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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Une analyse structurale de *Perpétue et l'habitude du malheur* de Mongo Beti

Afi Esinam Kokovena-Gbegnon

Doctor of Philosophy in French

University of California, Los Angeles, 1994

Professor Boniface I. Obichere, Co-Chair

Professor Eric Gans, Co-Chair

Faire une analyse structurale d'un texte littéraire, c'est étudier l'organisation structurale, les différentes idées et leur signification qui sont à l'origine de ce texte. Cette thèse fait une analyse structurale de *Perpétue et l'habitude du malheur* écrit par Mongo Beti en 1974.

Après avoir présenté l'espace socio-politique où s'est déroulé l'action du récit décrite par le romancier, la géographie physique, les assises historiques et religieuses du Cameroun, nous porterons notre attention sur la vie littéraire camerounaise. Puis nous verrons les interférences pré- et post-indépendances dans *Perpétue* et la vie sociale du Cameroun indépendant. Dans le dernier mouvement enfin, nous analyserons le contenu romanesque de *Perpétue*.

En conclusion, nous ferons le point des différentes parties en faisant ressortir le message que Beti veut communiquer à son lecteur dans *Perpétue*.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Textual Promiscuities: Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, Frances Burney and Choderlos de Laclos

Antoinette Marie Sol

Doctor of Philosophy in French

University of California, Los Angeles, 1994

Professor Stephen Werner, Chair

This dissertation attempts to integrate two important women writers of the Eighteenth Century into the critical studies of Choderlos de Laclos. It is my thesis, presented in the first chapter, that Laclos draws upon the pre-sentimental novel of Riccoboni and the domestic novel as written by Burney to create his great novel.

Chapter Two examines how women were progressively written out of literary history and how Laclosian criticism excludes studies of women's works on an author who is recognized as owing a great debt to his literary forebears. It reviews traditional literary criticism's view that Crébillon, fils, Richardson, and Rousseau were the primary influences on Laclos and suggests that one must look to women's texts to complete the study of *Les liaisons dangereuses*. Chapter Three shows the connection between Riccoboni and Burney. Burney read Riccoboni and rewrote her. She drew upon specific episodes in Riccoboni's texts and expanded them in a more "realistic" mode. The violence and humor that is present but subdued in Riccoboni, is exaggerated in the younger Burney's text.

Chapter Four concerns Laclos's reading of Riccoboni. In a manner similar to Burney, Laclos exploited parts of Riccoboni's texts to create *Les liaisons dangereuses*. He drew upon characters and voices found in Riccoboni to create Merteuil, Tourvel, and Valmont. He exaggerated her characters, heightened the tension between conflicting ideologies, and extended situations present in Riccoboni's texts to the breaking point. Laclos's reading of Burney's *Evelina* is studied in chapter Five. Laclos used *Evelina* as a starting point for his novel. *Les liaisons dangereuses* is the product of Laclos's reading of Riccoboni and Burney (and indirectly a product of Burney's reading of Riccoboni). Burney's second novel *Cecilia or Memoirs of an Heiress*, published within a few months of *Les liaisons dangereuses*, dealt with many of the same topics as the French novel. A paired reading of the two novels reveals the plight of the individual in a

corrupt society and the impossibility of a "happy" resolution as their common theme. This chapter explores the difference gender makes to the writing of novels and suggests that Laclos deliberately draws upon the "faulty" narrative strategy found most often in the novels written by women.

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PAROLES GELEES

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Ce serait le moment de philosopher et de
rechercher si, par hasard, se trouverait ici
l'endroit où de telles paroles dégèlent.

Rabelais, *Le Quart Livre*

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