

[Series: Being right with... Monique Wittig](#)

Episode 3/5: How is commitment reflected in literature?



L'écrivaine Monique Wittig au cœur d'une manifestation de femmes œuvrant pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes, 26/08/70, Place de l'Etoile, à Paris ©AFP

Monique Wittig has made literature a battleground. With texts such as "Les Guérillères" (1969) and "Paris-la-politique" (1999), by inscribing herself in the political experiments of the 60s and 70s or by problematizing language, the writer transcends literature through politics.


"There's nothing ... There's something ... let me see ... something should happen ... But what?"

These are the words of two young girls, the intrepid heroines of Vera Chytilova's radical, feminist 1966 film *Les petites marguerites* (Little Daisies), which follows the wanderings of these two temperaments ready to overturn all the conventions that weigh down women in society. We can imagine that Monique Wittig asked herself the same questions, and that this film resonated with her. So much so, in fact, that the first group of revolutionary women she formed in 1968 was named after the film's title: *Les Petites Marguerites*. Once again, art catches up with politics, or politics catches up with art, in the wittigian universe.

Wittig did not cease her literary work, however, and in 1969 published *Les Guérillères*, which she had begun writing in 1967, a tale of a world of women, joyously at war, inspired by the Amazons, in which the masculine plural pronoun disappears to make way for ELLES, a feminine plural pronoun that becomes the universal. She also experienced disillusionment within the Women's Liberation Movement (MLF), which ostracized her for her avowed political lesbianism, and published the book *Paris-la-politique* (Ed. POL, 1999).

We'll be discussing these issues with our guests: Ilana Eloit, professor of gender and sexuality studies and a specialist in Monique Wittig, and Benoît Auclerc, lecturer in literature at Lyon 3 University and co-director of *Lire Monique Wittig aujourd'hui* (*Read Monique Wittig now*) (with Yannick Chevalier, ed. PUL, 2012), who works on the relationship between literature and politics. Also with us, Chloé Jacquesson, author of the thesis *Somewhere where "sex doesn't exist": fictional and theoretical practices and gender issues in Nathalie Sarraute and Monique Wittig* (2018).

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