is, at least, a fellow scientist, thus representing a transitional figure between the kind of mentor we find in *La vagabonde* (with no work life whatsoever) and those in the novels by Tinayre and Yver. And, as Rogers points out, there are no other women doing Gaude's kind of work who might mentor her (133).

l'illusion, et c'est une force ! Elle m'ouvre tous les cœurs, toutes les bourses. Pour être belle, une femme qui aime se damnerait, et celle qui veut se faire aimer tuerait père et mère, pour m'acheter la beauté" (94), aligns her with the charismatic Vautrin, Balzac's iconic mentor figure, who asserts, in one of his lengthy speeches to his protégé, Rastignac, that if Parisian husbands "ne peuvent entretenir [le] luxe effréné [de leurs épouses], elles se vendent. Si elles ne savent pas se vendre, elles éventreraient leurs mères pour y chercher de quoi briller" (60). When Gaude wonders, naively, why talent is not enough to succeed in Paris, Thaïda can only exclaim, "Vous arrivez de votre montagne ! Dans trois mois vous verrez ce que Paris engloutit de talents qu'il ne peut utiliser... Ici, l'intelligence, ce n'est pas l'exception, c'est la règle. C'est un perpétuel combat d'êtres aux armes multiples qui se détruisent parce que la vie les y condamne" (92). The negative descriptors, military vocabulary, and the authority with which Thaïda speaks (she intends to show Gaude "la vie telle qu'elle est" [92], just as Margot pledges to tell Renée the truth) harken back to the lectures of "papa Vautrin" (107, 115) who aims to disabuse the young man of his naïve (provincial) ideas. Gaude, like Rastignac, is in equal measure attracted to and repulsed by her mentor, wondering "[q]uelle âme sinistre doit avoir cette femme" (93).¹³

Portrayed throughout the novel as extremely rigid and devoid of emotion except where her work is concerned, Gaude is quick to criticize her cousin's profession and especially her clients—"Actrices, demi-mondaines, épouses délaissées, vieilles filles desséchées par le célibat, matrones sentimentales, mamans Colibri ; éternel féminin torturé par le désir ou la nécessité de plaire. Troupeau de vierges folles, galopant devant les affamés d'amour, et se vautrant, rassasiées, sur la douleur, sur l'effort, sur le grand rêve humain" (120-21). To Gaude's mind, Thaïda has made herself a slave to these women through her cultivation of artifice. Observing Thaïda at work in her "laboratoire de beauté" (120) heightens Gaude's awareness of the chasm separating her from "ces femelles vouées aux joies animales" (122) and incites her to come up with a slogan of sorts: "Quiconque . . . abandonne son corps au commandement brutal de l'instinct, détruit aussitôt l'ineffable sérénité de l'esprit" (122-23). Unlike Rastignac, who shows himself to be vulnerable to his mentor, Gaude sits in judgment of hers, considering Thaïda "amointrie" for abandoning a noble profession (123). The fact that Gaude could believe that Thaïda had become a "[f]emme rapace, femme versatile" (123) implies that she has assumed the dominant role in the mentor-mentee dynamic.

In the end, however, Thaïda regains her authority, for Gaude has grossly underestimated her mentor. For one thing, Gaude does not give Thaïda credit for acknowledging "the charlatan aspects of her new career" (Rogers 130). Also, like Vautrin, described repeatedly as a sphinx (104, 121, 151)—and, to a lesser degree, Margot—Thaïda has a talent for seeing through Gaude while remaining opaque herself. It turns out that Thaïda is amassing a fortune not for her own personal use, but rather, for the establishment of a school in her native country. Gaude thus comes to understand that her cousin may not be so different from her after all, since they are both invested in noble endeavors. When Thaïda discloses that she is also in love, Gaude realizes just how much she has changed since her arrival in Paris, since her previous, more prudish, self would

¹³ Vautrin is described in similar terms—he is "tentateur" (133, 153), "démon" (153), "poème infernal" (186), "archange déchu" (186)—though from the perspective of the narrator.

never have agreed to stay with a woman who has a lover. Thaïda's revelation that she is both sexual being and philanthropist changes Gaude's perception of her mentor, who "apparaissait sous une forme d'une pureté héraldique. Elle semblait vêtue d'une armure, coiffée d'un cimier, sa main se fermait sur une invisible épée" (128). Though Gaude remains steadfast in her plan to finish her father's masterpiece—at the expense, it must be said, of pursuing a career of her own—she has softened emotionally as a result of her exchanges with Thaïda, laying the foundation for the next stage in what Rogers labels a "quest plot" which has the heroine take a traditional series of steps away from sheltered family life (131). As Thaïda herself tells her protégée, her use of a medical term attesting to the enduring influence of her professional training, "Je vous ai vaccinée, rien de plus. Votre intelligence fera le reste" (97).

