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Women, War, and H. G. Wells: The Pacifism of French Playwright Marie Lenéru

Marie Lenéru (1875-1918) was the most important woman playwright in France during the period immediately preceding World War I. She had achieved startling success especially for two of her plays, *Les Affranchis* (The Emancipated Ones), first performed in 1910, and *La Triomphatrice* (The Triumphant Woman), which debuted in February 1914. The honor of the Prix Fémina in 1908 and the Prix Émile Augier in 1914 for *Les Affranchis*, in addition to the distinction of being the first woman since George Sand to have a play produced by the official theater of France, the Comédie Française, established Lenéru's reputation as a dramatist of genius.¹ Despite specific differences in plot and theme, her plays generally focus on the attempt of intelligent and self-directed women to resolve the conflict between the expansion of individual goals and the conventional demands of a love relationship. In 1932 Suzanne Lavaud, author of the first major analysis of all of Lenéru's works, compared her main characters with those of her well-known male contemporaries, such as Henri Bataille, Paul Hervieu, and Georges de Porto-Riche. While those playwrights tended to portray women pejoratively, as victims, dupes, or imbeciles, the main characters in all of Lenéru's dramas were strong women who contemplated their situations with seriousness and purpose and then transformed those reflections into action.²

Lenéru died at age forty-three at the beginning of the influenza epidemic in 1918, and thus did not live to see a production of her last play, *La Paix*, (Peace), begun in 1914 and finished in 1917, or an end to the war she hoped would be humanity's last. Administrators at the Comédie Française had judged its frankly didactic content too inflammatory for a public at war, and had refused in January 1918 to honor Lenéru's request to replace the previously scheduled *La Triomphatrice* with the new play.³ *La Paix* sets forth succinctly Lenéru's ideas on pacifism, feminism, and the roles women and men would play in the future of France and Europe. Lenéru considered herself a

follower of British novelist H. G. Wells (1866-1946), and like he, embraced the paradoxical notion of all-out war as the means to achieve a permanent peace. As Wells did in England, Lenéru campaigned for the creation of the League of Free Nations as the legal means to prevent future war. In *La Paix*, Lenéru extended Wells's ideas to analyze the origin of militarism and the establishment of peace specifically in gendered terms. However, Lenéru's theories on the roles of men and women in the realization of world peace demonstrate two particular inconsistencies. Although Lenéru regarded war as a product of the male drive for honor and revenge, the male characters in her play were not deemed accountable for their actions. Rather, the female characters were granted the power and responsibility to create the environment necessary for peace. Further, despite her public opposition to feminist organizations and the suffrage campaign, Lenéru created women characters whose actions and words duplicated the conviction of militant pacifists that women would play the most important and active role in the attainment of peace.

H. G. Wells had for some years before 1914 expressed the need for "some common peace-preserving council for the whole world," and in the early months of the war published a series of articles, entitled "The War That Will End War," in the British press.⁴ These essays explained his views on the causes and objectives of the war and the need for the formation of a world body to counteract and control militarism and imperialism in the future. While Wells certainly acknowledged that the cause of the present conflict was the invasion of Luxembourg and Belgium, he urged his readers to consider the long-range objectives of such a war of legitimate defense. Citing what he termed the "intolerable nuisance" of Prussian imperialism that had been spreading propaganda of "ruthless force" and "political materialism" for over forty years, Wells declared that the aim of the war was to destroy that ideology, but not the German people. He blamed their political leaders and professors for having advanced a dogma of "physical and moral brutality," but above all, he denounced both the enormous power of their armaments industry, that he termed "Kruppism," and the German dynastic system as the major causes of Teutonic belligerence (78-79; 84). His advocacy of the overthrow of the German monarchy and the establishment of a democracy similar to the French Third Republic were essential prerequisites for the future reintegration of Germany into the family of European nations.⁵

