

## Tricky, Fine, and Trapped: Painting the *Femme Forte* in Early Seventeenth-Century France

Between the late 1620s and late 1640s, the *femme forte* (strong woman) was a favored subject of a new coterie of French painters working in Paris. The generic category of the *femme forte* comprised women from diverse historical and religious backgrounds, including Lucretia, Cleopatra, Dido, Portia, Sophonisbe, Esther, Judith, Joan of Arc, and Mary Queen of Scots.<sup>1</sup> *Femmes fortes* were of high birth (Joan of Arc and Judith being exceptions) and were distinguished for courage, beauty, and commitment to ideals of family, nation, and noble selfhood.<sup>2</sup> For the French painters Claude Vignon (1593–1670), Jacques Blanchard (1600–1638), and Simon Vouet (1590–1649), the *femme forte* offered an opportunity to combine the female nude with a historical subject.<sup>3</sup> For the *femme forte*, however, pictorial representation had the tendency to make her suffering into the object of the viewer’s sensual delectation.

The *femme forte* as exemplary type represented an outgrowth of the ongoing *querelle des femmes*, the wide-ranging debate, initiated in the early fifteenth century by Christine de Pisan, regarding the merits of women and the role they should play in society.<sup>4</sup> The *femme forte* offered one answer in the form of its pantheon of female exemplars, none of whom were particularly relevant to the experience of the average woman, but who provided dramatic and often racy material for literature, art, and theater. Despite its apparently pro-woman inclination, the discourse of the *femme forte* was interlaced with misogyny. The narratives of the lives of strong women fixated on violent forms of death, in which the woman was simultaneously exalted and

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to this iconography in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see, *Die Galerie der Starken Frauen* (exh. cat. Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf), ed. by Bettina Baumgärtel and Silvia Neysters, Düsseldorf 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Maclean, *Woman triumphant: Feminism in French literature 1610–1652*, Oxford 1977, 54–118.

<sup>3</sup> This period has mainly been addressed in survey texts. See Alain Mérot, *La peinture française au XVIIe siècle*, Paris 1994, 1–116. Marc Fumaroli, *De Rome à Paris: Peinture et Pouvoirs aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, Dijon 2007, 167–247. Louis Dimier, *Histoire de la Peinture Française du retour de Vouet à la Mort de Lebrun, 1627 à 1690*, 2 vols., Paris 1926, vol. 1, 1–10 and 29–46. For one excellent critical account, see Thomas Kirchner, *Le héros épique: Peinture d’histoire et politique artistique dans la France du XVIIe siècle*, Paris 2008, 9–131.

<sup>4</sup> On the *querelle des femmes* see Joan Kelly, Early feminist theory and the “querelle des femmes”, 1400–1789, in: *Signs* 8, 1982, 4–28. Julie D. Campbell, The Querelle des femmes, in: Allyson M. Poska, Jane Couchman, and Katherine A. McIver (eds.), *The Ashgate research companion to women and gender in early modern Europe*, Farnham 2013, 361–379.

annihilated at the same time, bloody endings that neglected to imagine women's social role beyond instances of crisis. In France, interest in the *femme forte* was piqued as a result of the presence on the royal stage of Marie de Medici, queen of France between 1601 and 1610 and then regent for her minor son Louis XIII between 1610 and 1614.

Within the distinctive cultural and social milieus of the Paris of Louis XIII, the *femme forte* was a subject of profound contemporary relevance, the representation of which revealed uncomfortable truths about myths of female heroism and the seductions of flesh and paint.<sup>5</sup> The sensational nature of the strong woman's heroic death interacted in problematic ways with artistic techniques, most notably with the use of colorist manners of painting. When artists working in a colorist idiom painted the *femme forte*, they gave the *femme forte* a body that resonated with contemporary moralists' condemnation of women's bodies as dangerous instruments of seduction. If colorism was not at issue, other elements of the painting's *mise-en-scène*, in particular the setting of the bed and the *ruelle*, could work in similar ways to ensnare the image of the *femme forte* in a network of associations that challenged her exemplarity. When put into conversation with period texts and cultural contexts, paintings of the *femme forte* by Blanchard, Vignon, and Vouet expose the problematic misalignments between the myth of the exemplary woman and social realities specific to the early seventeenth century.

## I. The Queen Between Allegory and Flesh

In Peter Paul Rubens' spectacular cycle of paintings illustrating the life of Marie de' Medici, Marie cast herself as the latest member of the pantheon of *femmes fortes*.<sup>6</sup> Through its performance of a delicate negotiation between the conventions of allegory and the representation of historically-specific female bodies, the cycle offers an essential precedent for the

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<sup>5</sup> For the sake of brevity, one historically significant example of the representation of the *femme forte* is left out of this account. This is the cabinet of the Maréchale de la Meilleraye at the Arsenal, the only existing painted cabinet of strong women in Paris. In a longer account, I do discuss this decorative ensemble, but this article attends more closely to oil paintings and to easel paintings, which asked for a different kind of viewing than this particular décor required. On this cabinet see Jean-Pierre Babelon, L'hôtel de l'Arsenal au XVIIe siècle, in: *L'Oeil*, 143, 1966, 26–34, 55, and 58.

<sup>6</sup> The series was commissioned in 1622 and completed by 1625. On this cycle and the circumstances surrounding its commission, see Fanny Cosandey, *La reine de France: symbole et pouvoir*, Paris 2000, 333–360.

representations of the *femme forte* that would follow.<sup>7</sup> Two features are of particular note in Rubens' contribution to the visual vocabulary of the *femme forte*. Rubens created a figure for Marie that constantly asserts its importance above and beyond the illustration of historical narratives. In addition, Rubens deployed his bravura colorist technique in order to invest the female body with sensual appeal. Yet Rubens' representation of Marie also opens the series to misogynistic readings that align a woman's voracious appetite for power with her desire for sexual conquest.

In the series' great homage to allegorical figuration, *The Happiness of the Regency*, Marie is both allegorical and historical at once (fig. 1). Her figure subsumes generic distinctions into its charismatic singularity. She sits on her throne, holding the scales of justice in one hand, the other hand resting on a globe. Even in this highly-populated composition, Rubens' Marie seems to be alone with herself, her monopoly of power expressed in the way her body seems to both generate and receive the composition's directional vectors. The line of the metal bar from which the scales of justice are suspended points outward from her figure only to indicate figures that look back towards Marie, their gazes following the line of the scales. The bar of the scales also points to Marie's exposed breast, the sign of her maternity as well as an allegorical representation of fecundity. The festoons of bulging fruits above Marie's head and the fruits falling from Plenty's basket, in particular the green pear with the nipple-like indentation at its base, compose the allegorical register to which Marie's exposed breast belongs.

Through his application of oil paint, however, Rubens emphasizes the specific material characteristics of Marie's breast, which dampens the allegorical impact. For the representation of Marie's bare skin, Rubens used bluish underpainting beneath the flesh tones, liquid top-strokes of pink and white, with shadows darkening into blue, green, and vermillion, along with black. The result was the appearance of smooth, pliable human flesh. This is the real breast that nursed the king, or, since Marie, like all aristocratic women, used a wet nurse, the breast serves as a metonymic representation of the real body that bore the king.<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, Marie also desired

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<sup>7</sup> Extremely useful interventions on this series have preceded me. See Sarah Cohen, Rubens's France: Gender and personification in the Marie de' Médicis cycle, in: *The Art Bulletin* 85, 2003, 490–522. Geraldine A. Johnson, Pictures fit for a queen: Peter Paul Rubens and the Marie de' Medici cycle, in: *Art History* 16, 1993, 447–469. Mary Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The image of the female hero in Italian baroque art*, Princeton 1989, 154–171.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-François Dubost, *Marie de Médicis: La Reine Dévoilée*, Paris 2009, 148. The wet nurse was named Antoinette Joron; she attended to the dauphin alongside his doctor, Jean Herouard, and his governess, Madame de Montglat. During the first six months of his life, Marie saw Louis XIII only every four days or thereabouts.

the exposed breast to evoke a comparison with the Virgin Mary, another woman who combined the historical realities of motherhood with expanded allegorical and religious significance.<sup>9</sup>

Marie may have welcomed this reminder of her life as a physical body – her embodied existence. She was canny enough to recognize that she owed a large part of her power to the successful functioning of her reproductive system, which had produced two male heirs to the throne within a few years of marriage.<sup>10</sup> However, Marie’s representation as embodied also yielded other, less positive readings, as Geraldine Johnson has shown.<sup>11</sup> In general, period commentators did not regard a woman’s display of her body as a sign of healthful fertility, but rather as an indication of concupiscence and lubricity. During the early seventeenth century, in a continuation of the ongoing *Querelle des Femmes* pamphlets and books abounded that sought to analyze, condemn, or defend female nature and behavior.<sup>12</sup> Pierre Juvernay, in a widely read anti-woman diatribe, *Discours particuliers contre les femmes desbraillées de ce temps*, devoted an entire treatise to a condemnation of women who wore their dresses cut too low and showed their breasts (*desbraillées*). Juvernay attributed all of society’s ills, from ordinary sins to wars, plagues, and famines, to “this cursed nudity of the female breast”.<sup>13</sup> As the argument went, women exposed their bodies in order to arouse male desire, which satisfied women’s insatiable vanity as well as their raging sex drive.<sup>14</sup> In consequence, women’s bodies endangered the proper

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<sup>9</sup> This comparison of the Queen to the Virgin became particularly popular during the reign and the Regency of Anne of Austria, whose production of a male heir after twenty-three years of marriage inspired comparisons to the Immaculate Conception. See the discussion of this comparison in Cosandey 2000 (as note 8), 275–294.

