



## Imitating Rabelais in the feminine

Portraits of women in the *Contes drolatiques*

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Abstract: Unlike their Rabelaisian source, and echoing *La Comédie humaine*, the *Contes drolatiques* put women in the spotlight, from the analytical perspective of a feminine “history of behaviors.” The art of female portraiture, lexical work, and euphemization make women not only objects of pleasure, but also subjects of tragic institutional farces. In this way, Balzac favors a cunning language, and sets up Rabelais as a smiling figure of courtesan irony.

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