Wells reiterated and expanded these views in his many publications throughout the war period. From 1917-1919, he campaigned energetically for the establishment of a League of Free Nations, and his high-profile role in that

crusade increased his reputation outside of England. In particular, his 1918 publication, *In the Fourth Year: Anticipations of a World Peace* provided Wells's detailed analysis of the impact of imperialism and the possibility of ending war forever.⁶ Illustrating the interdependence of empire building and world trade, he perceived the prelude to war in the competition for economic dominance, aligned with nationalism and a powerful munitions industry. The League of Free Nations, representing people of all, and not just the economically strong countries, would have oversight of all territories under the control of larger nations, and even Britain and France would be held accountable for their actions. The League would also regulate sea and air transportation routes and the distribution of basic goods. For Wells, the League would accomplish nothing less than the rescission of all empires, including those of his own country, as well as of Germany and France (38; 46-47). "Until people have faced the clear antagonism," he wrote, "that exists between imperialism and internationalism, they have not begun to suspect the real significance of the project of the League of Free Nations" (39).

Wells also reiterated his denunciation of the political power of the armament industry, supported in each country by a nationalistic press, and he called for a general disarmament as a prerequisite for peace. "The very existence of the League presupposes that it and it alone is to have and exercise military force" (32). The League would have control over world wide munitions production and would have the power to investigate the military apparatus of any country, including propaganda and other forms of advertisement for the armaments industry. As he concluded:

The only wise course before the allied European powers now is to put their national conceit in their pockets and to combine to lock up their foreign policy, their trade interests, and all their imperial and international interests into a League so big as to be able to withstand the most sudden and treacherous of blows. And surely the only completely safe course for them and mankind - hard and nearly impossible though it may seem at the present juncture - is for them to lock up into one unity with a democratized Germany and with all other states of the earth into one peace-maintaining League (104).

Wells's anti-imperialist stand might have made him an ally of Romain Rolland, perhaps the most respected writer in France before 1914, who had

also cited imperialism as the prime cause of war. However, Wells rejected Rolland's charge to European intellectuals, beginning in September 1914, that they refuse to lend their support to the war, and that they remain, in his famous slogan, "above the battle." In spite of the fact that Wells and Rolland had a deep and mutual respect for one another's work and had planned to collaborate on an internationalist review before the war, Wells added his voice in March 1916 to the public condemnation of Rolland.⁷ For although Wells agreed with Rolland that German imperialism was the root cause of the war, he was also convinced that the overthrow of that ideology with its monarchist system of government was necessary for world peace. Advocating the punishment of Germany, he argued that the eradication of German militarism would end war and that the creation of a League of Free Nations would prevent its resurgence. "Every sword that is drawn against Germany now," he wrote in *The War That Will End War*; "is a sword drawn for peace."⁸

That Marie Lenéru would embrace many of Wells's ideas is not surprising in that most French people agreed with his assertion that the conflict was a war of legitimate defense and that the total defeat of Germany was a necessary condition for peace.⁹ Unlike Wells's more generous characterization however, the prevalent image of the German people in France, as evidenced by both fiction and non-fiction alike, was one of depravity and inhumanity, propelled by a Nietzschean impulse to dominate the world. In France, Germans as individuals were inseparable from their country's political aims, and the war became, not the war to end wars, as Wells had stated in 1914, but, as in the times of the Crusades, the war to save Christianity and Western Civilization from the barbarism of the infidel hordes from the East.