<sup>10</sup> As Katherine Crawford has shown, in the aftermath of the assassination of Henri IV, Marie did not hesitate to appear overcome by grief, a sign of her bodily response to her bodily condition as mother and wife. In the panic following Henri’s death, Marie’s “gendered performance” propelled her to the regency. Katherine Crawford, *Perilous performances: Gender and regency in early modern France*, Cambridge, Mass. 2004, 61–72.

<sup>11</sup> Johnson 1993 (as in note 9).

<sup>12</sup> For summaries of these debates and bibliographies of primary sources, see Pierre Darmon, *Mythologie de la Femme dans l’ancienne France, XVIe–XIXe siècle*, Paris 1983, 17–73. Maclean 1977 (as note 2), 25–63. Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance notion of woman: A study in the fortunes of scholasticism and medical science in European intellectual life*, Cambridge 1980.

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Juvernay, *Discours particulier contre les femmes desbraillées de ce temps par Pierre Juvernay, Prêtre Parisien, Réimpression faite sur la troisième édition* [Paris 1637], Geneva 1867, 28: “Et certes, d’où pensons-nous que sont causées toutes ces guerres, pestes et famines qu’on voit souvent en France, sinon des péchez qui y règnent, lesquels ordinairement prennent leur naissance de cette maudite nudité du sein féminin.” Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

<sup>14</sup> *Le Tableau des piperies des femmes mondaines, où par plusieurs histoires se voyent les ruses et artifices dont elles se servent* [1632], Paris 1879, 18–19. François de Grenaille, *L’honnête fille*, ed. by Alain Vizier, Paris 2003, 457–485. Grenaille, who wrote frequently and copiously on female behavior, reproduces in this text (first edition 1639–1640) the treatise of Saint Cyprian, *On the discipline and the dress of virgins*. On female vanity, see Jacques Olivier, *Alphabet de l’imperfection et malice des femmes* [1617], Rouen 1630, 255–278. Olivier’s account offers a virulent critique of women; his book was re-edited frequently throughout the seventeenth century.

functioning of society. Under the sway of physical passion, men made bad decisions, which led to disorder.<sup>15</sup> If men are expected to do their part and restrain their impulses, women are cautioned against attempting to arouse male passion.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, as a moralist like Jacques du Bosc indicated, women, because they are vain and concupiscent, are prone to debauchery.<sup>17</sup>

Arguments such as these, disseminated in moralizing texts like those of Juvernay, du Bosc, François de Grenaille, and Jacques Olivier, underlay the reception of the representation of women. While pro-women texts also abounded, like Marguerite de Valois' *L'Excellence des femmes avec leur reponse à l'auteur de l'alphabet* (1618), as well as panegyrics praising Marie's motherhood and successful reign, the lack of consensus meant that alternative readings were always possible.<sup>18</sup> To represent a woman in terms that emphasized her body was to throw her into a contentious discourse that cast this body as alternatively fecund, nourishing, terrifyingly tempting, and castrating. While Marie wanted to show that her life and her achievements had already raised her into the sphere of the *femme forte*, the vivid illustration of her material incarnation aligned her figure with less elevated readings of female power. As Johnson suggests, if we read Marie's exposed breast according to period prejudice, perhaps Marie displayed her body with the specific intent of distracting, disturbing, or 'tricking' male viewers, including the statesmen who gazed at Rubens' cycle while waiting to be granted an audience.<sup>19</sup> In this reading, certain paintings in the cycle function as tricky traps, snares for male desire baited by a woman's exposed body part. Other, more positive readings, were of course possible, but however Rubens, or Marie, intended for the cycle to be read, the polemics surrounding women made possible a wide variety of runaway readings, many of which expressed traditional fears of "women on top".<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> On the destabilizing effects of feminine concupiscence, see Darmon 1983 (as note 14), 34–36. Women were the leading cause of duels, which were attributed to disorderly passion and regarded as a major social ill. See François Billaçois, *The duel: Its rise and fall in early modern France*, ed. by Trista Selous, New Haven 1990, 77–82.

<sup>16</sup> See also Grenaille 2003 (as note 16), 467. Grenaille warns that if a woman seeks attention in public through ornament, dress, and cosmetics, she will cause the downfall of many people, "comme un glaive et comme un venin de Basilisc", and in consequence, no one will believe that she is chaste.

<sup>17</sup> Darmon 1983 (as note 14), 27–32. On female concupiscence see Olivier 1630 (as note 16), 43–49. On the "debauched" woman (*la debauchee*), see Jacques Du Bosc, *L'honneste femme*, Paris 1632, 229–248.

<sup>18</sup> For the panegyrics on Marie, which played on the confusion of identity between Marie de Medici and the Virgin Marie, see Cosandey 2000 (as note 8), 285.

<sup>19</sup> Johnson 1993 (as note 9), 457

<sup>20</sup> The classic essay on the trope of "women on top" in Early Modern Europe is Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top," in: eadem, *Society and culture in early modern France*, London 1975, 124–151.

In the Medici cycle, Rubens explored the themes of the *femme forte* in the context of the large-scale decorative ensemble. Other decorative cycles also celebrated the *femme forte* in seventeenth-century France, but the trickiest themes of Rubens' cycle would manifest in the relatively new (to France) medium of small-scale easel paintings on canvas, intended for a collector's cabinet.<sup>21</sup> The easel painting supposed a more intimate mode of viewership and encouraged prolonged contemplation of a single gesture. There was no possibility that a viewer looking at Marie's figure might imagine him or herself as the queen's privileged interlocutor. Her figure, in its allegorical expansiveness and triumphant mien, supposed a large public of admirers. Decorative cycles by no means prohibited sensual experiences, as the later example of Blanchard's decoration of the gallery at the Hôtel Bullion will suggest, but the easel painting was particularly well-suited to the use of colorist techniques of painting to mimic tactile sensations, like the texture of skin.<sup>22</sup> Although Marie's allegorical exceptionalism was compromised by Rubens' attention to her living flesh, her figure easily re-acquired its proper distance, thanks to the cycle's pompous apparatus and sheer size. The easel painting, however, invited viewers to come close. While this closeness could be used to set a trap for the viewer, the strong woman might also find herself trapped in a body of paint, the sensuality of which compromised her own desire to free herself from this body.

## II. Colorism and Cleopatra

In early seventeenth-century France, a widespread discourse on female trickery described women as prone to disguise themselves using the resources of cosmetics, wigs, padded garments, corsets, jewels and perfumes. However, while female trickery was met with dismay, trickery in painting was an object of sophisticated delight. Connoisseurs like Georges de Scudéry enthusiastically described the work of the colorist painter Claude Vignon as a "tricky and fine art" (*un art trompeur et fin*). Vignon was one of the most popular artists working in Paris in the

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<sup>21</sup> The other major decorative cycle is that painted in the cabinet of the Maréchale de la Meilleraye at the Arsenal. See Babelon 1966 (as note 5).

<sup>22</sup> Another discourse would argue that colorist painting was best seen from a distance, at which its various effects would merge in a single *coup d'oeil*. As Lichtenstein has shown, this argument, offered by Roger de Piles, was intended to invert previous critiques of colorism as that which needed to be seen up close. At stake was the attention of the *honnête homme*, who exercised his exquisite discernment from a disinterested distance. Lichtenstein 1999 (as note 6), 177.

1630s and 1640s.<sup>23</sup> He was a prolific designer of models for prints and book illustrations, for which he is now better known than for his enormous output of oil paintings executed in a distinctly colorist manner. Yet together with Jacques Blanchard, whose painting of Lucretia is discussed below, Vignon catered to a thriving niche market for colorist easel paintings, which prospered alongside a growing taste for slick surfaces and classicizing ‘atticism’ in the manner of Vouet.<sup>24</sup> Vignon dealt with the representation of the strong woman on numerous occasions, in both paint and print. For his representation of *The Death of Cleopatra*, Vignon uses a colorist technique to create painterly surrogates for Cleopatra’s jewels, furs, brocades, and hair (fig. 2). Offering what is perhaps one of the most controlled, but also one of the most cynical representations of the *femme forte*, Vignon doubles up on trickery, using the trickery of colorism to represent a woman whose trickiness tempted Mark Anthony to his demise.

It is worth noting that Cleopatra’s sexual escapades made her a bit too racy for the most conservative pantheons of *femmes fortes*.<sup>25</sup> However, Cleopatra was included in Scudéry’s *Les femmes illustres*, a collection of harangues in which famous women reflect upon their deeds (his sister, Madeleine de Scudéry, wrote one of the harangues, although she has at times been credited with all of them).<sup>26</sup> Scudéry’s compendium reflects a variant type of *femme forte*, one associated with heroic noble identity.<sup>27</sup> Following Torquato Tasso’s definition of the noble heroine, Scudéry overlooks sexual impropriety if the woman is of exceptional birth and if the behavior contributed in some manner to the perpetuation of extraordinary ambitions or destinies.<sup>28</sup> Cleopatra, in this context, exemplifies both high birth and inflexible commitment to honor: she kills herself because she cannot bear to be exposed in Octavian’s Roman triumph. Yet Scudéry situates Cleopatra’s tirade not in the moment immediately preceding her suicide, but

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<sup>23</sup> The major source on Vignon is Paola Pacht Bassani, *Claude Vignon 1593–1670*, Paris 1992. See also Antoine Schnapper, *Curieux du Grand Siècle: Collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVIIe siècle*, Paris 2005, 96–99. Vignon also dealt in paintings by other artists and in antiquities. He served as a buyer in Spain and Italy for Marie de Medici and Gaston d’Orléans.