Unlike Margot with Renée, Thaïda is keenly interested in Gaude's intelligence, her future as a professional, that is the intellectual half of a mentor's duties, according to Sloan. But she has advice to offer on the affective as well. It is thanks to Thaïda's profession, in fact, that Gaude gets her first job as research assistant to Gilbert Luceram, the husband of one of her cousin's clients, Odette, a traditional woman whose entire life revolves around pleasing her man. Odette could not contrast more sharply with Gaude, who may be knowledgeable but has neither a sense of self nor a concept of romantic love (Waelti-Walters 89). When Gaude finally realizes that Gilbert loves her and that she may even have feelings for him, it is Thaïda who confirms the inauguration of a new phase in Gaude's life, calling it a metamorphosis, but insisting that Gaude help Odette save her marriage. In her view, Gaude's feelings for Gilbert represent nothing more than evidence of a capacity to love, not love itself. With that, Thaïda's mentorship comes to an abrupt end: she has saved enough money to shut down her business and leave for Warsaw to get her school project underway. But she continues to provide support for Gaude, who thinks of her often and even reaches out to her by letter during the next phase of her *formation* at a boarding school for wealthy girls where she teaches after leaving the reunited Lucerams.

With her "air provocant et joyeux de Figaro" (93), her "badinage" (125), Thaïda is, in truth, a far more compelling figure than the heroine herself, especially when juxtaposed to Odette and to the director of the boarding school, the female authority figure dominating the final stage in Gaude's story. If Gaude was disappointed by Thaïda, at least initially, she is outraged by the schoolmistress, who is as unflinchingly epicurean as Gaude is stoic. Mme Feuillet-Du Crône wants nothing to do with Gaude's plan to cultivate her students' minds, since "Ce sont nos caprices qui règlent l'existence. Imposer ses caprices, voilà ce qu'une femme vraiment femme doit savoir faire..." (227). While Thaïda represents the forward-looking, modern woman who pluckily forges her own path, Mme Feuillet-Du Crône belongs to the past. Her approach to running her "école du bonheur" is to

apprivois[er] mes filles comme madame de Warrens apprivoisait ses jeunes compagnons. . . .
[J]'ai l'art de plaire et je plais avec art. . . . Ici tout vit pour moi. M'approcher est un bonheur.
Recevoir un baiser est une récompense inoubliable. . . . Allez-vous parler à ces jeunes filles le langage de la froide raison ? Erreur ! Il faut s'adresser uniquement à la sensibilité. Je parle au cœur. . . . Quand elles sortent de mes mains, ce sont des êtres prêts à goûter toutes les jouissances de la vie. (228-29)

Gaude bears reluctant witness to the perverse court Mme Feuillet-Du Crône holds over her students, whose outward docility camouflages a thoroughly rotten core: the rivalry between two of the girls is so intense that one pours acid in the other's bed to keep her away from their beloved madame. When, at the end of the novel, Mme Feuillet-Du Crône accuses Gaude of everything irregular transpiring under her roof, the heroine responds with an order—"Réformez cette maison !" (333), followed by a wholesale indictment of her employer's practices: "... l'éducation que vous donnez à ces jeunes filles est malfaisante. Vous éveillez en elles toutes les mauvaises curiosités, vous flattez leurs instincts, quels qu'ils soient; vous étendez votre indulgence à toutes les fautes, à tous les crimes même..." (332). The novel comes to an abrupt close with Gaude's departure for Warsaw, her story to continue in a sequel, *La bachelière en Pologne* (1911). Gaude's strength and self-assurance at the end of the novel can be attributed to her contact not only with Thaïda herself, but also with the anti-mentors who follow. That Gaude evolves less than the protagonists in other feminine *romans de formation*¹⁴ of the Belle Époque does not take away from the lasting impression Thaïda makes on her. It is, after all, no accident that she opts to go to the very place where Thaïda has begun a new life.