Like Wells, Lenéru distinguished the potential power of individual determination for peace from the traditional acceptance of the inevitability of war. In her many newspaper articles, published between 1915 and 1917, and in her diary, she criticized in particular governmental leaders whose belief that war was predetermined rendered them scandalously indifferent to its horrors. For her, acceptance of war was based on a fallacy that, if exposed, could change the course of human history. People were blind to their inherent ability to create a lasting peace because the true causes of war were camouflaged by false ideas on human nature and the economics of nations.¹⁰ For Lenéru, the most difficult impediment to permanent peace was simply the mentality of those who supported it, leaders and ordinary citizens alike. What was required, she believed, was a conscious rejection of the traditional notion that wars were fought for the preservation of a culture or national group. Noting the con-

demnation of pacifism as utopian, she argued that according to that definition, in fact war was far more utopian. "It is war," she wrote, "and not pacifism, that requires people to die for an idea."¹¹

Her critique of war notwithstanding, Lenéru repudiated as well the conventional definition of peace. She agreed with Wells that the victory that marked the end of a war directly created the conditions for the next armed conflict. Treaties punished the losers and rewarded the winners with economic reparations and territorial changes, and in so doing, fueled ancient animosities and sowed the seeds of new recriminations. No peace treaty, in her view, was anything more than a momentary truce, during which both sides rearmed and intensified their hostility for one another. True peace could never result from such settlements.

Lenéru argued instead for pacifism, but again, distinguished her understanding of this concept from the common definition. Lenéru attempted to enlarge the meaning of the term, in part to stem the negative reaction and accusation of disloyalty that her first articles received in 1915. While there were important differences in method and aim among those who criticized and/or opposed the war, the attacks in the press generally referred to them collectively as "defeatists." This term designated equally those who were against all wars, those who opposed specifically the combat begun in 1914, and those in favor of converting that conflict into a class war that would generate socialism throughout Europe. Moreover, the writers of these newspaper and literary review articles were most often not professional journalists, but people of letters who responded favorably to the French government's demand that intellectuals develop and influence public opinion in favor of the war. It is perhaps indicative of the paradoxes that arise from any war situation that those writers pressed to induce public support found themselves denouncing friends and colleagues of long standing. Thus in differentiating between disarmament in the face of aggression and disarmament of an aggressor, Lenéru was not only particularizing her concept of the means to secure universal peace, she was also separating herself definitively from well-known dissenters like Romain Rolland, as well as from activists such as the feminist Hélène Brion, and the socialist Louise Saumoneau, both of whom spent time in prison for sedition. Reiterating Wells's insistence on universal demilitarization, Lenéru advocated a firm-handed program that did not depend on treaties, pacts, or alliances between individual nations. Instead, like Wells, she regarded the creation of an international body, like the League of Free Nations, as the means to insure compliance with general disarmament,

thus ending the cycle of wars punctuated intermittently by periods of peace.¹²

Lenéru's writing during this time demonstrates both her conviction that the conditions for peace would arise if people abandoned their acceptance of the inevitability of war, and her understanding of the power of the press to influence social ideas. In her diary entry of June 11, 1915, she asserts her agreement "with Wells that results will come from a momentous campaign for public opinion, conducted by all available methods: press, theatre, [and] books, and not by the secondary means of congresses and committees."¹³ Additionally, her play, *La Paix*, focuses on the role of women in the crusade to alter the collective perceptions of war and peace, assigning to them the pre-eminent role as guardians of memory. As witnesses to the agonizing deaths of their men, women become for Lenéru the sacred protectors and sole repositories of their *souvenir* or memory. The multiple connotations of *souvenir* as remembrance, keepsake, and memorial lend depth to Lenéru's insistence on the concrete action necessary to fulfill the process of memory. She thus extends the stereotypical identification of the passivity of emotion with the feminine by infusing it with an active quality for change. Recollecting the soldiers' sacrifice without continuing their effort to secure world peace is to disregard the power to end war that the memory of their deaths bestows on women.