<sup>24</sup> On Atticism see Marc Fumaroli, Introduction: Des Leurres qui persaudent les yeux, in: *France in the golden age: Seventeenth-century French paintings in American collections* (exh. cat. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), ed. by Pierre Rosenberg, New York 1982, 1–33, here 12. Atticism was also a literary style. See Marc Fumaroli, *L’École du Silence: Le Sentiment des images au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris 1994, 343–364.

<sup>25</sup> She is not included in Pierre Le Moyne’s *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes* or in Du Bosc’s *La femme héroïque*.

<sup>26</sup> Georges de Scudéry, *Les femmes illustres, ou les harangues héroïques avec les véritables portraits de ces Heroïnes, tirez des Medailles Antiques*, 2 vols., Paris 1644, vol. 1, 45–60.

<sup>27</sup> On this of uncompromising kind of noble heroism, see Paul Bénichou, *Morales du grand siècle*, Paris 1948, 15–79.

<sup>28</sup> This was an argument made by Tasso in *Discorso della virtù femminile e donnesca*, see MacLean 1977 (as note 2), 19–21.

rather at the point when she must explain to Mark Anthony why she retreated from the battlefield without signaling to him.<sup>29</sup> Mark Anthony suspects a trick, but Cleopatra must assure him that she did it for his sake. Marc Anthony might struggle to believe her, because she has already set several traps for him. In Scudéry's harangue, Cleopatra reminds Marc Antony that it was she who set out to conquer his love, by arriving at their first meeting in a magnificently adorned ship, decorated with purple sails, a golden prow, and silver oars.<sup>30</sup> According to seventeenth-century critiques of women, however, Cleopatra's display could also be characterized as the lustful woman's use of cosmetic adornment in order to trick her male admirers. As *Le Tableau des piperies des femmes mondaines* announced, the more lascivious a woman, the more ornament she applies in the form of cosmetics, jewelry, and rich garments.<sup>31</sup> Cleopatra's sexual voraciousness manifests itself in displays of ornament and splendor, which Vignon expertly translates into oil paint.

Vignon renders Cleopatra's suicide as moment of sensual intensity, which the viewer experiences through the different applications of paint, from the shimmering folds of her golden shawl, to the velvety texture of her skin, to the glistening ridges of paint on her jewels. Cleopatra wears a crown, dangling earrings, a jeweled bodice, and a jeweled sleeve ornament. An ermine, strewn across her lap, indicates royalty. On the surface of her figure, Vignon boldly performs his painterly 'negligence', covering the canvas with a net of mobile brushwork, from the gold webbing of the brocade to the dynamic tangle of the draperies on her shoulder, to her hair, flying out in the wind, each lock of which is composed of a single, curling brushstroke. Vignon depicts the snake with relish as a large black serpent, its writhing body highlighted in liquid white. Ornament, rather than flesh, provides the locus of Vignon's colorist attention, as he attempts to create a painterly equivalent for the spectacle of precious, sparkling things. Having exerted himself to render the texture of Cleopatra's garments and jewels, Vignon represents Cleopatra's fingers with the most cursory brushstrokes. There are no joints or ligaments in these pale tubes, which curl around the serpent's body without really seeming to grasp it. These differentiated

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<sup>29</sup> Breitenstein points out that Scudéry's strategy is to choose unusual moments for the harangues, the goal being to allow the speakers to shed light on the "fissures" in their own narratives, to "explorent les interstices de l'histoire officielle". Renée-Claude Breitenstein, *Représentations de l'histoire et parole féminine dans Les Femmes illustres ou les Harangues héroïques des Scudéry*, in: Sylvie Steinberg and Jean-Claude Arnould (eds.), *Les Femmes et l'écriture de l'histoire*, Rouen 2008, 342–353, here 350–353.

<sup>30</sup> Scudéry 1644 (as note 28), 51.

<sup>31</sup> *Le Tableau des piperies* 1879 (as note 16), 20–23.



painted surfaces, each marvelously tactile in its own way, are quilted together in adjacency upon Cleopatra's figure, competing for attention, drawing the viewer's eye from the shadowy patch where her breasts cleave to the black gash of her open mouth, and on to those bright bits of gold on her crown. The quick shifts of paint application, from matte, to glossy, to ridged, heighten the sensual immediacy of Cleopatra's gesture, creating an agitated texture to match her passionate state.

Vignon's commercial success with a range of clientele, from the robe and sword nobility to the bourgeoisie suggests that during the early seventeenth century, the Parisian market itself had no qualms regarding colorism.<sup>32</sup> Colorism, a manner of painting that arose in Venice in the early sixteenth century, varies widely in its applications.<sup>33</sup> Its variants include the atmospheric dewiness of Giorgione and Titian, the bruised flesh tones of Tintoretto and Veronese, and Rubens' spectacular glossiness and animated brushwork.<sup>34</sup> What colorist painters share, however, is an emphasis on tonal and luminous handling of pictorial volumes, as well as a tendency towards expressive, tactile paint application, which is described as *colorito* or *il colorito alla veneziana*.<sup>35</sup> Vignon's colorism tends towards the latter. Vignon used his colorist style for all his paintings, indiscriminately of subject matter. Accordingly, the meaning of the colorist style varied with its subject matter. In some cases, it is possible that Vignon built up tactile surfaces of paint in his representation of precious objects in order to approximate the workmanship of artisanal craft.<sup>36</sup> Yet in the case of his representations of the *femme forte*, his colorism acted in concert with the subject matter to perform an alliance between tricky women and tricky painting.

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<sup>32</sup> The intellectual elite may have felt differently. While there are few written sources on art from the first half of the seventeenth century, one exception, a precis of a series of lectures on painting at the Académie Renaudot, records a speaker's opinion that color was "the least part of painting" (*la moindre partie de la peinture*). Jacques Thuillier, *Doctrines et Querelles Artistiques en France au XVIIe Siècle: Quelques Textes Oubliés ou Inédits*, in: *Archives de l'art Français, Documents Inédits sur l'art Français du XVIIe siècle*, Paris 1968, 127–217, here 135. All in all, the Académie Renaudot evinces a severe attitude towards painting, anticipating the intellectualism of the Royal Academy.

<sup>33</sup> Sydney J. Freedberg, *Disegno vs. Colore in Florentine and Venetian Painting of the Cinquecento*, in: *Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations*, 2 vols., Florence 1980, vol. 2, 309–322. David Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*, Cambridge 1997, 10–25. Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art*, New Haven 1990, 265–274.

<sup>34</sup> On the varied manners of *colorito* within the oeuvre of a single artist, see David Rosand, Titan and the Eloquence of the Brush, in: *Artibus et Historiae* 2, 1981, 85–96.

<sup>35</sup> Rosand 1977 (as note 41), 20–25.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Vignon's *The Banquet of Anthony and Cleopatra* at The Ringling, Sarasota (Object number: SN653). I have made this argument in a conference paper: *Belated Binaries: Jacques Blanchard, Simon Vouet, and French Painting in the 1630s*, Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting, Chicago, 1 April 2017.

While it is difficult to determine exactly how Vignon's colorism was read in its time, some clues suggest that viewers would have taken pleasure in the colorist bravura of the painted surface without giving much thought to the moral implications of Cleopatra's death. Scudéry himself, in his *Le Cabinet de Monsieur de Scudéry*, a collection of poems about an imaginary cabinet of paintings, devotes a long poem to Vignon's painting of an amazon queen, Thalestris.<sup>37</sup> Scudéry spends very little time describing Thalestris' facial expression and no time at all describing her pose. Instead, he devotes all his attention to the recounting of her accoutrements: the rich fabrics of her robe of embroidered and transparent gauzes, her plentiful jewelry of diamonds, pearls, and rubies, her gilded and enameled weapons, the forest of feathers on her helmet ornamented with an enameled snake. He sprinkles the poem with words that evoke the visual effects of these rich substances: the "éclat" of gold, the "burning rays" of her eyes like "sparkling stars".<sup>38</sup> Finally, he describes Thalestris' sword:

The eye has seen nothing as beautiful  
As the guard and the hilt  
Of her fearful sword:  
A thousand false ornaments  
By which our soul is tricked,  
Are taken for real diamonds.<sup>39</sup>

Scudéry is not at all disturbed at having been tricked. Quite the contrary, he continues, enchanted, to laud Vignon's "tricky and fine art" (*un art trompeur et fin*) and to declare: "Oh Vignon, this painting proves your glorious art!"<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Georges de Scudéry, Thalestris, Reine des Amazones, de la main de Vignon, in: Christian Biet and Dominique Moncond'huy (eds.), *Le Cabinet de Monsieur de Scudéry*, Paris 1991, 85–87. Amazons represented a popular type of *femme forte*. Christophe Regina suggests that the Amazon posed a relatively non-threatening instantiation of the *femme forte* because of her exceptionality, and her geographical, cultural, and temporal distance from contemporary European society. Christophe Regina, *La Violence des femmes: Histoire d'un Tabou Social*, Paris 2011, 53–63.