The same concern—that is, whether love and a satisfying professional life can co-exist—are at the heart of Tinayre's *La rebelle* and Yver's *Les dames du palais*, whose female mentors adopt an open and unapologetic feminist stance. Tinayre tells the story of Josanne Valentin, a journalist for a women's magazine who enters the workplace to support her ailing husband (who eventually dies) and the young child born of her extramarital affair. In the opening scene, she is shown waiting impatiently in a bookstore for Maurice, her lover and the father of her child; thanks to his tardiness, she ends up perusing a feminist treatise entitled *La travailleuse* and is pleased to find that the views of its author, Noël Delysle, resonate with her own. The positive review she publishes leads to a correspondence and eventually an affair. The bulk of the novel focuses on Josanne's struggles to deal with Noël's unexpectedly antiquated ideas about women and his intense jealousy of her past life and of the child who, for him, literally embodies it.

Josanne's mentor, Mlle Bon, is first mentioned in that opening scene, when Josanne realizes she has seen Delysle's work on her colleague's desk. Responsible for reporting on trade unions, charities, and the like, this ardent feminist has devoted her life to "toute l'humanité féminine exploitée et corrompue par l'homme. Elle vivait parmi ces tristes passagères des asiles, des refuges, des maternités, parmi les vieilles incurables, les enfants abandonnés, les filles-mères, les libérées de Saint-Lazare" (60). Her many talents notwithstanding, Mlle Bon, exiled to a distant office lest a subscriber chance to see her, fails to project the right image for the magazine: "[Elle était] sincère, touchante et ridicule avec ses éternels lainages noirs et ses crêpes couleurs de rat, ses gants reprisés, sa rotonde doublée de lapin, sa figure de bonne sans place, chétive et craintive" (60). She is, for Mélanie E. Collado, "le type même de la féministe militante, telle que perçue par une grande partie de la société française : une vieille fille bas-bleu et un peu ridicule par sa mise et ses attitudes" (172).

¹⁴ For general background in the sub-genre of the feminine *roman de formation* see Margaret Cohen; Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland; James N. Hardin; and Esther Kleinbord Labovitz.

In contrast, the magazine's co-director, Madeleine Foucart, is described in glowing terms: she is the "grande féministe" (34) and "plus jolie femme de Paris" (33). Roberts tells us that Foucart was modeled on Marguerite Durand, founder, in 1897, of the newspaper, *La fronde*, notable for its all-female staff and for its coverage of politics, news, sports, and the stock market. The *frondeuses*, including Clémence Royer (the first woman to teach at the Sorbonne) and Jeanne Chauvin (one of the first women admitted to the Paris Bar), represented "an Olympiad of 'firsts,' a virtual hotbed of new women" (Roberts 5). Foucart may share Mlle Bon's interest in good works and women's rights, but she lacks her colleague's altruism, instead hobnobbing with dignitaries who might prove useful in her pursuit of the Légion d'honneur; she dislikes Josanne because she is poor, not well dressed, and proud. Jennifer Waelti-Walters labels her and the magazine's theatre critic as "false 'feminists,' . . . women who have no real understanding of and give no real support to other women, though the rhetoric of feminism is firmly in place" (42). Put another way, they talk the talk, but do not really walk the walk.

Mlle Bon has no such prejudices, though it is clear early on that she and Josanne are seldom of like mind regarding feminism. An early scene shows Josanne chatting with a woman, pregnant with her sixth child, who plans to get married solely for the handouts offered by Mlle Bon's charity. "Quelle rage de fourrer la morale partout... jusque dans la charité !," Josanne rants to Mlle Bon. "À qui profitera-t-elle, la morale, dans le cas présent ?... Ni aux enfants, ni à la mère, mais à cette « gouape » de Martin... !" (the husband-to-be) (40). Mlle Bon's mentorship, like that of Thaïda in *La bachelière*, involves helping the younger woman professionally as well; she encourages Josanne to write an article about a home for unwed mothers, prompting a visit which sets the stage for another heated confrontation over an expectant mother identified only as Mme Neuf whose situation is painfully familiar to Josanne. Upon learning that Mme Neuf has broken her promise not to abandon her baby because the father dislikes children, Josanne again lashes out at Mlle Bon: "Relever la femme, éduquer la femme, affranchir la femme ! Vous croyez à l'avènement de la femme consciente, fière de sa libre maternité, heureuse de n'être plus l'idole ou la servante de l'homme ? Vous croyez que grâce à vous, grâce à nous, les « madame Neuf » deviendront plus rares ?" (89). When Mlle Bon answers affirmatively, Josanne declares, "Alors il faudra supprimer l'amour, mademoiselle. Peut-être affranchirez-vous la femme des entraves sociales, des préjugés qui l'empêchent de gagner son pain... Mais vous ne l'affranchirez pas d'elle-même... La femme qui a un « homme dans le sang » appartient servilement à cet homme" (90). Commenting on this decisive dialogue, Collado draws a parallel between Josanne's "jugement sévère . . . envers son propre sexe" and that of Colette's Renée, "qui elle aussi voit le modèle de la « femme amoureuse » comme un des principaux obstacles à sa propre liberté," although Josanne does not manifest "la même volonté farouche de résistance, comme si l'amour était pour elle irrésistible" (173).