But I also ask the women, because I reserve for them a mission, the mission that is specifically theirs, which is mine, that of memory. ...I have come to this belief, only one thing is essential, one single thing would suffice, but of which humanity is perhaps incapable: not to forget...Ah! if only each person had seen....if only a single one of these horrors, which played across our cowardly imaginations by the thousands, were truly a part of the actual life of each one of us, if only we considered ourselves in fact to be charged with exacting revenge... They assassinate your brothers in your houses, and you listen behind your latched door... (30-31).¹⁴

The play begins in 1918 with the imagined end of the war and the beginning of the peace treaty negotiations. Lady Mabel Stanley, a pacifist of international reputation, has come to France with Graham Moore and other activists to persuade the delegates of the Congress of Paris to adopt the prin-

ciple tenets of the Wilsonian and Wellsian models for world peace. The beginning of the play finds Mabel at the home of her friend Marguerite de Gestel, who has lost her husband and two eldest sons in the war. Mabel's continued presence at the château solicits the anxiety of several characters. Moore, a former government minister and plenipotentiary member of the peace congress, wants Mabel to return to her lobbying efforts in Paris. Marguerite's brother, a famous war poet, fears the influence of Mabel's pacifist ideas on his nephew Jean, but more importantly, on General Peltier, a high-ranking member of the general staff in the French army. Peltier fell in love with Mabel while recovering from wounds at the hospital where she was a nurse, and he traveled to the château to ask her to marry him. The principle focus of the play concerns whether the pacifist Mabel and the professional soldier Peltier can overcome the personal and political ramifications of a marriage between such well-known and ideologically opposed public figures. Their efforts to explain their beliefs, and the attempts of other characters to influence their ultimate decision, provide a backdrop for Lenéru to explore the psychology of war and to present theatrically her previously-stated views on the creation of world peace. She reiterates her conviction that both peace and war result from the collective will, for wars would not continue without an assumption of their inevitability and peace, its permanence assured by a vigilant and powerful international congress, would result from public demand. For Lenéru, the soldiers had died to create a lasting peace, and to subvert or fail to support that goal was to debase their memory.

Mabel's arguments for the possibility of peace have at their core an attempt to convince the other female characters of the essential importance of women's support to continue any policy of war, something already known to generals and politicians alike. The women in the play represent an array of different attitudes and responses to the consequences of war, from Marguerite, the sorrowful mother identified with the Virgin Mary of the Pietà, to the sanguinary and vengeful Simone. Their individual struggles to understand or even merely to endure their situations provide the means for Lenéru to elucidate carefully her pro-peace position, and counter any arguments that could dispute her doctrine of women's responsibility.

Lenéru creates debates between characters who hold opposing views, but who came to those conclusions from similar life situations. These arguments delineate all of the rational and emotional arguments for and against the idea of a permanent peace and the role of women in its realization. For example, both Marguerite and Mabel served as volunteer nurses, where they experi-

enced firsthand the physical reality of war. Marguerite even lost the use of her arm to an infection transmitted from a patient, and Mabel was a witness to her beloved brother's slow and agonizing death. Words like honor and glory do not grant solace to Marguerite for the loss of her husband and two sons, for she is haunted by the image of her son Gérald. He did not experience the kind of heroic battlefield death that people had been led to imagine by writers like Marguerite's brother, the famous war poet. A machine gun sheared off the top of his head, and Gérald died in a hospital, screaming continuously for 29 hours. Despite the similarities in what they experienced, the women responded differently. Marguerite reacts to her tragedy by retreating to her memories of the past and refusing to continue her life, while Mabel rejects this mute resignation and embraces an active concept of remembrance. She recognizes the inherent transformative power in the grief of mothers to preserve the peace that the soldiers died to obtain. She urges Marguerite to translate her acquiescence into resistance, her sorrow into action, so that the war just ended would truly be the last (21-27).

Lenéru also contrasts the ideas on war, men, and marriage held by two young women characters, Perrine and Simone. Perrine, a childhood friend of Marguerite's sons, has lost three brothers and a brother-in-law in the conflict. Introduced early in the play, Perrine gives voice to the traditional argument for women's pacifism. Perrine decides to reject any personal participation in the cycle of violence by remaining celibate. Her denial of motherhood is a direct repudiation of her prescribed role in the creation of French soldiers for the future. Unlike Marguerite, who chastises her for rejecting her patriotic duty, Perrine understands her power, however small it may be, to affect events in the society to come.

