

Marie-Ève Thérénty. *Femmes de presse, femmes de lettres: De Delphine de Girardin à Florence Aubenas*. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2019. 400 pp. ISBN: 978-2-271-11792-2.

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Marie-Ève Thérénty's *Femmes de presse, femmes de lettres: De Delphine de Girardin à Florence Aubenas* provides a detailed analysis of the history of female journalists from 1836 through to the media age of 1944, when women in France at long last finally gained the right to vote. In her introduction, Thérénty astutely examines the reasons why women wrote from a distinct point of view: Their status in civil, professional, and domestic society was entirely different from that of their male counterparts since they were essentially minors without the right to vote and were relegated to the role of enhancing a husband's career via their domestic skills on the home front. Addressing thus this subordinate role played by women, Thérénty deliberates the perceptible impact on how female journalists wrote. Specifically, she studies six journalistic figures who form *le Siècle de la presse* stretching from 1836 to 1944.

Each chapter combines journalistic practice with an author's standpoint that is named after a female mythological character. "*Chapitre premier. Les chroniqueuses ou les Pénélope*" focuses on the middle of the nineteenth century. As the guardian of the home, Pénélope functions as an allegory for the two-sphere society that assigned women to the domestic space yet excluded them from the public sphere, including journalism. Women wishing to participate in the rise of newspapers in the 1830s found themselves confined to lighter, less serious topics, for example, fashion and social events. But then there enters Delphine de Girardin at the head of *La Presse* between 1836 and 1848, who transforms it into a multifaceted and hybrid space of worldly conversation. Thérénty stresses the ambivalence of this "space" in the newspaper, which allows women access to everyday life while confirming gender constraints and stereotypes. This is why those who have documented its history – beginning with Girardin and continuing with, for example, Jeanne Thilda – adopt strategies of obliquity, irony, and counterpoints to bring out a disruptive discourse and question journalistic gender boundaries. "*Chapitre 2. Les publicistes ou les Cassandre*" centers on political journalists of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, including George Sand, Marie d'Agoult, Juliette

Adam (*la Cassandre germanophone*), and Claude Vignon (*la Cassandre parlementaire*). Thérénty shows how these women's positions as outsiders were reinforced by the fictionalization of their production, their use of the epistolary novel, and the distance they took from traditional news. "Chapitre 3. *Les Frondeuses ou les Bradamante*" is devoted to those Thérénty calls "Les Frondeuses ou les Bradamante," Bradamtante being a heroine of Ariost, who disguised as a man, ran from the battlefields. Among them we learn about Séverine, the first journalist to receive field training similar to that of her colleagues; Andrée Théry, who developed the practice of immersion as an investigative technique for reporting; as well as Andrée Viollis and Colette, both defined by the practice of interviewing and professionalization. "Chapitre 4. *Les aventurières ou les amazones*" examines the writing of those female journalists who describe their explorations for the press of the twentieth century. The "amazones" also play on the ambiguity of the genre by their clothing, as did Isabelle Eberhardt with her male attire in Arab countries. "Chapitre 5. *Les rédactrices professionnelles ou les Sappho*" studies the writers from the interwar period - Marcelle Tinayre, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, Germaine Beaumont, Myriam Harry, Blanche Vogt, and Huguette Garnier. In "Chapitre 6. *Les grandes reporters ou les Dalila*" Thérénty explains how the prejudices and rules that constrain women are ultimately in line with journalism as it was understood in the inter-war period, so as to embody sensitivity, subjectification of the world, literacy, and dramatization.

In conclusion, Thérénty does a fine job of analyzing the work of French female journalists from 1836 to 1944, highlighting the challenges they faced and particularly importantly, underscoring the multiple ways women crafted their art as journalists. An interesting follow-up study would be to consider how female journalists in France fared after 1944, because even though General Charles de Gaulle, as leader of the post-World War II provisional French government, signed the measure giving French women the right to vote into law on April 21, 1944, French women did not actually cast their ballots for the first time until April 29, 1945 when France held its first general elections since Liberation.