Lindsay A.H. Parker. *Writing the Revolution: a French Woman's History in Letters*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 200. Hardcover $24.60.

Lindsay Parker juxtaposes the unique status and responsibilities of French middle-class women under the monarchy and during the French Revolution. Based on more than one thousand letters by Rosalie Jullien, a Parisian middle-class woman, to her husband and son, and divided into seven chronological chapters from 1775 through 1803, Parker argues men were hostile towards influential women.

Jullien took on a masculine role while she and her family lived under the monarchy because she was a businesswoman who owned and managed property. During the revolution this would not have been possible because all property belonged to her husband. The new regime also sought to silence women. A vital setback was the disbandment of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, a short-lived women's political group. The revolution discouraged women's involvement in politics altogether. Ironically, Jullien politicized herself more through the letters, but was not able to vocalize her thoughts publicly. It seems men were aware of women's importance in political action because, before the takeover women were a vital force in the Bread Riots and the fall of the Bastille.

Some ideas leave the reader wanting more. This is especially true when Jullien seems to contradict historians' claims: "most accounts described the marches as almost exclusively female, Rosalie did not" (54), but Parker does not address why she believes Jullien fails to mention this important difference. Jullien's experience is unusual, as most women were excluded from overtly political events, but she was able to attend political meetings to inform her family. Parker applies her exclusive role to contrast the reality of others.

Dominant male ideologies have obscured these middle-class female stories resulting in this being a lesser known aspect of history. Politicized women were aware of the revolution and established their own political identities, but the male ideology excluded from real involvement. Some women embraced the idea of Republican Motherhood by raising sons who would be loyal to

the revolution. Others still sought political engagement by discussing issues with the government. Parker's work is significant to French history because it highlights the revolution's actions to push women out of power, so women's positions outside of domesticity became less significant and acceptable. Academics interested in gender studies should consider Parker's work because it provides great insight into a woman's experience before; during, and after the revolution and tracks the chain of events as women lost their influence in society.

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