A key difference between Mlle Bon's and Josanne's brands of feminism is that the heroine's does not extend to personal space. She applauds the efforts of a female elite to create a new ideal of feminine honor, virtue, and duty and to challenge the conventional morals that she herself has eschewed in her pursuit of happiness. But she makes a distinction between a woman's public and private personas: "... au foyer, dans l'alcôve, l'ordre antique se rétablit... Avec tout son cœur, avec tous ses sens, la femme aspire à la servitude amoureuse. . . . Que l'amant aimé marche sur elle, elle lui baisera les pieds et dira :

« Encore !... » (91). Curiously, it is Josanne—a feminist woman—who gives voice to the equation advanced by Holmes that has “public = masculine, private = female”—that is, the typical male point of view expressed in these novels—an equation that “can be contested within the Belle Époque romance, but . . . remains a powerful norm” (“Decadent” 18). For both Josanne and Renée (not to mention Margot), then, “desire falls at once into a ready-made script of submission and domination” (Holmes, *Romance* 40)—a view that Mlle Bon rejects outright, blaming society for obstructing women’s rebellion and for fostering their submissiveness. She even insinuates that Josanne is a coward for mocking “les femmes qui ont brisé les vieilles chaînes, parce qu’elles traînent encore les tronçons !” (92). Collado underlines the contrasting use of singular versus plural definite articles in the two women’s statements, noting that Josanne uses the singular, “perpétuant ainsi l’idée d’une féminité universelle,” while Mlle Bon prefers the plural, “évoquant non plus une abstraction mais des individus en mouvement qui ont brisé leurs chaînes mais ne sont pas encore tout à fait affranchis”; the passage, in short, “a la particularité de présenter une vision statique et une vision évolutive de l’émancipation féminine, sans que l’une ou l’autre l’emporte immédiatement” (173).

It is no wonder that as Josanne’s relationship with Noël intensifies, Mlle Bon recedes to the background (similarly to Margot, as Renée grants Max increasing access to her personal space), with nary a mention for some eighty pages. After all, love is, as Josanne has made clear, incompatible with feminism. When Mlle Bon resurfaces, it is to accompany Josanne to a luncheon for the “syndicat de couturières” (193), where the lovestruck young woman quotes from Noël’s treatise for the sheer pleasure of saying his name in public. Unaware until then that Josanne has a man in her life (she, unlike Renée, does not feel compelled to confess), Mlle Bon finds herself in an awkward position, especially when the president of the “Fraternité féminine,” Mme Gonfalonet, reports having spied Josanne on the arm of a man, “compromet[tant] nos idées en se compromettant” (205). When another member of the group proposes ousting Josanne for this stroll with the enemy, Mme Gonfalonet, “qui appartenait à l’âge héroïque du féminisme, à la génération des Paule Mink et des Potonié-Pierre” (204),¹⁵ concedes that Josanne has committed no crime, but insists that a feminist devoted to the cause “ne doit donner aucune prise à la malignité de nos adversaires...” (205).

Though Mme Gonfalonet takes a harder line in her feminism than Mlle Bon, the reality is that she is far more conflicted. An advocate of free love and the matriarchy who prides herself on refusing to wear a corset, she has lived “sous la loi de son tyran Gonfalonet,” now deceased, “plus féministe que sa femme” (204). One might say, then, that the same public versus private dichotomy that characterizes Josanne’s feminism also figures in that of the outwardly radical but inwardly submissive Mme Gonfalonet (or, for that matter, in that of the “Rosa Bonheur . . . nihiliste” but abused Margot). There is no such disconnect between Mlle Bon’s philosophy and her lifestyle: when Josanne notes that her mentor would have made a good wife and mother, Mlle Bon reveals that she once dreamed of just that, and even entertained two marriage proposals, but promised herself that she would only marry

¹⁵ Min(c)k (1839-1901) was a feminist and socialist of Polish descent who participated in the Commune and ran for the National Assembly. With Marguerite Durand and others, she founded *La fronde* (1897). Potonié-Pierre (1844-98) founded the Fédération des Sociétés Féministes Françaises (1892).

a man as “pur” as herself, and she never found him (93). Waelti-Walters notes that this was a revolutionary attitude in a woman depicted as elderly in 1905; to show her “as [a] happy, independent, useful, and respected membe[r] of society is just as revolutionary in literary terms” (43). On the other hand, to Collado’s way of thinking, by revealing that she is not the “vieille fille” (174) everyone assumes she is, Mlle Bon shows herself to be even more idealistic and passionate than Josanne, “dont le féminisme paraît alors plus équilibré, plus pragmatique et donc moins menaçant pour l’ordre social” (175).