<sup>38</sup> Scudéry 1991 (as note 41), 85-87: "L'éclat de l'or," line 49; "deux astres étincelants/jettent des rayons brûlants," lines 32-33.

<sup>39</sup> "L'oeil n'a rien vu de si beau | Que la garde et le fourreau | De sa redoutable épée: | Car mille faux ornements, | Par qui notre âme est trompée, | Y sont crus vrais diamants." Scudéry 1991 (as note 41), 85, lines 55–60.

<sup>40</sup> Scudéry 1991 (as note 39), 87, lines 91–92: "Ô Vignon, cette peinture | Prouve ton Art glorieux!"

In praising trickery, Scudéry echoes one of the first texts written in French to provide a vocabulary for sophisticated conversations about art, the Jesuit René François Binet's *Essay des merveils de nature et des plus nobles artifices* (1622). Binet describes painting as “innocent trickery” (*tromperie innocente*) the goal of which is to “elegantly trick” (*tromper finement*).<sup>41</sup> He offers a list of things for an educated viewer to say about painting, most of which dwell on the viewer's astonishment that what he sees before him is painted, not nature. According to Binet, a good painting was one that succeeded in ‘tricking’ its viewer, in the sense of fooling or deceiving the viewer into believing that he saw the thing itself, rather than its image. Scudéry and Binet delight in painted trickery, yet a very similar kind of painted surface, when assumed by women, aroused the vituperation of contemporary moralists. A typical example of the topos is offered in the widely-read anti-woman text, *Le Tableau des piperies des femmes mondaines*, that condemns a “made-up beauty, painted and false (*peinte et trompeuse*), which depends upon the artifice of the devil, who invented make-up [*des fards*]”.<sup>42</sup> Jacques du Bosc, less severe, agrees that an ugly woman wearing makeup (*une laide fardée*) is “nothing but Painting”.<sup>43</sup> For Olivier, author of *L'Alphabet de l'imperfection et malice des femmes*, women, “monsters in nature” [*monstres en nature*] conceal their imperfections, by “a tricky art” (*un art trompeur*), “beneath the color of a beautiful painting” (*sous la couleur d'une belle peinture*).<sup>44</sup> These comments attest to a discrepancy between contemporary aesthetic and moral discourses. According to connoisseurs of paintings, a tricky painting is glorious and fine. For moralists, however, a tricky woman, who is like a painting, is monstrous. While the moralists do not explicitly condemn painting, they castigate women who resemble paintings.

Jacqueline Lichtenstein has shown that during the debates regarding color and line in the late seventeenth century, the critique of painting merged its rhetoric with the critique of

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<sup>41</sup> René François Binet, *Essay des merveilles de nature et des plus nobles artifices, piece très nécessaire a tous ceux qui font profession d'éloquence*, Rouen 1622, 301–303. On the French use of Jesuit texts as sources of a critical vocabulary that could be employed to describe painting, see Fumaroli 2007 (as note 3), 226–230.

<sup>42</sup> *Le Tableau des piperies* 1879 (as note 16), 18–19: “beauté fardée, peinte et trompeuse, laquelle depend de l'artifice du Diable, qui a donné l'invention des fards, est des eaux de senteur et distillées, pour profaner l'image de Dieu”.

<sup>43</sup> Du Bosc 1632 (as note 19), 284: “ce n'est que Peinture”.

<sup>44</sup> Olivier 1630 (as in note 16), 345: “Mais du depuis que par un art trompeur, on s'apperceut, ces monstres en nature, sous la couleur d'une belle peinture”. Some contemporary scientists believed that women were “monstrous” creatures. See Maclean 1980 (as note 14), 30–31.

women.<sup>45</sup> Colorful painting was cast as a coquette and a courtesan, simpering and falsely made-up (*pardée*), desirous of tricking (male) viewers out of the use of their reason and their language.<sup>46</sup> Already, in Italy, in the mid- to late sixteenth-century, Italian theorists had made *colore* into one pole of a polemic that pitted *colore* and Venice against *disegno* (drawing, design) and Florence.<sup>47</sup> These theorists also inaugurated comparisons between *colore* and painted women, particularly courtesans looking to attract clients.<sup>48</sup> However, as the discussion above suggests, during the early seventeenth century, the period of the strong woman's greatest popularity in French art, French aesthetic discourse had yet to embrace the negative associations between tricky women and tricky painting. In part, this reflects the extent to which Jesuit voices, like that of Binet, dominated the early seventeenth-century reception of painting in France.<sup>49</sup> The character of the French discourse on art, with its emphasis on pleasure and delight, suggests the enthusiasm of first discovery, which would be appropriate to the belated nature of the French turn towards both easel painting and art criticism.<sup>50</sup> Yet perhaps paintings like Vignon's *Cleopatra* delighted just a bit too much in the marvelous merging of the trickiness of art and the trickiness of woman.<sup>51</sup> The particularity of Vignon's colorism is such that the instruments of a woman's deceptions – the cosmetic adornments of jewels and rich fabrics – are the same surfaces upon which he performs his colorist brio. Vignon's knitting together of feminine and painterly trickiness gives rise to the tantalizing possibility that it was paintings like this one that

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<sup>45</sup> Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *La couleur éloquente: rhétorique et peinture à l'âge classique*, Paris 1999, 201–211. On these debates, see the essential Bernard Teyssède, *Roger de Piles et les débats sur le coloris au siècle de Louis XIV*, Paris 1957.

<sup>46</sup> For example, Fréart du Chambray, *Idée de la perfection de la peinture*, Paris 1662, cited in Lichtenstein 1999 (as note 6), 207: “Ils se sont fait une nouvelle maîtresse coquette et badine qui ne demande que du fard et des couleurs pour agréer à la première rencontre, sans se soucier si elle plaira longtemps.”

<sup>47</sup> Patricia L. Reilly, The taming of the blue: Writing out color in Italian Renaissance theory, in: Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (eds.), *The expanding discourse: Feminism and art history*, New York 1992, 87–99. On the gendering of *colore* and *disegno* see also John Gage, *Color and meaning: Art, science, and symbolism*, Berkeley 1999, 35–36.

<sup>48</sup> Reilly 1992 (as note 47), 94–96.

<sup>49</sup> Fumaroli 2007 (as note 3), 223–224.

<sup>50</sup> As Zerner points out, the French “Renaissance” saw few easel paintings. Its true strength lay in print-making, large-scale decorative ensembles, like that at Fontainebleau, and the dissemination of ornamental designs to be executed in a number of different ornamental mediums. Henri Zerner, *Renaissance art in France: The invention of classicism*, Paris 2003, 237–246. See also Thuillier's assessment of France's belated turn to art criticism, a result of French ‘snobbism’ in relationship to the status of artists. Jacques Thuillier, “Les Debuts de l'histoire de l'art en France et Vasari,” in: *Il Vasari Storiografo e Artista*, Florence 1974, 667–684.

<sup>51</sup> Olivier 1630 (as note 16), 345: “sous la couleur d'une belle peinture”.

ultimately pushed French critics (of art) to borrow from the language of contemporary moralists in order to espouse the dangers of painting's trickery.

### III. A Body Not Lucretia

If we accept Scudéry's representation of her character in *Les femmes illustres*, Vignon's style of colorism gave Cleopatra the painted body she desired and deserved. The same was not true for another strong woman, Lucretia, whose colorist embodiment in a painting by Jacques Blanchard showed the *femme forte* trapped in a body she wanted to disavow (fig. 3). If Cleopatra was distinguished for her amorous adventures, Lucretia was famous for her exemplary chastity. Lucretia, a beautiful and virtuous matron who first appeared in Livy's history of Rome, was raped by Sextus Tarquin, son of the tyrannical king of Rome.<sup>52</sup> According to Livy, the morning after, she sent for her husband and father and, after exacting their promise that they would avenge her, plunged a dagger into her heart. Her death became a rallying point for a new Roman Republic, which overthrew the Tarquins.<sup>53</sup> During the Renaissance, Lucretia appeared frequently as a subject of both word and image in Northern and Southern traditions.<sup>54</sup> In early seventeenth-century France, another wave of representations of Lucretia made her one of the most visible of the *femmes fortes*.<sup>55</sup> Lucretia was unusual in that she combined the role of *femme forte* and

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<sup>52</sup> Livy, *The history of Rome, Books 1–5*, ed. and trans. by Valerie M. Warrior, Cambridge 2006, 79–83. For commentary on Livy's text, see R. M. Ogilvie, *A commentary on Livy, Books 1–5*, Oxford 1965, 218–229. Ovid's version of the Lucretia story was also influential: Ovid, *Fasti*, trans. by Sir James George Frazer, Cambridge, Mass. 1989, 111–119.

<sup>53</sup> In Livy, the rape of Lucretia leads to the founding of the Roman republic; her ravishment and her cry for vengeance represent the brutalization of the Roman people and their cry for freedom. James A. Arieti, Rape and Livy's view of Roman History, in: Susan Deacy and Karen F. Pierce (eds.), *Rape in antiquity: Sexual violence in the Greek and Roman worlds*, London 1997, 209–229.