I sacrificed my happiness in this world. And so that God might never permit, as long as I am alive, that children of others be killed again...I made a vow to never have any of my own (18).¹⁵

Simone, however, sees beauty and grandeur in sacrifice and unlike Mabel, believes that war, rather than peace, honors the memory of the dead soldiers. She identifies heroism so completely with war, that she vows to marry only a soldier, someone who has experienced the "sacred fire" (90-91). Moreover, Simone and her father Delisle, the famous war poet, espouse the proposition directly opposed to that of Mabel. Simone considers peace an impossible dream, and both of them accept war as inevitable because they

believe that it is part of a divine plan to punish sin and purify the earth. Thus to defeat war, as Lady Mabel proposes, is to blaspheme by opposing the will of God and further, to rob the world of virtues like nobility and self-abnegation that can only arise through war (89-95).

Lenéru skillfully emphasizes the viability of Mabel's views on the potential role of women in creating peace by unmasking Delisle's attempts to obscure the force of women's power. Like Mabel, he acknowledges the considerable influence that women possess. As women remain largely unaware of their power, he correctly perceives the danger in Mabel's attempts to stimulate women to exert their energy for peace. He concedes that in order to continue to exist, a politics of war must have the undiluted support of women, whether as mothers of future soldiers or as the conscience of those presently in arms. His concerted efforts to prevent the marriage of Peltier and Mabel stem from his fear that the high-ranking general will lose the inspiration needed to wage the next war. Delisle's religious tone elucidates Lenéru's view that war and peace depend on belief systems, and that war becomes inevitable only when people act according to those doctrines, "[t]he only reality in the world is in our convictions" (113).¹⁶

But you are at the highest level of the national defense... The man charged with anticipating, with ordering future sacrifices, future slaughters, if you like, cannot live in the unbelieving atmosphere of pacifism. He will not take from the eyes of a woman in mourning, from the arms of a defiant woman, the self-confidence, the composure, the certainty to accomplish the essential task, the indispensable responsibility, the supreme mission of salvation! (120-21)¹⁷

Further, Lenéru compares the sentiments and actions of Peltier and Jean, the only remaining son of Marguerite, to explore the illusions that ensnare people in a politics of war. Peltier, the 50-year-old professional soldier, freely admits the absurdity and uselessness of war. His judgment on war and peace, however, is interwoven with a static and gendered view on the respective responsibilities of men and women. Peltier's approval of Mabel's pacifism results from his certainty that such a position is normal for a woman, just as waging war is normal for a man. So firm is he in this conviction that he condemns women who are warlike or even resigned to war, and declares that he could only love a pacifist (44). Although Peltier concedes that a man might be

a pacifist, he cannot envision himself in any other role than that of soldier. His chosen profession transmits a sense of honor so integral to his definition of himself as a man that he cannot abandon it, even knowing that war is futile.

