

Planté, Christine et Marie-Ève Thérienty (éd). Féminin/Masculin dans la presse du XIXe siècle

Hope Christiansen

Numéro 123, hiver 2023

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1107718ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1107718ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Department of French, Dalhousie University

ISSN

0711-8813 (imprimé)

2562-8704 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Christiansen, H. (2023). Compte rendu de [Planté, Christine et Marie-Ève Thérienty (éd). Féminin/Masculin dans la presse du XIXe siècle]. *Dalhousie French Studies*, (123), 118–119. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1107718ar>

l'aune de l'herméneutique cynégétique. *The game is afoot* –le gibier est à pied⁷–, comme le rappelle Holmes au début de chacune de ses enquêtes.

Julien Defraeye

St. Thomas University

Planté, Christine et Marie-Ève Thérénty (éd). *Féminin/Masculin dans la presse du XIX^e siècle*. Lyon : Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2022. 481 p.

This hefty volume of twenty-two essays (plus introduction, conclusion, and sixteen pages of illustrations) adopts a transdisciplinary approach to explore the dynamic between gender and the press during the long nineteenth century, drawing on disciplines as varied as gender studies, information science, discourse analysis, media history, and political science, among others. Since space restrictions make it impossible to discuss each study in detail, this review will focus on a few representative examples that illustrate the diversity of the topics treated and the overall excellence of both writing and presentation style. Part I lays the foundation for the rest of the book by looking at instances of what the editors call, in the section title, “inflexions” of the gender line. In his examination of *la presse de mode masculine*, François Kerlouégan invites us to consider *le masculin* to be “une construction socioculturelle plus qu’une donnée anatomique” (29). Barbara Bohac explores the ways Mallarmé’s *La Dernière Mode* subverted the stereotypes propagated by fashion magazines in order to propose a new image of woman as a key player in “la religion du Beau” (30). Nicolas Pitsos studies how advertisements for various products (*toniques, diététiques-cathartiques, hygiéniques-cosmétiques*) came to define the well-being of men and women alike, pinpointing two *leitmotive* in the ads’ portrayal of the female organism: menstruation/menopause and “la légendaire faiblesse de la constitution féminine” (139). Isabelle Matamoros offers a fascinating study of representations of women reading journalism in the Belle Époque. Painters typically put illustrated magazines (identifiable by their double-page format) in the hands of their female subjects, political newspapers being the purview of men, except in the case of *Le Figaro*, “la lecture féminine par excellence” (151). Where this reading took place likewise cut across gender lines: men are shown reading in an office or at the dining table while women do so in intimate spaces like the *salon* or bedroom. Even after women made inroads into urban spaces like *cafés*, they were consistently depicted as solitary readers, in contrast to men, for whom reading was very much a social act.

In the opening essay of Part II, on art and literature, Hélène Marquié delves into the process by which the press discredited male dancers and feminized the ballet; along the way, she analyzes the tensions between *la danse noble* and *la danse romantique*, pantomime and dance, narrative and poetry, Opéra and théâtres du Boulevard, and more broadly, masculine and feminine spheres. Laurence Brogniez shows how writing art criticism (for the Salons between 1830 and 1880) enabled women to reveal, “sous couvert d’appréciations esthétiques, les prescriptions et les contraintes sociales qui pèsent sur les corps, sur l’apparence et sur les canons de la beauté” (31). Part III centers on the *fait divers*, with Amélie Chabrière’s piece on women and *chroniques judiciaires*, Michele Fontana’s on *l’affaire Gouffe* (which argues that not only had the press’ discourse on female criminals not evolved much by the end of the century, but the *grandes affaires criminelles* continued to be fictionalized in spite of advances in psychiatry), and Frédéric Canovas’s on the place of homosexuals in late nineteenth-century society as evidenced by the French press’ treatment of the *affaire Oscar Wilde*.

7 Je reprends ici la citation relevée par Jean-Pierre Naugrette dans sa contribution « Sherlock Holmes cynégétique », ainsi que la traduction qu’il en propose.

In Part IV, on women journalists, Sarah Mombert introduces three women—Clémence Badère, la comtesse Dash, and Albertine Philippe—involved in various ways in Alexandre Dumas's *Le Mousquetaire*, while Marie-Ève Thérénty scrutinizes the case of Marie d'Agoult who, although successful in publishing *un premier-Paris* (a political rubric usually reserved for male writers) in *La Liberté* in 1866, was the exception, not the rule; as Thérénty puts it, "même pour une femme très cultivée et influente, à l'important réseau politique, il est impossible de soulever le plafond invisible et même de le crever pour soi-même" (353). Margot Irvine discusses *Les Matinées espagnoles*, which, by encouraging exchanges among European *femmes de lettres*, created not only new forms of sociability for women but the possibility of official recognition for their talent. Guillaume Pinson studies the groundbreaking *Femina* which aimed at garnering a wide female readership (in contrast to many of its predecessors whose inclusion of the word "mondain" in their titles presumed "un micro-univers social fermé et homogène" [393]) and at striking a balance between tradition and modernity. The final section turns to the twentieth century, with a contribution by Paul Aron that includes two useful tables—one on women in the French press in 1928 and the other on women journalists of the *entre-deux-guerres*—featuring information on each individual's class, education, marital status, publications, social engagement, and journalistic activity; followed by Claire Blandin's essay on the ways *Marie-Claire* melded traditional content devoted to "feminine" topics (beauty, childcare, etc.) with material that encouraged women to participate in France's social and economic life, setting a standard for magazines to come in the second half of the twentieth century.

The other contributions (by Catherine Nesci, Caroline Fayolle, Christine Planté, Sandrine Roll, Patrice Izquierdo, Laetitia Gonon, and Sandrine Lévêque) are just as worthy of readers' attention, as is the remarkable conclusion which posits a direct relationship between the book's overarching message and recent events such as a 2015 column in *Libération* signed by forty women journalists who have been victims of sexism; movements such as #MeToo, #BalanceTonPorc, and #PayeTaShnek; the Strauss-Kahn, Weinstein, and Polanski affairs; even television coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic, in which "la parole d'autorité . . . restait largement masculine, alors même que le secteur de la santé est très féminisé" (453). The editors conclude by stating that "Notre ouvrage voudrait, en éclairant l'histoire qui fonde ces inégalités, aider à prendre du recul pour mieux les combattre" (454). *Féminin/Masculin dans la presse du XIX^e siècle* not only meets but surpasses that goal.

Hope Christiansen

University of Arkansas

Anselmini, Julie. *L'écrivain-critique au XIX^e siècle. Dumas, Gautier, Barbey d'Aurevilly*. Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2022, Collection « Situations », 554 p.

Le dix-neuvième siècle, époque qui a vu la naissance de la grande presse et une expansion pyramidale de l'imprimerie, a vu également le développement important et une transformation considérable de la critique littéraire ; on assiste à la naissance de la critique moderne, telle qu'on la connaît et qu'on la pratique dans une certaine mesure encore. La multiplication exponentielle des œuvres littéraires et théâtrales appelait presque naturellement la mise en place de balises, l'invention d'instruments de mesure prétendument objectifs, d'instances d'évaluation, et la création d'une catégorie professionnelle pouvant certifier de la plus ou moins grande valeur des volumes qui s'empilaient chaque jour davantage dans les librairies. Projet noble et louable. Le problème étant, toutefois, que si la critique, dans l'abstrait, est une nécessité impérieuse et une excellente chose, le critique, très concrètement – c'est chose connue et avérée – est