

Interview with  
Camille Froidevaux-Metterie

## UN CORPS À SOI

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texte | tekst

**Your book seeks to analyze feminism's return to the body via a phenomenological approach. What is the book's point of departure?**

It was my observation, in the early 2000s, of the curious disappearance of women's bodies within feminism that made me enter into this field. I then strove to understand this disappearance. I observed how, having made it the basis of all battles, feminists had then proceeded to delegitimize and devalorize female corporeality. Exploring this pathway, I discovered the phenomenological approach to these questions, particularly in the work of American philosopher, Iris Marion Young. Her approach to the specificities associated with the fact of having a female body, viewed through the prism of gendered relations of domination, was for me an intellectual revelation. It is in her wake that I strive today to explore all the embodied dimensions of women's lives, analyzing these dimensions through the double prism of alienation and liberation.

**How did you go about writing the book?**

I had carried this book within me for a long time, since the publication of *The Revolution of the Feminine* (*La révolution du féminin*. Folio, 2015; second edition, 2020), which was its programmatic announcement. The idea was to unravel the thread of female existence, stopping at each of the corporeal knots that mark and determine that existence. I began with a work on women's breasts that articulated life stories and feminist philosophy (*Breasts. In search of freedom. [Seins. En quête d'une libération.]* Anamosa, 2020). I continue this work in this book, in the first person: I chose to express my own lived experience of the corporeal phenomena I study, to have it resonate with the experiences of the women I met. I wove these voices into the web of the writings of female feminist authors. The result is a hybrid writing, simultaneously personal and philosophical in scope. It expresses a feminist principle that has become crucial: that the intimate is political.

**How is this book relevant today?**

In *Women's Bodies: The Intimate Battle* (*Le corps des femmes. La bataille de l'intime*. Points, 2018; second edition, 2021), I analyzed the decisive turn taken in the early 2010s, when a new generation of feminists focused anew on the most intimate dimensions of women's bodies. This dynamic of reappropriation cannot be grasped in terms of the old intellectual framework that opposed a universalist feminism to a differentialist feminism. Nor is this

dynamic adequate with regard to the rediscovery of the materialist and radical feminists of the 1970s. We need new conceptual tools to think through this fundamentally new moment in which we live. The intersectional approach proposes a particularly adequate framework of thought, as does the phenomenological approach, both sharing the same attention to the diversity of lived experiences of oppression. I add to this a concern for the historicization of battles and the diffusion of feminist thought. In this manner, I strive for an embodied theorization of the current wave of feminism.