

**Klein, F. (2023) “Marguerite Yourcenar’s ‘Feminism’ and the Ambivalence of Ovidien Models in *Feux*”, in F. Cox et H. Taylor (eds), *Ovid in French. Reception by Women from the Renaissance to the Present*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 188-219.**

This essay compares Ovid’s *Heroides* and Marguerite Yourcenar’s *Feux* (a collection of stories about (mostly) mythological women that focuses on erotic passion and rewrites a heroic literary tradition from a female perspective). It shows that reading both works in tandem is illuminating in relation to the question of Ovid’s so-called proto-feminism: Yourcenar responds to the key literary device at play in Ovid’s text, which imprisons women within a predestined (/already written) future and reduces them to the expression of the passionate and lamenting love in which they are trapped. First, the essay establishes the formal and thematic similarities between the two texts to support the argument for reading them in parallel. It then studies how *Feux* explores the motif of imprisonment in a solely feminine world and thematizes the limits which trap the passionate women in a way that resonates with the *Heroides*. Finally, it focuses in particular on two stories from *Feux*—‘Achilles, or the Lie’, and ‘Sappho, or Suicide’—which on the surface appear to complicate those limits by highlighting indeterminacy around gender and sexual orientation; by examining their characters’ attempt to escape a restrictive universe, it explores how this yearning to leave the confined space of the feminine condition is strengthened by the memory of another Ovidian work: the *Metamorphoses*.