While Noël is not nearly as bad as Mlle Bon seems to think, he does have his flaws, obsessive jealousy and a propensity for violence among them; furthermore, there is no question that Josanne’s involvement with him has a negative impact on how she is perceived, not just as a feminist, but as a professional: the decline in her work at the magazine—she forgets interview times, fails to correct proof, and writes sub-par articles—is roundly blamed on her affair. Asked to intervene, Mlle Bon reminds Josanne of the feminist she once was: a model member of the “Fraternité,” a *real* feminist, “sérieuse, vaillante, libre et volontairement pure... Un si beau type de travailleuse intellectuelle!” (205-06). But the guilt trip comes to naught, as Josanne bristles at the insinuation that she is less serious simply because she is in love. What Josanne advances is a moderate and practical feminism: “À quoi vous sert d’être « affranchies » . . . si vous ne mettez jamais vos théories en pratique?” (206), she asks, the “vous” referring to the women she calls elsewhere “les bigotes du féminisme” (207), “de grosses dames moustachues” who call each other “citoyennes” (94).

Josanne’s mixed feelings about Mlle Bon (like Gaude’s about Thaïda), whom she sees at once as an ally of those “bigotes” and a saint-like free thinker (207) are mirrored in the reader’s own understandable difficulty in reconciling the rebel of the novel’s title with the woman who insists on women’s utter powerlessness in love relationships. But as we saw in the case of Mme Gonfalonet, other characters exhibit similar contradictions, including Noël, who has difficulty practicing the feminism he preaches. Interestingly, in Mlle Bon’s final speech to Josanne, she says—as unable to find an appropriate term for Noël as Margot is for Renée’s “individu”—that she would like to believe that there is, “entre vous et... celui que vous avez choisi, une véritable harmonie intellectuelle... Mais dans l’amant, comme dans le mari, il y a un maître... Méfiez-vous!” (207), effectively echoing the argument Josanne herself has made all along, that women aspire to servitude in love. Both women turn out to be right: in *La rebelle*’s conclusion, Josanne seems poised to abandon her career in order to play slave to an all too eager master, as is evidenced by a series of scenes in which her behavior becomes uncharacteristically passive with Noël. In one particularly striking passage, she gazes at him, for example, with “des yeux sombres, caressants, résignés, d’une douceur animale, des yeux que la première parole du maître emplira de frayeur ou de volupté. . . Elle attend que son amant la flatte et la rassure comme une douce bête effrayée, qu’il l’apprivoise, qu’il l’étourdisse . . .” (202). A crisis—a grave illness that befalls Josanne’s young son—finally dampens Noël’s simmering jealousy, and the novel ends, in sharp contrast to the conclusion of *La vagabonde*, with the lovers’ passionate embrace and a rather maudlin comment by the narrator about the power of love. The title that Tinayre originally had in mind for the novel, *Le cœur de Josanne*, is far less at odds than *La rebelle* with Josanne’s behavior in the conclusion, since her heart (the affective) does triumph over her head (the intellectual). It goes without saying that Mlle Bon would be as

displeased with the path that Josanne decides to take as Margot would be pleased with that taken by Renée—at least until the latter renounces her freedom in favor of love (for a different man) in the sequel to *La vagabonde*, *L'entrave* (1913).

Yver offers, in *Les dames du palais*, an even more conciliatory heroine, in spite of the influence of a bevy of feminist colleagues/mentors. The plot of the novel follows a trajectory that is not only similar to that of Tinayre, but nearly identical to that of her own, better known one, *Princesses de science* (1907), about women doctors. In it and *Les dames du palais*, a brilliant, self-assured woman marries a man in the same profession; when her success eclipses his, his extreme jealousy nearly tears the relationship apart. The same emotion complicating the love relationship in *La rebelle* is at play in that between Henriette and André in this courtroom drama, only the jealousy is more professional than personal. In both narratives it is at the intersection of public and private spaces—the intellectual and the affective, to borrow Sloan's terms again—that the feminist mentors do their work.

