



Deposited via The University of Leeds.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/165896/>

Version: Accepted Version

Article:

Holmes, D (2019) Gender, Generation, and Journalism in France, 1910–1940. By Mary Lynn Stewart. *French Studies*, 73 (4). pp. 654-655. ISSN: 0016-1128

<https://doi.org/10.1093/fs/knz190>

© The Author(s) 2019. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for French Studies. All rights reserved. This is an author produced version of an article published in *French Studies*. Uploaded in accordance with the publisher's self-archiving policy.

Reuse

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

Gender, Generation, and Journalism in France, 1910-1940. By MARY LYNN STEWART.

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018. x + 285 pp.

Like so many other areas of life, journalism is a profession that has been largely populated by men, with women forming a small, often embattled minority. This book attempts to restore to history not so much the great, exceptional pioneers of French female journalism (Sévérine, Marguerite Durand, Colette) as the second and third generations of women who wrote regularly for the big daily papers, between 1910 and 1940. Mary Lynn Stewart makes ten of these significant but (on the whole) little-known figures the primary focus of her study, expanding its scope by referring too to a wider circle of their contemporaries. She examines the factors that enabled them to enter the overwhelmingly male world of the press, and what their gendered difference brought to French journalism. She is however very careful not to narrow her focus too tightly, so that the broad context of early twentieth-century news journalism is usefully sketched in and a comparative approach acknowledges cross-sex similarities, as well as the specificities of these women's situation and their writing. Section One (of three) is organized around the concept of generations: it shows that constraints and opportunities were slightly different according to the decade in which aspiring women reporters started their careers, and traces the important role of woman-to-woman mentoring between generations. Whether literal (the 'Grand Reporter' Andrée Viollis was the mother of equally intrepid foreign correspondent Simone Téry) or figurative (Sévérine nurturing the career of Marcelle Capy, Colette that of Germaine Beaumont), maternal/filial relationships played an important part in enabling the success of the generations that followed the pioneers of the Belle Époque. Stewart shows how the early trailblazers provided not only inspiring role models, but also practical support, with

Durand's *La Fronde* in particular launching the careers of numerous women in the press. Support also included the handing on of gender-specific knowledge and skills, such as how to combine being a fearless journalist with maintaining a 'respectable' profile that would alarm neither editors nor readers. The book's other two sections - on women as front-page reporters on world affairs, and on those who specialized in 'feminine' matters from social issues to fashion - confirm that although there is certainly no single 'feminine style', gendered difference is a constant. Family connections eased entry into the profession for both sexes, but women journalists needed extra qualifications to make it into the newsroom: they were mainly of a higher social class than their male counterparts, and better educated. They also shared a markedly empathetic approach to the human subjects who make the news, a tendency to combine journalism with more literary writing, and a worldview that though varying from mildly reformist to radical was consistently feminist. Two minor quibbles, both on language: French titles are so riddled with errors that the copy-editor surely had no French, and key words (for example women reporters being accused of performing 'stunts', p.119) are given only in translation, so that one longs to know the original. But this is a well-researched and valuable study that presents itself as part of the ongoing collective project of restoring women to cultural history.

Diana Holmes

University of Leeds