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**Jennifer
Willging**

**"Marguerite
Duras's
Murders"**

Marguerite Duras was an ardent reader of *faits divers*, especially of the criminal kind. She included numerous murderers among the characters in her fiction and discussed several real ones in her essays and interviews. Duras's literary treatment of murderers suggests that her attitude toward them, not only those of her own invention but also many real-life ones, was generally sympathetic, in some cases even—scandalously—admiring (with one notable exception). This essay examines a number of biographical and historical factors that may account for the appeal that this most extreme form of social deviance held for Duras.

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was of noble or common origins. To this end, Miller's evidence of how Manichean, ideological discourse turned the Revolution against the social stratum that had initiated it is particularly compelling. The book will be of interest to scholars who wish to learn more about the French Revolution at the logistical level, as well as to those interested in the regional politics of eighteenth-century France.

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Allison Stedman

SHERIDAN, GERALDINE. *Louder Than Words: Ways of Seeing Women Workers in Eighteenth-Century France*. Lubbock: Texas Tech UP, 2009. ISBN 978-0-89672-622-2. Pp. xvi + 256, 193 B/W photos. \$55 (cloth).

This reviewer had the distinct pleasure of seeing the author present some of the research for this book in the keynote address at the 2006 Women in French conference held at the University of New Hampshire. The lecture prefigured what I experienced while reading the book: delight at seeing (some previously unpublished) images of women workers in eighteenth-century France, interest in the information the author provides about the engravings and the women in them, and admiration for the broader conclusions she draws about women workers based on her contextualization and interpretation of the engravings.

Through her suitable title, Geraldine Sheridan indicates her goal for this book. Since trade guilds in eighteenth-century France did not generally allow women as members, there is practically no written record—no record in words—of women workers' activity. Sheridan argues that period engravings do in fact speak "louder than words" by showing the nature and extent of women's work, even if the accompanying text customarily overlooks the women. Her plates come from the *Encyclopédie* and the *Description des arts et métiers*, both dating from the second half of the eighteenth century with the latter incorporating some images from the seventeenth century. The author substantiates her argument: *Ways of Seeing Women Workers*... restores to history eighteenth-century French women workers by literally making them visible to the modern eye in various ways. As the List of Plates preceding the text underlines, women workers were active in a surprisingly wide range of fields.

Sheridan has organized these activities and in addition to an introduction and conclusion, her annotated study consists of five chapters, each devoted to a different area of the French economy. The first is what she calls "the traditional economy" which includes agriculture, mining (yes, women worked in mining!), and fishing. The second and longest covers the artisanal trades; it is divided into ornamental and luxury products and essential goods. The next two chapters discuss women workers in textiles and manufactories, respectively, with manufactories not being the predecessors of the nineteenth-century factories but rather "large enterprises often supported, and sometimes fully capitalized, by the royal administration" (183); perhaps the best-known example is the tapestries at Les Gobelins. The last and shortest chapter analyzes women's commercial activity in for instance the baker's shop and the forerunner of the modern fashion boutique. It is unfortunate, but probably unavoidable, that readers end up flipping back and forth regularly between pages whenever the discussion about a certain engraving does not start on the same page as its reproduction.

The author impresses with her knowledge of eighteenth-century trades. Through

the women workers present in the engravings, she teaches readers in great detail how objects like fans, buttons, wax, tin, and vermicelli are made, how various fish are caught in different ways, how women managed shops, etc. Additionally, Sheridan brings the women to life for readers by providing details about their lives outside of the engravings but deduced from them: their relationships with their children, their husbands and each other, and the toll inflicted on them and their bodies not only by their regular pregnancies, their low wages and sometimes dangerous and unhealthy work environment, but also by their utterly exhausting and physical work.

A list of Manuscript Sources, Works Cited and an Index conclude the book, which also contains 193 black and white photographs of engravings. The bilingual cross-referencing in the Index, such as "ribbon makers. *See rubanniers*" (254), is particularly useful for anglophone readers.

This book will be of interest to scholars and students of the eighteenth century, of French cultural history and of Women's Studies. Those in art and art history studying women and the female body may also find the images engaging.

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Marijn S. Kaplan

JONNES, JILL. *Eiffel's Tower: And the World's Fair Where Buffalo Bill Beguiled Paris, the Artists Quarreled, and Thomas Edison Became a Count*. New York: Viking, 2009. ISBN 978-0-670-02060-7. Pp. 354. \$27.95.

The Eiffel Tower, the lasting legacy of the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889, stands as a testament to the success of the ambitious fair. Trying to leave recent difficulties behind, France aimed to elevate its national prestige through a six-month celebration of liberty, science, and technology. In this work, Jill Jonnes leads the reader through the drama of the fair, from the construction of the world's tallest structure, to the contributions of some of the era's most colorful characters, both famous and lesser-known, all bringing their own self-interest to the endeavor.

Engineer Gustave Eiffel was already a wealthy man before the tower project, thanks to a successful career as a railway bridge builder. Eiffel's planning was so masterful—with precise calculations so that the iron plates could be cut at ground level, then hoisted and riveted into place—that the tower was completed in only twenty-eight months, compared to decades for the Washington Monument during the same era. Despite the weather and worker demands, Eiffel managed to complete the tower in time for the fair's opening. Here, as elsewhere in this work, it is the unexpected detail that enlivens the story. Thus, after the first platform was finished, it became the site of a midday meal for the workers, ostensibly to avoid the necessity of descending to ground level, but also preventing them from overindulging in wine during the noon break. Throughout the fair, Eiffel hosted distinguished visitors in his elegant personal salon at the tower's summit. For forty years the Eiffel Tower remained the tallest structure in the world, until the Chrysler Building was completed in 1929 and the Empire State Building two years later.

Contrary to popular belief, Parisians of the day did not dislike the Eiffel Tower or call for its destruction. Initial hesitation in some quarters gave way to wonder and astonishment as the colossal wrought-iron structure rose over the Seine.