The mentor figure exerting the most influence in *Les dames du palais* is Mlle Angély, whose name, like that of Mlle Bon, summarizes her character: she is as Angély(que) as the latter is Bon(ne),¹⁶ and she shares Mlle Bon's interest in children, having founded the Œuvre des petits déshérités. Though she no longer argues court cases, her judgment is so shrewd and her mastery of the law so complete that male lawyers consult her on the sly. Physically, she fits the stereotype of the “grosses dames moustachues” mocked by Josanne in *La rebelle*: “C'était une femme de quarante-cinq ans, d'un embonpoint notable, la lèvre ombrée, le chapeau défraîchi sur une tignasse noire, dépeignée” (22), her appearance as unorthodox as that of Mlle Bon.¹⁷ Where she departs from her Tinayrian counterpart is in the sheer scope of her influence: she is repeatedly described as an apostle (186, 202, 426), prophet (50), oracle (9), even a God-like figure intent upon creating lawyers in her own image. She mentors Henriette, an unfocused student inclined to flights of fancy, so successfully that the newly minted lawyer brings “toute la passion humanitaire insufflée par la généreuse Angély” (64)—the verb *insuffler* serving the same purpose as Thaidä's *vacciner* in *La bachelière*—to her first court cases. Mlle Angély plays a maternal role reminiscent of that of Margot not only for her “pépinière d'avocates” (49) but also for the children she pulls off the streets. She, like Mlle Bon, has an ulterior motive underlying her mentoring, that of filling the courtroom with young women culled from her lycée classes who will take up the cause of the juvenile delinquents who are her real concern.

One might say that Mlle Angély is to Mlle Bon what a second mentor figure in *Les dames du palais*, Mme Surgères, is to Tinayre's Mme Gonfalonet and her cohorts. “[Une] grande

¹⁶ In her analysis of the roles of Mlle Bon and another character, Mlle Miracle, Waelti-Walters affirms that the way in which Tinayre's choice of names obviates any misinterpretation of their qualities “is both allegorical and ironic. . . . [T]he irony is directed more at Tinayre herself and her readers than against the admirable women she depicts. Her society had no dignified place for single women who were not nuns, no established ways of treating them seriously, so in order to create such characters at all, Tinayre has to make it appear as though she is mocking them while she gives us time to appreciate their worth” (42-43).

¹⁷ Attesting to the endurance of this mentor figure is a similar one in Margueritte's *La garçonne* (1922) who is “féministe et militante”(73), like Mme Gonfalonet and Mme Surgères; a high school teacher, like Mlle Angély; and an advocate for children, like the latter and Mlle Bon: “C'était une de ces maigres quadragénaires, sans âge et presque sans sexe, qui n'ayant jamais été mères, se vouent, de tout l'élan féminin insatisfait, au trompe-cœur de l'éducation. L'habitude de professer lui avait donné une autorité un peu sèche, sous laquelle une sensibilité ardente couvait” (184).

féministe” (9), the militant Mme Surgères is often pitted against Mlle Angély. When Henriette temporarily abandons her work to take care of her gravely ill husband, André, the only support Mme Surgères can muster is to remind her to live for the cause. She sees Henriette’s landslide victory in her first big case as a victory for feminism rather than for Henriette personally. While vocabulary describing Mlle Angély highlights her selflessness, that attributed to Mme Surgères evokes the battlefield: she is “emportée par la combativité de son tempérament, part[ant] en guerre contre les idées rétrogrades qui ont fait jusqu’ici, sous la férule du devoir, l’asservissement des épouses” (195), fully engaged in “[un]e lutte contre le joug masculin . . . pour . . . fournir [aux femmes] des armes contre leur antique tyran” (203-04).

Mme Surgères’s message is so diametrically opposed to that of Mlle Angély that the feminism of the latter begins to seem problematic, an impression substantiated by her comment to her protégées that women will never surpass men and that attempting to compete with them in strength and intellect is foolish; rather, women should “forget themselves” in favor of the children that men create only to abandon. Mlle Angély takes Mme Surgères to task—as Josanne does the *Fraternité* feminists—for theories not put into action: “Quand on cherche une règle de vie pour les femmes, il n’y a pas tant à s’inquiéter de leurs droits qu’à déterminer leurs devoirs . . .” (193). Curiously, it is not Mme Surgères’s incendiary rhetoric that wins over the lawyers in her entourage, but Mlle Angély’s “zèle fervent” (214), suggesting that traditional “feminine” values (nurturing, altruism) still trump those seen as “masculine” ones (militancy, power), even among professional women.