Like Peltier, Jean had decided to become a professional soldier and likened himself to a monk, called to holy orders (141). However, he soon accepts Mabel's argument that peace would exist if people desired it more than they wished for war, and he resigns his commission in the army to join the pacifists. His decision frees him from the static definition of honor and masculinity that constrains Peltier and aligns him instead with the vigorous activism of Mabel. Choosing pacifism over war, that is, female qualities of caring over masculine violence, he accepts a "call to the heart" that grants him a higher image of himself as a man than if he had yielded to the temptation of following in his brothers' footsteps to avenge their deaths (142). His fiancée, like Peltier, is not able to relinquish her belief either in the inevitability of war or of a man's natural desire for glory in battle, and she breaks her engagement with Jean, just as Mabel ends her relationship with Peltier (150-51). Thus, both Jean and Mabel reject individual happiness through marriage for the possibility of universal welfare. In uniting love and action, emotion and intellect, Mabel and Jean transcend stationary gender-determined categories to personify the aggregate qualities essential to enact Lenéru's vision of the future. It is significant that although Lenéru clearly indicates the moral superiority of the choices made by Mabel and Jean, she does not specifically condemn the views of the other characters. Since each one of those characters represents a different reaction to the reality imposed by war, Lenéru's forbearance demonstrates the value, however limited, that she recognizes in that individual response. Thus Mabel and Jean, much like the pacifist principles Lenéru embraced, personify a model for the future, more than a castigation of the past. The play, however, ends on a pessimistic note that proved to be prophetic. The pacifists, determined to end the cycle of brief truces that merely interrupt continual war, vow to continue their campaign, despite the failure of the congress to adopt any of Wilson's or Wells's doctrines (158). Writing in 1917, Lenéru would not live to see the accuracy of her prediction of a failed peace, or her premonition that visualized, as did that of Wells, explosions that would reduce the cities of Europe to volcanic rubble (148).

Despite the pivotal role that women play in Lenéru's vision of the postwar world, she opposed the actual suffrage campaign and distanced herself from feminist issues. Wells, conversely, long known in England as a champion of equal rights for women, had published novels with emancipated

female characters. His analysis of the changes in women's civil status and social condition resulting from war is noteworthy not only for its recognition of the strategic importance of women's contribution to the war effort, but also for its defense of the demand of equal pay for equal work. Commenting on the "enormous volumes of untrained and unassigned feminine energy" released by the disintegration of the pre-1914 world, Wells predicted the continuity of this forward social movement.

The war has merely brought about, with the rapidity of a landslide, a state of affairs for which the world was ripe. The world after the war will have to adjust itself to this extension of women's employment, and to this increase in the proportion of self-respecting, and self-supporting women.¹⁸

Lenéru's vision of the importance of women's contribution to future society, although somewhat more mystical in the strength of its effect, was certainly as durable as that of Wells. In fact, the central place that women occupy in Lenéru's play was typical in French women's wartime fiction, regardless of the author's view on the politics of war itself. Vehemently prowar writers, like the venerable Lya Berger, as well as younger novelists such as Andrée Mars, whose 1917 best-seller, *Tu aimeras dans la douleur* (You Will Love in Sorrow) portrays openly the hardships endured by women with permanently disabled husbands, recount the experience of French women during the Great War.¹⁹ In spite of tremendous variation in plot, theme, and characterization, this fiction, like Lenéru's play, reproduces the values of Republican Motherhood, the prevailing maternal ideology in France for nearly a century. Rooted in the tenets of the Civil Code and in Michelet's widely read *Femme* (Woman/Wife), this doctrine combined reproduction and patriotism to define women as the creators of the nation's future citizens. Although the role of *mère-éducatrice*, or mother-teacher, expanded during World War I to include activities outside the home, it continued to hold value for both women and men alike. Feminists, who advocated increased civil rights for women, did not reject the doctrine of Republican Motherhood, for it recognized their moral authority as (potential) givers of life. Organizations such as the powerful *Union française pour le suffrage des femmes* (French Union for Women's Suffrage) based their claims for the right to vote in part on the biological uniqueness of women which created a moral and social consciousness. Even those considered radical, such as Hélène Brion (1882-1962), the embattled pacifist teacher arrested for sedition in 1917,

regarded pacifism as the expression of a specifically female morality, the opposite of male brutality. Similarly, Madeleine Vernet (1878-1949), a pioneer in educational reform, considered pacifism as the natural response of women, as carriers of life, to male violence. That Marie Lenéru, who repudiated the ideas of such women as Brion and Vernet and further rejected the more modest demands of reformist feminists, founded her own interpretation of Wells's prototype for world peace on the same maternal ideology, is an illustration of the constancy of a belief system that continues to this day to empower as well as manipulate the political thinking of women.²⁰

