**Finding their place** (*Une place à prendre*)

From the outset of this book, one question we have left hanging is: why is it so crucial to teach works written by women? And to whom should we teach them? One of the problems faced by Quebec’s education system (so we are constantly told) is that boys are not interested in literature. These alarm bells distract attention from another important point: we are primarily teaching works written by men. Apparently, this is not enough to make literature appealing to boys. But why aren’t we talking about the girls, particularly those for whom reading is a simple fact of life? By obliging them to read books almost exclusively written by men, we are constantly presenting girls with women as objects (and often secondary ones, at that). How can we then expect girls to see themselves as active agents in the world? When we only teach works by male authors, we let girls believe that women are destined to be spoken to, and not to speak for themselves. Far from wishing to defend an essentialist idea of gender, we are nonetheless sure that women reflect a different experience of the world than men do, chiefly because women are socialized differently. Surely, boys would also benefit from encountering this experience, which might otherwise be foreign to them – indeed literature offers boys the chance to discover what would normally be inaccessible. And this chance might just be the very thing that *incites* them to read. Perhaps it’s an error to assume that boys only want to hear about themselves; even if that were true, it would only make it more essential to encourage them to view women as active subjects.