Henriette, who struggles as valiantly with her husband’s inability to accept her professional success as Josanne does with Noël’s to accept that she could have loved another man before, comes to see herself as an amalgam of the two feminist mentors, explaining that it was Mme Surgères’s ideology that seduced her first and convinced her to choose a man’s profession, then that of Mlle Angély that made her dream of helping children. Having a baby reinforces the maternal feelings instilled in her by Mlle Angély, making her an even better lawyer whose heart is on equal footing with her mind: “Il y avait là,” concludes the narrator, “comme une victoire pour les sentiments de mademoiselle Angély et les idées de madame Surgères” (298). Neither can truly claim victory, though, since Henriette ultimately rejects both women’s principles in order to please a man who is as childish and chauvinistic as Tinayre’s Noël and Colette’s Max.¹⁸ After fighting to remain true to her feminist beliefs, Henriette gives up her career to be her husband’s humble secretary. Mlle Angély’s final speech, aimed at staving off a mutiny since Henriette is such an influential role model for her peers, lauds Henriette’s world-wide reputation and her success on both work and home fronts. But her disappointment in Henriette’s decision—similar to Mlle Bon’s when Josanne appears so lovestruck at the feminists’ gathering, or, for that matter, Margot’s when Renée begins her “rechute”—could not be more obvious, given her references to Henriette as “scribe, copiste, saute-ruisseau” (454) for André. Henriette’s response is a masterpiece of compromise: far from suggesting that the others abandon their career, she insists that they work hard and earn a living while single. If, after marrying men of their choosing, they erase themselves (“s’effacent”) and are content to limit

¹⁸ In general, men do not fare well in these novels. For a varied and extensive discussion of how they are portrayed, see France Grenaudier-Klijn, Élisabeth-Christine Muelsch, and Jean Anderson.

themselves to being their husbands' helpers, "cette hypothèse-là concerne exclusivement l'être moral nouveau formé par le mariage" (454). If the marriage fails, having had professional training means that they can still be someone in the world. Yver reiterates these views in a theoretical work published years later, *Dans le jardin du féminisme* (1920), generally read as a virulent attack on feminism.¹⁹

That Henriette excels, to a greater degree than Josanne, at "doing it all" (her work is never shown to suffer from her commitment to André or her child) makes her capitulation all the more baffling. The same is true of her behavior—far more inauthentic than that of Josanne at a comparable moment—when she pretends to be overwhelmed, incapable of arguing a case that for which she had, earlier, scarcely been able to contain her enthusiasm, just so that she can pass it on to André, a performance that Yver's own narrator characterizes as "[une] admirable comédie" (442). Rotraud von Kulesa comments that even when new ways of life for women are the subject of novels by women, "leurs « plots » chancellent en général entre le retour aux modèles de vie traditionnels et des modèles novateurs," and marriage remains, "malgré une mise en question, généralement incontournable" (69-70). She labels this a double-voiced discourse "qui oscille entre l'adaptation de modèles littéraires établis, donc masculins, et la subversion de ceux-ci afin de trouver des modes d'expression propres" (60).²⁰

Just how paramount female mentors are in these novels becomes clear when one tries to imagine, with difficulty, the heroines' development without them. Even if Gaude, Renée, Josanne, and Henriette do not always embrace their mentors' principles, their thinking is always challenged by them, which means that they, like their predecessor Rastignac, are able to evolve and to move forward. But whereas Rastignac was part of a long tradition of male characters "formed" by fellow men, the protagonists of these novels are "new" in every sense of the word, as the narrator of *Les dames du palais* expresses when she marvels at Mlle Angély's annual gathering of women lawyers to celebrate the anniversary of her "prestation de serment": "... c'était un tableau vraiment neuf que cette réunion de femmes, à l'esprit dégagé de toute frivolité, qui étudiaient consciencieusement les plus modernes des problèmes sociaux, avec autant de simplicité que leurs mères en eussent mis à raconter leurs toilettes" (205). Réval's, Colette's, Tinayre's, and Yver's heroines are, to be sure, the first generation to make inroads into a work-life balance that still eludes many of their early twenty-first century counterparts, fictional and real-life alike,²¹ each of them arguing convincingly for a woman's right to self-actualization, with mentors playing a transformative role in novels aimed at challenging the status quo.

¹⁹ For an analysis of the ambiguities in Yver's feminism, see my article "Grappling with Feminism in the Belle Époque: Colette Yver's *Princesses de science* and *Les dames du palais*."

²⁰ Many women writers were loath to push their radical ideas too far for fear of alienating their reading public, as Waelti-Walters explains: "... we are dealing here with writers who are pragmatic and realistic for the most part. ... Consciously or unconsciously, they are aware of how much they can change the views of their readers, how far they can lead them along the way toward support of improvement in the status of women, how subversive they can be, and when they must perforce accept the prevalent codes of belief and behavior if they want to be read. This is not literature written to obtain a place in literary history; these are books written to produce immediate social effects" (81-82).