Notes

1. Dossier Marie Lenéru, Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand.
2. Suzanne Lavaud, *Marie Lenéru, sa vie, son journal, son théâtre* (Marie Lenéru, Her Life, Her Diary, Her Theatre), (Paris: Société française d'éditions littéraires et techniques, 1932), 236-72.
3. Rachilde, "Mort de Marie Lenéru" (Death of Marie Lenéru), *Mercure de France* (1918): 755-56; Lavaud, 145-70; 258-64.
4. H. G. Wells, "The Possible Collapse of Civilization," *New York World*, 1909, excerpted in H. G. Wells, *Journalism and Prophecy 1893-1946*, ed. W. Warren Wagar (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), 75; "The War That Will End War" in *The War That Will End War* (New York, Duffield, 1914), excerpted in H. G. Wells, *Journalism and Prophecy 1893-1946*, ed. W. Warren Wagar (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), 77-84.
5. H. G. Wells, *What is Coming?* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), excerpted in H. G. Wells, *Journalism and Prophecy 1893-1946*, ed. W. Warren Wagar (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), 100-02.
6. H. G. Wells, *In the Fourth Year: Anticipations of a World Peace* (New York: Macmillan, 1918).
7. Romain Rolland, *Journal des années de guerre* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1952), 717-20 and passim.
8. As cited in Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie, *H. G. Wells, A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 300.
9. Lavaud reprints a letter (166-67) Lenéru wrote to Léon Blum in 1917 in which she proclaims: "I am from one end to the other, completely in the official line [with Wells's program] and I feel no need to get out of it." All translations of quoted French material are my own.
10. Marie Lenéru, *Journal de Marie Lenéru* (Paris: Crès, 1922), excerpted in Lucien Roth, "Marie Lenéru et la Guerre" (Marie Lenéru and the War), ...Évolution (1930): 25-29.
11. Marie Lenéru, *Journal de Marie Lenéru* (Paris: Crès, 1922), excerpted in Lavaud, 148.
12. *Ibid.*, 146-49.
13. Cited in Roth, 30.
14. Mais je demande aussi les femmes, parce que je leur garde une mission, la mission qui est proprement la leur, qui est la mienne, celle du souvenir. ...J'en suis arrivée à cette conviction, une seule chose est nécessaire, une seule chose suffirait, mais celles dont l'humanité est peut-être incapable: ne pas oublier...Ah! si chacun avait vu...si une seule de ces horreurs, qui ont passé par milliers devant notre lâche imagination, appartenait vraiment à la vie réelle de

chacun de nous, si nous nous en sentions vraiment les vengeurs responsables... On assassine vos frères dans votre maison, et vous écoutez derrière votre porte loquetée....

15. J'ai fait le sacrifice de mon bonheur en ce monde. Et pour que Dieu ne permette pas, tant que je serai en vie, qu'on tue encore une fois les enfants des autres... j'ai fait l'aveu de n'en avoir jamais à moi.

16. "Il n'y a de réalité au monde que dans nos convictions."

17. Mais vous êtes au tout premier rang de la défense nationale... L'homme chargé de prévoir, d'ordonner les futurs sacrifices, les futures hécatombes, si vous voulez, ne peut vivre dans l'atmosphère incrédule du pacifisme. Il ne puisera pas dans les yeux d'une femme en deuil, dans les bras d'une femme révoltée, l'assurance, le calme, la certitude d'accomplir l'œuvre nécessaire, l'œuvre indispensable, la mission suprême du salut!

18. H. G. Wells, *What is Coming?* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), excerpted in H. G. Wells, *Journalism and Prophecy 1893-1946*, ed. W. Warren Wagar (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), 108.

19. For a detailed analysis of these novels and short stories, see my "*Woman, Your Hour is Sounding*": *Continuity and Change in French Women's Great War Fiction, 1914-1919*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

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