<sup>54</sup> For a useful introduction, see Ian Donaldson, *The rapes of Lucretia: A myth and its transformations*, Oxford 1982, 3–20. Lucretia appeared as an *exemplum virtutis* on Italian *cassone*, the decorated coffers given to brides upon their marriage. Cristelle L. Baskins, *Cassone painting, humanism, and gender in early modern Italy*, Cambridge 1998, 128–159. In the early sixteenth century, Giovanni di Medici, the future Pope Leo X, contributed to interest in her figure when he declared that an antique sculpture excavated in the Trastevere was a representation of Lucretia. Wolfgang Stechow, Lucretiae Statua, in: Oswald Goetz (ed.), *Essays in honor of Georg Swarzenski*, Chicago 1951, 114–124. On Northern versions of the theme by Cranach, Baldung Grien, and Dürer, see Linda C. Hults, Dürer's *Lucretia*: Speaking the silence of women, in: *Signs* 16, 1991, 205–237. On Raphael's influential sketch, engraved by Marcantonio, see Patricia Emison, The singularity of Raphael's *Lucretia*, in: *Art History* 14, 1991, 372–396.

<sup>55</sup> On the French Lucretia, see Philippe Bosquet, Le suicide féminin au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: un acte héroïque?, in: Richard Hodgson (ed.), *La Femme au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Tübingen 2002, 183–200. Bosquet focuses on the question of Lucretia's suicide and its reception in Catholic France. Most commentators excused the suicide on the grounds of Lucretia's paganism. On representations of Lucretia in French art of the longue durée, see Frédérique Villemur, Le suicide de Lucrèce, ou la République à l'épreuve de la chasteté dans les arts des XV<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles, in: Steinberg

*honnête femme* (honest woman). The *honnête femme* was a parallel type of female exemplar, one that emphasized chastity and domesticity above political heroism or martial virtues.<sup>56</sup> Lucretia, who prefers to stay at home and manage her household, is the perfect example of the *honnête femme*. Her rape, however, inaugurates her new role as a *femme forte* who incites political rebellion and unflinchingly prefers death to dishonor.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, it became conventional to point to Blanchard as the “French Titian”.<sup>57</sup> Yet, as Charles Sterling has pointed out, Blanchard’s technique owed more to the contemporary Venetian painters – Domenico Fetti and Bernardo Strozzi – whose Blanchard saw in Venice, than to Titian or Veronese.<sup>58</sup> Whereas Vignon relies upon the representation of precious, reflective objects as surfaces for fancy brushwork, Blanchard’s expertise lay in the rendering of female flesh. Blanchard presents Lucretia at half-length, a saffron-yellow shawl draped across her chest, exposing one breast. She throws her head back; she clutches a dagger in a tight fist; an ermine is draped over her other wrist. The texture of the painted surface of *The Death of Lucretia* is less brilliant than that of other extant paintings by Blanchard, but it is likely that this is due to over-cleaning or restoration, before the painting was acquired by the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes.<sup>59</sup> Even so, Blanchard’s hand is palpable in the traces of paint that record his gestures, in the squiggle of white on the tip of Lucretia’s nose, in the dashes of orangey pink on the insides of the index and middle fingers of her spread hand, in the little crust of yellow on the tip of the middle finger, the broad strokes of white that create the hollows of her palm, and in the hilt of the dagger, which he has highlighted with a fluid streak of gold. A dab of vermillion on the knotted fabric below her breast anticipates the violence to come.

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and Arnould 2008 (as note 31), 381–403. Villemur looks at images from the late sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century and focuses on the question of the relationship of Lucretia’s body to the representation of history.

<sup>56</sup> On the *honnête femme*, see Maclean 1977 (as note 2), 125–135. The characteristics of the *honnête femme* were outlined by Du Bosc 1632 (as note 19). The *honnête femme* was also related to the “dame illustre”, and the “neuf preuses”, pious, maternal female figures that were evoked as historical exemplars of the female regent, with the contemporary destination of such references being Anne of Austria. See Catherine Pascal, *Représenter la régence? Image(s) de reine(s) dans les Éloges des douze dames illustres grecques, romaines et françaises dépeintes dans l’alcove de la reine* [1646], in: Steinberg and Arnould 2008 (as note 31), 89–102.

<sup>57</sup> Charles Perrault, *Les Hommes Illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce Siecle, avec leurs portraits au naturel*, 2 vols., Paris 1700, vol. 2, 93: “le Titien de la France”. On Blanchard see Jacques Thuillier, *Jacques Blanchard 1600–1638* (exh. cat. Musée des Beaux Arts Rennes), ed. by idem, Rennes 1998. See also the crucial essay and catalogue by Charles Sterling, *Les peintres Jean et Jacques Blanchard*, in: *Art de France* 1, 1961, 76–118.

<sup>58</sup> Sterling 1961 (as note 57), 109.

<sup>59</sup> The painting was in an American private collection before its acquisition by the MBA Nantes. Its prior provenance is unknown.

Colorist painting in Blanchard’s manner elides the character of flesh and the character of paint. To be painted is thus to acquire another body – a body in paint. As a manner of painting, *colorito* intersected with the question of Lucretia’s own embodiment, a question that assumed particular importance in the context of her French representations. Lucretia’s decision to commit suicide is determined by her rejection of her own body, an embodied vessel that she willingly exchanges for life as a disembodied exemplar. In 1636, two tragedies were performed in Paris that took Lucretia as their subject. Pierre du Ryer’s tragedy is the better-known and likely the first, the success of which was copied by a rival troupe in a play written by Urbain Chevreau.<sup>60</sup> In these two plays and in the additional texts that followed, Lucretia’s pre-suicide tirades focus on articulating the relationship between her body and her soul. In Du Ryer’s tragedy, Lucretia repeatedly dwells on the fact that it is her body that was violated, not her soul:

The barbarian that [Sextus] is has conquered only the body.

It was not Lucretia, who will soon die,

who was this Tyrant’s shameful conquest;

it was only a body without soul and without charms,

because the soul cannot be where there is no consent.

Thus this one comfort remains to me amidst the torments I endure,

That in a soiled body, I retain a pure soul, [...].<sup>61</sup>

Her soul is free of her body’s taint, but Lucretia still chooses to die; the destruction of the body (‘not Lucretia’) will free ‘Lucretia’ from a container rendered unworthy. This attitude was shared

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<sup>60</sup> Urbain Chevreau, *La Lucesse romaine. Tragedie*, Paris, 1637. Pierre Du Ryer, *Lucrece* [1638], ed. by James F. Gaines and Perry Gethner, Geneva 1994. Gaines has written a number of interesting analyses of Du Ryer’s *Lucrece* as an allegory of opposition to the politics of Cardinal Richelieu. See James Gaines, Pierre Du Ryer’s Roman Tragedies: Against the Cornelian Theater of Absolutism, in: David Trott and Nicole Boursier (eds.), *L’Âge du théâtre en France*, Edmonton 1998, 169–182. James F. Gaines, Lucrèce, Junie, and Clélie: Burdens of female exemplarity, in: *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* 17, Los Cruces 1974, 515–524.

<sup>61</sup> “Le barbare qu’il est n’a vaincu que le corps. | Ce ne fut pas Lucrece, à mourir toute preste, | Qui fut de ce Tyran la honteuse conquête; | Mais ce ne fut qu’un corps sans âme et sans appas, | Puis que l’âme n’est point où l’on ne consent pas. | Ainsi ce bien me reste au tourment que j’endure, | Que dans un corps souillé, je garde une ame pure, [...]” Du Ryer, *Lucrece*, Act 5, Scene 2, lines 1346–1353.##Do you mean **Du Ryer 1994 (as note 60), *Lucrece*, Act 5, Scene 2, lines 1346–1353?##**

by Chevreau's Lucretia, who declares: "if my body is polluted, my spirit is not".<sup>62</sup> Other literary accounts of Lucretia, namely Jacques du Bosc's commentary in *La femme héroïque* and Scudéry's harangue in *Les femmes illustres*, also describe Lucretia post-rape as a pure soul trapped in an impure body.<sup>63</sup>

Lucretia's ultimate decision manifests an indifference to her bodily condition, as well as an assurance that 'Lucretia' will survive the death of her body. In this way, Lucretia illustrates one of the particular ways that the *femme forte* could escape her own embodiment: by killing herself. The destruction of the woman's body promises to regenerate her as an image, an exemplar. Du Bosc cites Lucretia's famous lines from Livy: "It shall not be said, that any woman shall live unchaste by the example of Lucretia."<sup>64</sup> In the moment before her death, Lucretia anticipates and designs her survival, disembodied, as an example of chastity. Cleopatra's suicide can be understood in similar fashion, as manifesting a preference for determining an image of herself in death, which will forestall Octavian's planned use of her body in a staged spectacle of his own power. Another *femme forte*, the North African queen Sophonisbe, also commits suicide in order to avoid exposure in a Roman triumph.<sup>65</sup> In her harangue in Scudéry's *Les femmes illustres*, Sophonisbe instructs her lover Massinisse to kill all portrait painters in Rome so that her effigy cannot be displayed in the triumph, even after she is dead.<sup>66</sup> Yet she quickly recants, realizing that her image will attest to her absence, and thus to the fact that she has preferred death to life in servitude. In these cases, suicide becomes an explicit choice of life as an image over life in a body.

When Blanchard paints Lucretia back into a fleshy body, he restores her to the body that she finds odious and intolerable. He also opens Lucretia to erotic consumption by viewers primed to enjoy the pleasures of painted trickery. A roughly contemporary description of a now

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<sup>62</sup> Chevreau 1637 (as note 60), 88–89: "Si mon corps et pollué, mon esprit ne l'est pas." This Lucretia also dwells on the way that Sextus' intent was to make her "no longer Lucretia": "je ne suis plus Lucesse ... il veut qu'à la fin je ne sois plus Lucesse".