²¹ It is disheartening indeed that the July 2017 issue of *Cosmopolitan* includes an article by Jenna Birch titled "Ambition or Love: Do You Have to Choose?," leaving us to wonder just how much progress has been made on this front if twenty-first-century women still feel obligated to pose this question.

Works Cited

- Abel, Elizabeth, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, eds. *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*. Hanover: UP of New England, 1983. Print.
- Balzac, Honoré de. *Le père Goriot*. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966. Print.
- Birch, Jenna. "Ambition or Love: Do You Have to Choose?" *Cosmopolitan* July 2017: 70-72. Print.
- Callahan, Anne. *Writing the Voice of Pleasure: Heterosexuality without Women*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Print.
- Christiansen, Hope. "Educating Nélide and Valentia: Female Mentorship in Two Works by Marie d'Agoult." *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 44.3-4 (2016): 235-49. Print.
- . "Grappling with Feminism in the Belle Époque: Colette Yver's *Princesses de science* and *Les dames du palais*." *MLN* 130.4 (2015): 946-62. Print.
- Cohen, Margaret. *The Sentimental Education of the Novel*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999. Print.
- Colette. *La vagabonde*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1990. Print.
- Collado, Mélanie E. *Colette, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, Marcelle Tinayre: Émancipation et résignation*. Paris: Harmattan, 2003. Print.
- Deimling, Katherine. "The Female Mentor in Crébillon's *Les égarements du cœur et de l'esprit*." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 16.1 (2003): 13-31. Print.
- Grenaudier-Klijjn, France, Élisabeth-Christine Muelsch, and Jean Anderson, eds. *Écrire les hommes: Personnages masculins et masculinité dans l'œuvre des écrivaines de la Belle Époque*. Saint-Denis: PUV, 2012. Print.
- Hardin, James N., ed. *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1991. Print.
- Headrick, Ashlee S. "Images of Women Mentoring Women in French Literature 1650-1750." Diss. U of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, 2006. Print.
- Holmes, Diana. "Decadent Love: Rachilde and the Popular Romance." *Dix-neuf* 1 (2003): 16-28. Web. 2. Nov. 2017.
- . *French Women's Writing, 1848-1994*. London: Athlone, 1996. Print.
- . *Romance and Readership in Twentieth-Century France: Love Stories*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.
- Holmes, Diana, and Carrie Tarr. "New Republic, New Women? Feminism and Modernity at the Belle Époque." *A 'Belle Époque'?: Women in French Society and Culture, 1890-1914*. Ed. Holmes and Tarr. New York: Berghahn, 2006. 11-22. Print.
- Kulesa, Rotraud von. *Entre la reconnaissance et l'exclusion: La position de l'autrice dans le champ littéraire en France et en Italie à l'époque 1900*. Paris: Champion, 2011. Print.
- Labovitz, Esther Kleinbord. *The Myth of the Heroine: The Female Bildungsroman in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Lang, 1986. Print.
- Margueritte, Victor. *La garçonne*. Paris: Flammarion, 1922. Print.
- Mesch, Rachel. *Having it All in the Belle Époque: How French Women's Magazines Invented the Modern Woman*. Stanford UP, 2013. Print.
- Réval, Gabrielle. *La bachelière*. Paris: Flammarion, 1910. Print.
- Roberts, Mary Louise. *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002. Print.

- Rogers, Juliette M. *Career Stories: Belle Époque Novels of Professional Development*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2007. Print.
- Sloan, Margaret Kathryn. "Mothers, Marys, and Reforming 'The Rising Generation': Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays." *Mentoring in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture*. Ed. Anthony W. Lee. New York: Routledge, 2010. 225-41. Print.
- Solomon, Julie. "Makeup and Mirrors: Writing on the Face in Colette's *La vagabonde*." *Telling Performances: Essays on Gender, Narrative, and Performance*. Ed. Brian Nelson, Anne Freadman, and Philip Anderson. Cranbury: Associated UP. 2001. 168-84. Print.
- Tinayre, Marcelle. *La rebelle*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1923. Print.
- Waelti-Walters, Jennifer. *Feminist Novelists of the Belle Époque: Love as a Lifestyle*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990. Print.
- Yver, Colette. *Femmes d'aujourd'hui: Enquête sur les nouvelles carrières féminines*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1929. Print.
- . *Les dames du palais*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1909. Print.