<sup>63</sup> Jacques Du Bosc, *La femme héroïque ou les heroines comparees avec les heros en toute sorte de vertus*, Paris 1645, 651–694. Scudéry 1644 (as note 28), 205–244.

<sup>64</sup> Du Bosc 1645 (as note 63), 655: "Il ne sera pas dit, qu'aucune femme prenne sujet de pecher sur l'exemple de Lucrece." Du Bosc's translation is slightly different than Warrior's translation from Livy's Latin, which reads: "Nor henceforth shall any unchaste woman continue to live by citing the precedent of Lucretia." The Latin word is *exemplum*, as Warrior notes. Livy 2006 (as note 52), 81.

<sup>65</sup> For a useful edited collection of the various seventeenth-century accounts of Sophonisbe, see Dominique Descotes (ed.), *Mairet, Scudéry, Corneille, d'Aubignac: Sophonisbe*, Saint-Étienne 2008.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, 105–106.



lost cycle of paintings by Blanchard attests to the joys and the hazards of viewing Blanchard's female bodies.<sup>67</sup> Henri Sauval (1623–1676), looking at Blanchard's Ovidian allegories in the gallery of the Hôtel Bullion (now destroyed), delighted in Blanchard's rendering of female flesh: "But I would not know how to be quiet about a Diana on a cloud, who is seen in the month of November, it is but a half figure; but the figure offers so many beautiful parts, that it is irritating that the rest of it is enveloped in clouds; her eyes gracious and wide open, her cheeks fresh and vermillion, her round arms, her white breast, her noble air, her head well-coiffed and crowned with a half-moon, all this incites temptation in those who look too curiously."<sup>68</sup> Sauval, we can infer, had experienced the "temptation", aroused by excess curiosity, to imagine the parts of Diana's body hidden by clouds. "Curiosity" in this context, alludes to prurient sexual interest; in *La femme héroïque*, Du Bosc indicates that "curiosity" led Sextus to desire to see Lucretia, with fatal consequences.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, Sauval almost seems to intentionally perform the role of a viewer who has been fatally distracted – or fatally tricked – by the sensual pleasures of colorism. He feigns the loss of control of his own text as his delight provokes an outpouring of verbosity: "I would not know how to be quiet" (*je ne saurois me taire*).<sup>70</sup> Talking too much was one of the many vices leveled at women by period critics; Olivier suggested that a man who talks too much should be forced to dress as a woman.<sup>71</sup> Thus Sauval becomes, thanks to Blanchard's female figures, a man unmanned by woman. Sauval notes that Blanchard may have suffered the same fate, adding that Blanchard, who died only a year after his second marriage, exhausted himself in 'caressing' his new wife.<sup>72</sup> To Italian critics of colorism, this was a familiar topos – Raphael, it was rumored, had suffered the same fate.<sup>73</sup> It should be noted that Sauval responds not to a

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<sup>67</sup> Henri Sauval, *Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris*, Par M. Henri Sauval, Avocat au Parlement, 2 vols., Paris 1724, vol. 2, 193–194.

<sup>68</sup> "Mais sur tout je ne saurois me taire d'une Diane sur une nue, qu'on voit dans son mois de Novembre, ce n'est qu'une demie figure; mais il s'y voit tant de belles parties, qu'il est facheux que le reste soit enveloppé de nuages; ses yeux gracieux et bien fendus, ses joues fraîches et vermeilles, ses bras ronds, sa gorge blanche, son air noble, sa tête bien coëffée et couronnée d'un Croissant, donnent la tentation à ceux qui la regardent trop curieusement." Sauval 1724 (as note 67), 194.

<sup>69</sup> Du Bosc 1645 (as note 63), 652: it was Collatin, Lucretia's husband, whose excess of praise gave Tarquin "la curiosité de la voir". On the dangers of curiosity and its association with women (women's curiosity, curiosity about women's sexuality), see Abby E. Zanger, *Scenes from the marriage of Louis XIV*, Stanford 1997, 131–154.

<sup>70</sup> Sauval 1724 (as note 67), 194.

<sup>71</sup> Olivier 1630 (as note 16), 94: "qu'un homme babillard tient du feminin, et merite qu'on luy fasse porter des habits de femme". Olivier devotes the letter "G" of his *Alphabet* to "Garrulum gutter" (a play on garrulousness).

<sup>72</sup> Sauval 1724 (as note 67), 193: "Blanchart, pour avoir trop caressé sa seconde femme, mourut à trent-sept ans."

<sup>73</sup> Reilly 1992 (as note 47), 93. This is according to Vasari, who also blamed entanglements with women for the deaths of Giorgione and Corregio. Interestingly, Raphael was not a colorist, although the other two artists were.

specific easel painting, but to the figures of women within an entire gallery of paintings of women's bodies. This was a considerably less intimate mode of viewing than that offered by an easel painting, yet Sauval describes individual figures as if he were quite close to them, suggesting the extent to which Blanchard's painting invited the viewer to approach. Even in the context of the gallery, Blanchard's female figures interfered with the viewer's ability to maintain a decorous distance. Rubens had managed the same feat in the Medici cycle, when the allegorical pomp of the cycle yielded to moments of startling fleshiness. In these instances, the woman's body upset the conventions of public viewing, creating moments of intimacy even in a public or semi-public space, tricking a viewer into believing he was alone.

More *honnête* than Cleopatra, Lucretia proves her ability to control the passionate impulses ascribed to a woman's body. Her rape, however, marks her body with Tarquin's illicit passion. A colorist representation of Lucretia, in this sense, figures the tragic dilemma of her embodiment, but only if viewers want to read it this way. Sauval's account, as well as the responses to Vignon's colorism, suggest that there were plenty of other ways to react to Lucretia's embodiment in oil paint. Most of these responses would have ignored the suicidal gesture entirely, seeing the dagger and the movement of the arm as mere accessories to the real event – the nude torso, the long neck revealed by the head thrown back, the charming dimple on her chin. If colorism tempted viewers to look 'too curiously', then Blanchard's painting of Lucretia invites the same dangerous curiosity that led Sextus to seek out Lucretia in the first place. Colorism in its various guises thus proved a mixed medium for the representation of the strong woman. The surfaces of colorist painting offered too many potential pleasures, derailing the expression of the heroine's moral exemplarity.

## V. In the Bedroom

Another genre of representation of the *femme forte* locates the heroine's death within a group of women inside an interior or semi-interior space. These compositions removed much of the erotic charge of the half-length, isolated figure, who seems to perform her suicide for the viewer's delectation alone. Yet the image of a group of women in a domestic space proves as tricky as the image of a woman's body. In early seventeenth-century France, the bed and the space alongside it had multiple meanings, several of them quite new. Old meanings, however, which associated

the bed with the symbolic enclosure of the female body, proved difficult to shake, even in representations of the *femme forte*. In period literature and imagery, the bed was portrayed as another tricky space, analogous in many respects to the trickery of the female body.

Blanchard's *Death of Cleopatra* (fig. 4) and Simon Vouet's *Death of Dido* (fig. 5) show their respective heroines having just received or struck the fatal blow. In Blanchard's painting, Cleopatra is supine on her bed, the asp still at her breast, her lifeless head draped over the edge of the bed.<sup>74</sup> Her mouth has fallen slightly open, and Blanchard renders it as a thick, inelegant brown streak. The intimacy of the scene is disturbed by the soldier whose arm extends into the curtained alcove. In his painting, Vouet presents Dido, Aeneas' sword in one hand, collapsing onto her pyre, supported by an older woman, probably her nurse. As Dido falls, the goddess Iris alights on Aeneas' shield and plucks a hair from Dido's head. A younger attendant, clothed in a fuchsia robe edged with yellow (a bold combination that reflects Vouet's distinctive palette), kneels beside Dido, a handkerchief pressed to her face. Vouet has represented the setting as a space between interior and exterior. The pyre is situated in an alcove created by the heavy brown curtain, which falls behind the group of figures and is fastened to a large column. Vouet drapes the pyre with a rich red tapestry, so that its rough logs are almost concealed. A quick glance suggests that Dido is falling back onto a bed rather than a burning platform.

Vouet was not a colorist. While he had worked in a caravaggesque idiom during a decade spent in Rome, upon his return to Paris, he lightened his palette and classicized his décors.<sup>75</sup> In this way, he made his paintings conform to the appearance of works by Bolognese painters like Guido Reni and Guercino, artists highly sought-after by contemporary French connoisseurs. The Bolognese artists also offered variants on the image of the *femme forte* in a style marked by linearity (it was only late in his career that Reni would turn to a brushy style).<sup>76</sup> In fact, around 1625 in Rome, Vouet and Reni produced nearly identical versions of the Lucretia motif, both of which show the heroine about to collapse upon a curtained bed (figs. 6 and 7).<sup>77</sup> Vouet's painting

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<sup>74</sup> This painting has been cut down from its original size, although it is not known when this happened, nor is the original size of the painting known. Thuillier 1998 (as note 57), 132–133, cat. no. 28. *Vouet* (exh. cat. Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais), ed. by Jacques Thuillier, Paris 1990, 322–323, cat. no. 56.

<sup>75</sup> Fumaroli 1982 (as note 26), 24.

<sup>76</sup> On Guido Reni's Lucretias, see Richard E. Spear, *The "Divine" Guido: Religion, sex, money and art in the world of Guido Reni*, New Haven 1997, 77–100. Reni's Lucretias are closely related to his representations of Christian martyrs; the affect is masochistic. In addition to multiple images of Lucretia executed throughout his career, Reni also produced Cleopatras by swapping out Lucretia's dagger for the writhing asp.

<sup>77</sup> For a discussion of the early seventeenth-century Italian examples, particularly Lucretia and Cleopatra, see Garrard 1989 (as note 9), 210–277. Garrard dislikes both Vouet's and Reni's renditions of the Lucretia motif.

is now known through an engraving by Charles Mellan.<sup>78</sup> Given Vouet's surviving paintings, it is possible to surmise that his Lucretia's athletic body would not have been rendered in a colorist manner. Trickiness intervenes in a different manner, however, through the figure of the bed and its curtains. In these images, particularly the ones I discuss below, which involve multiple female figures, the bed does for the heroine's exemplarity what the colorist manner did for Vignon's *Cleopatra* and Blanchard's *Lucretia*; the bed imbricates her gesture in a largely negative cultural discourse regarding women's bodies and their sexuality.

The absence of men from these compositions – except for the intruding soldier – is unusual. In history painting, the female suicide and her female attendants offer a rare opportunity for women to appear without men. It is tempting to ascribe to these compositions some gesture towards the representation of a female community, despite the obvious way in which heterosexual entanglements have determined a tragic course of events. Nevertheless, the paintings show a circle of women supporting one another, as Dido is literally supported by her nurse. Here is a space for women without men, where women gather, not with the goal of displaying their bodies (this is not a gathering of Diana's disporting nymphs), but in order to assist one another. This variation on the representation of the *femme forte* may have responded to a contemporary interest in the subject of female gatherings in domestic spaces. In early seventeenth-century France, the bed and its *ruelle* – the space between the bed and the wall – had recently acquired additional meaning as the place where elite women gathered to converse. This was an innovation of a famous hostess, the Marquise de Rambouillet, who received in her bed, where she sat, heaped with furs.<sup>79</sup> Other women soon followed her example and the *ruelle* became shorthand for fashionable gatherings hosted by aristocratic and cultivated women.<sup>80</sup> Men, including both male relatives and friends of the hostesses as well as choice authors, intellectuals, and clerics, also attended the *ruelles*. According to contemporary accounts, the

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<sup>78</sup> Crelly, *The painting of Simon Vouet*, cat. no. 227. The Národní Galerie in Prague owns a painting that corresponds to Mellan's engraving, but its attribution to Vouet is uncertain. See *Europské Umení: Od Antiky do Záveru Baroka*, Prague 2004, 78.

<sup>79</sup> Maurice Magendie, *La politesse mondaine et les théories de l'honnêteté, en France, au XVIIe siècle, de 1600 à 1660*, 2 vols., Paris 1925, vol. 1, 122–137.

<sup>80</sup> Erica Harth, *Cartesian women: Versions and subversions of rational discourse in the old regime*, Ithaca 1992, 18–19. On the *ruelles* and the birth of the *salon* see also Carolyn C. Lougee, *Le Paradis des Femmes: Women, salons, and social stratification in seventeenth-century France*, Princeton 1976. Faith E. Beasley, *Salons, history, and the creation of 17<sup>th</sup>-century France*, Aldershot 2006.

cherished subject of conversation was love and its representations in works of literature and drama.<sup>81</sup>

Traditionally, the *ruelle* symbolized the enclosure of private property within the nuclear family.<sup>82</sup> Money, jewels, and plate were often stored in the *ruelle*. Most importantly, the bed was the symbolic enclosure of the body of the wife, whose confinement to the marriage bed ensured that family property would pass to legitimate heirs.<sup>83</sup> The use of the bed and the *ruelle* by the new conversational circles transformed its traditional function. Women led or at least participated actively in the conversation of the *ruelles*, but their social position and their sex prevented them from publishing their experiences.<sup>84</sup> For this, they relied upon the male members of the circle, who would write letters and poems that would publicize the private gatherings. As the activities of the *ruelles* were published by the male authors who frequented them, this space of enclosure became the position from which women assumed a presence in public life.<sup>85</sup> Thanks to Guez de Balzac, one of the attendees of Rambouillet's circle, we know that the members of the *ruelle* read aloud Mairet's *La Sophonisbe*, the tragedy about the North African queen who, like Cleopatra, commits suicide because she does not want to be exhibited in a Roman triumph.<sup>86</sup> In this context, Vouet's *Death of Dido* and Blanchard's *Death of Cleopatra* could have been read as visions of the women of the *ruelle* acting out the rituals of heroic womanhood.

Yet the bed and the bedroom, like the female body, were vulnerable to slippages by which they returned to their original, literal function, as the place for child conception and bearing, as enclosure of the female body and its effluvia. The ability of a woman's body to bear children was one of the features by which she was associated with what Peter Stallybrass aptly terms a "*naturally 'grotesque'*" body (italics original), as in a porous, dangerously open body, which needed to be confined – in the garden, in the bedroom – in order to ensure social order and

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<sup>81</sup> Benedetta Craveri, *The Age of Conversation*, New York 2005, 27–43.

<sup>82</sup> Orest Ranum, The Refuges of Intimacy, in: Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (eds.), *A history of private life*, 5 vols., Cambridge, Mass. 1989, vol. 3, 217–225.

<sup>83</sup> On the location and preservation of capital within the nuclear family and the pressure this placed upon female chastity, see Sarah Hanley, Engendering the state: Family formation and state building in early modern France, in: *French Historical Studies* 16, 1989, 4–27.

<sup>84</sup> Harth 1992 (as note 80), 24. Harth discusses the gendered distinctions between the salon (feminine, unofficial, private) and the Academy (masculine, official, public), the two spaces in early seventeenth-century Paris where literature and *moeurs* were discussed.

<sup>85</sup> Harth 1992 (as note 80), 26–28.

<sup>86</sup> Magendie 1925 (as note 79), vol. 1, 127.

private property.<sup>87</sup> Small details like the c-shaped red wound at Dido's breast aside, both heroines could be collapsing in the throes of childbirth, where they would indeed be accompanied by other women. Yet period satires read even the space of childbirth as a space of potential feminine disorder: the genre of the *caquets de l'accouchée*, which purported to record the conversation of a group of women in a birthing chamber after one woman has given birth, emphasized the grotesque, 'explosive' nature of childbirth, the excretive character of which was replicated in the women's endless outpourings of talk.<sup>88</sup>

In his prints illustrating contemporary domestic life, Abraham Bosse marked the bed as an emblem of women's compromised bodily boundaries. In several compositions, a male outsider penetrates the family bed. In his illustration of the hen-pecked husband motif, a woman beats her husband while her lover peeks out from between the bed curtains, awaiting her return (fig. 8). In Bosse's representation of a gathering of women visiting a friend after she has given birth, Bosse stashes a male 'spy' just behind the headboard of the woman's bed (fig. 9). The spy comments on the proceedings, but his presence also leads the viewer to suspect that the family bed is often occupied by men other than the *paterfamilias*. The spy's textual legend below jokes that the woman should not blame her husband for her pregnancy and the pain of childbirth, because "it is not often the husband who has done it".<sup>89</sup> Bosse not only represents women as chronically promiscuous, he also portrays their concupiscence as castrating: on the tapestry that covers the wall on the right side of the print, the figure of a male warrior has been decapitated by the hanging of a mirror. Proximity to the bed and other spaces of female vanity – in a word, curiosity – has led the male observer, another Sauval, to lose his head. Thus the bed can be seen simultaneously as a prison for women's leaky bodies and as women's trap laid for men.

By placing the suicide within a bedroom or bed-like alcove, Blanchard and Vignon's compositions open the representation of the heroic female suicide to a wide variety of readings and mis-readings. In Blanchard's *Death of Cleopatra*, the soldier, on the brink of entering the

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<sup>87</sup> Peter Stallybrass, Patriarchal territories: The body enclosed, in: Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (eds.), *Rewriting the Renaissance: The discourses of sexual difference in early modern Europe*, Chicago 1986, 123–142. Stallybrass is using the dichotomy of grotesque and classical body that was first suggested by Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his world*, Bloomington 1984. On this distinction in seventeenth-century France, see Donna C. Stanton, *The dynamics of gender in early modern France: Women writ, women writing*, Burlington 2014, 37–39. On the female body as grotesque in the contemporary poetry of Théophile de Viau, see Russell Ganim, Pissing glass and the body crass: Adaptations of the scatological in Théophile, in: *Fecal matters in early modern literature and art: studies in scatology*, Burlington 2004, 66–84.

<sup>88</sup> Stanton 2014 (as note 87), 37–61.

<sup>89</sup> "Ce n'est pas bien souvent le mary qui la fait."

alcove, can be read as the male viewer whose curiosity has tempted him to draw near, where a trap awaits him in the form of Cleopatra's body, the legs of which are suggestively spread. In the *Death of Dido*, the curiosity of the male viewer is not figured, but the site of Dido's suicide becomes a space of women's talk and women's bodies, so that her heroic bloodshed threatens to be read as just another form of female leakiness. As tricky as the bed is for curious men who draw too near, it is also tricky for the artist representing it, who cannot control the viewer's interpretation, unless he benefits from the helpful addition of a textual legend, as is the case for Bosse. Above all, the bed tricks the *femme forte*, whose strength is compromised when she falls into this contested space. This multivalent trickiness of the bed becomes apparent when the painted motif is read in tandem with cultural developments and literary discourses specific to France at this historical moment. Ideally, the *femme forte* transcended historical context: hundreds of years after the fall of Rome, Lucretia continued to function as model of chastity and Cleopatra as a model of strong queenship. Yet this exemplarity was threatened when it met a milieu of contemporary historical resonance, where a Roman bed might be too easily mistaken for a Parisian woman's *ruelle*, and thus arouse all the negative emotions surrounding this new gathering place for women.

#### IV. Graphic Endings

Pierre Le Moyne's *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes*, published in 1647, appeared during the second wave of popularity of the *femme forte*, which corresponds to the regency of Anne of Austria, Marie's daughter-in-law and mother of Louis XIV, between 1643 and 1651.<sup>90</sup> Yet Le Moyne's two-volume publication marks the beginning of the end of the *femme forte*. By the conclusion of the Fronde in 1652, a civil war between the monarchy and several religious and noble factions, the strong woman had largely disappeared from French literature, theater, and visual art. She survived in the décor of the Palais Royal, Anne's Parisian residence, but as Louis XIV assumed the responsibilities of personal rule, Anne's gallery would increasingly represent

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<sup>90</sup> On the gender politics of the *Galerie*, see Derval Conroy, Description or prescription?: Verbal painting in Pierre Le Moyne's *Galerie des femmes fortes* (1647), in: *French Forum* 36, 2011, 1–17. See also Joan DeJean, Violent women and violence against women: Representing the “strong” woman in early modern France, in: *Signs* 29, 2003, 117–147.

the symbolic language of a past generation.<sup>91</sup> For the illustration of Le Moyne's gallery, which was dedicated to Anne, Vignon designed figures that differed in significant ways from the embodied strong women of oil painting, including his own Cleopatra. He offered a vision of the strong woman as a radiant allegorical body controlled by a precise linear net.

Vignon's illustrations appeared at the beginning of the narrative of the lives of each of Le Moyne's strong women. Gilles Rousselet engraved the figures and Abraham Bosse etched the backgrounds. In his designs, Vignon paid tribute to the physical vigor and self-assurance of Rubens' female figures and looked to the example of Lorrainian etchers like Jacques Bellange and Jacques Callot for a linear yet dynamic treatment of fabric and accessories. Majestic in Roman armor and a feathered helmet, the Ethiopian queen Zenobia holds a spear in one hand as she steps a sandaled foot forward on a rocky ledge (fig. 10). Events represented in miniature behind her – Zenobia hunting lions and leopards with her children – attest to her bravery and strength, but ultimately the greatest prominence is granted to her full-length figure as she strides forward, without her children or her trophies of war.<sup>92</sup> Her strength lies in her figure, in her ability to sweep context into an impressive physical presence. For his Lucretia, Vignon follows the formula in prioritizing Lucretia's monumental figure over the event of her death, which is shown in the background, where a tiny Lucretia collapses into the arms of her menfolk (fig. 11). Lucretia's death and its remaking as an instrument of propaganda is less important than her figure, which lurches to the left, so that her outstretched arms, from dagger tip to fingertip, dramatically occupy the frame. Her hair, fluttering in the breeze, as well as the animate bunches of her drapery, suggest a figure so compelling that she self-animates, electrifying her physical accessories.

The statuesque physical perfection of Vignon's strong women, as well as their placement in relationship to the background, historical plane, convey the exemplary nature of the strong woman as a generic identity. These compositions possess neither detailed environmental context nor color. Supremely elegant in their crisply engraved lines, perfectly framed by masses of

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<sup>91</sup> On the decoration of Anne's "alcove", see Roger-Armand Weigert, *Deux Marchés Passés par Simon Vouet pour les Décorations de l'appartement d'Anne d'Autriche au Palais-Royal (1645)*, in: *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'art français*, 1952, 101–105. Catherine Pascal suggests that the anonymous *Éloges des douze dames illustres grecques, romaines et françoises dépeintes dans l'alcove de la reine*, Paris 1646, is a description of this décor. See Pascal 2008 (as note 56), 90–91.

<sup>92</sup> On Vignon's composition and the way it elevates the woman's figure as quasi-allegorical, see Maclean 1977 (as note 2), 229.



springy feathers, hair, and buoyant draperies, the figures are stylized towards allegory. The *rondeurs* of Lucretia's body tend towards the decorative pattern rather than physical particularity; graphic stylization extracts from the specific body a linear arabesque. The woman's body is still the powerful center of the composition, yet many of the 'problems' noted in the oil paintings have vanished. The strong woman is shown to be a distant ideal, whose body is too abstract to arouse prurient curiosity. At the scale of a book illustration rather than an oil painting in which her figure approaches life size, she does not threaten to trap her viewers. Her figure approximates the immaterial exemplar that Lucretia once desired to become.

The reign of Louis XIV is remarkable for the absence of literature and visual art featuring the strong woman. Louis' long life and his close hold on power meant that women played a much less visible role in politics. Allegorical vocabularies became increasingly centered around the representation of the King or of other male leaders like him – for example, Alexander, whose battles in Persia Charles Le Brun represented in a series of monumental paintings. Colorist painting also suffered significant reverses at this time, although by the early 1670s forces would be gathering to defend it. One survival of the *femme forte* in the second half of the seventeenth century came in the form of small-scale pencil, ink, and chalk drawings, which appear in French collections throughout the period. Two of these little sketches, which show Lucretia stabbing herself and which were rather optimistically attributed to Guido Reni, could be found in the collection of Louis XIV. In the drawing reproduced here, Lucretia's features and body are softened away from the classical ideal towards rococo prettification – big eyes, small mouth, pert nose (fig. 12). Looking ahead to the style of Jean-Baptiste Greuze and his tendency to flagrantly eroticize young women whose chastity has been compromised, the drawing represents the *femme forte* as an object of purely private delectation. While the easel paintings by Blanchard and Vignon were intended for the private cabinet, the cabinet was also a place of publicity and sociability, where collectors and amateurs gathered to discuss the merits of different artists and works. More importantly, the oil paintings discussed here co-existed with a rich public discourse on the nature of female heroism, a discourse that nuanced, compromised, and occasionally elevated the meaning of the paintings and their reception. The drawings, however, were enjoyed at a moment when such public discourse had ceased. Lucretia would have to wait until the

Revolutionary period to again become a public subject, although even then it was Brutus' oath, sworn over her dead body, which would take pride of place.<sup>93</sup>

In early seventeenth-century France, pictorial representations of the *femme forte* bore witness to the extremely troubled relationship between an ideal of female exemplarity, misogynistic discourse, and the contemporary social context in which this discourse circulated. No place and no medium proved to be a 'safe space' for the *femme forte*, although the nature of the generic type itself always already reflected the sentiment that good women were usually dead women. It seems highly unlikely, however, that the image of the *femme forte* disappeared from French art because artists and viewers felt this injustice and wanted to rectify it. Rather, she vanished because her pictorial instantiation endangered *male* viewers. In front of the image of the *femme forte*, men 'lost their heads'. Sauval talks too much; Bosse's cavalier has his head snapped off in the bedroom of the woman who has given birth; in Blanchard's *Death of Cleopatra*, the curious soldier is on the verge of tumbling into a morass of (castrating) female bodies. When she appeared in visual art in the first half of the seventeenth century, the *femme forte* fell into all the traps set for her by a misogynistic society. This presented little cause for concern, however, until men started falling too – falling into *her* traps, as if she had set them herself.

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<sup>93</sup> Villemur 2008 (as note 55), 401–404. See also Norman Bryson, Two narratives of rape in the visual arts: Lucretia and the Sabine Women, in: Sylvia Tomaselli and Roy Porter (eds.), *Rape*, Oxford 1986, 152–173, here 165–166.

## Captions:

1 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Happiness of the Regency*, 1622–1625, oil on canvas, 394 x 295 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre

2 Claude Vignon, *The Death of Cleopatra*, ca. 1740, oil on canvas, 95 x 81 cm. Rennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie (color preferred)

3 Jacques Blanchard, *The Death of Lucretia*, 1630–1638, oil on canvas, 74 x 61 cm. Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts (color preferred)

4 Jacques Blanchard, *Death of Cleopatra*, 1630-1638, oil on canvas, 110 x 146 cm. Reims, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Reims (color preferred)

5 Simon Vouet, *The Death of Dido*, n.d., oil on canvas, 215 x 170 cm. Musée de Dole (color preferred)

6 Guido Reni, *Lucretia*, ca. 1625, oil on canvas, 215 x 151 cm. Potsdam, Schloss Sanssouci

7 Claude Mellan after Simon Vouet, *Lucretia*, engraving, 43.5 x 28.4 cm. Cambridge, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Belinda L. Randall from the collection of John Witt Randall, R1445

8 Abraham Bosse, *The Husband-Beater*, ca. 1633, etching with engraving, 26.6 x 33.6 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

9 Abraham Bosse, *Visit to the New Mother*, ca. 1633, etching with engraving, 26.7 x 35 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

10 Gilles Rousselet and Abraham Bosse after Claude Vignon, *Zenobia*, 1647, etching and burin, 34.1 x 21.6 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

11 Gilles Rousselet and Abraham Bosse after Claude Vignon, *Lucretia*, 1647, etching and burin, 34.2 x 21.6 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

12 After Guido Reni, *Lucretia committing suicide*, chalk and wash on paper, 27.5 x 21.4 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre

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