part catered for by the daily news. It is this chapter particularly which reveals a limitation on one half of Tusan's stated aims – that of uncovering the 'making of a particular kind of female subject' (p. 1), as it fails to follow her turn towards the mainstream papers to discover what attracted her to them.

Women who were deeply involved in the women's press reveal in their correspondence, autobiographies and addresses to readers ways in which their gendered identities are forged in contact with advocacy journalism. Each female activist entered into complex negotiations with traditional, male expectations of their social role in order to break the rules by entering into the male sphere of public life but to minimize the consequent disapprobation. Powerful and colourful examples are provided from the writings of public women. However, the book does not deal with media theories that warn against the possibility of 'reading off' an audience subject position from the text. Undoubtedly those activist women believed strongly in the work they performed and its 'transformative potential' (p. 241). They addressed readers in ways clearly intended to invite their participation not only in the imagined community, but in real action. Yet there is little evidence for the ways in which these messages were received, except from those who became producers. There is no discussion of variety within subject positions, although it may be supposed a female journalist and a woman who merely read the occasional issue might have felt differently about their female activist identities. However, few authors have achieved the negotiations between Western historical and media studies methodologies necessary for such an undertaking, which requires a widespread initiative across countries, institutions and faculties.

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Women and journalism

Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner and Carole Fleming; Routledge, London and New York, 2004, 296p, ISBN 0-415-27445-1, £17.99 (Pbk); ISBN-13 978-0415274456, £60 (Hbk)

The main focus of this book is the production of journalism and women's role within it. Written by senior feminist academics, it is a comprehensive overview of the key developments in the profession since 1850, in both Britain and the United States. Within its themed chapters, it alternates discussion of the British and American experience, so it has an interrupted narrative. Rather than reading it from start to finish, therefore, it is probably most useful as a resource, to be read in sections for a specific purpose. It is thus very helpful for students in a number of disciplines – mainly communication or media studies but also for women's studies and research into media institutions and working practices.

Another strength is its attempts to include non-white female journalists. Although these sections are considerably thinner than those on white women, the dearth of these women in journalism and the lesser mark they made (or were allowed to make) on the historical record offers some explanation.

For much of the history of the media, women are shown to have struggled to make their voices heard. The book's key questions are around how women journalists have negotiated, challenged and changed patriarchal attitudes in news cultures. Familiar obstacles have been placed in the path of women journalists, just as in other professions – overt sexism, lack of childcare, the 'glass ceiling'. Women writers have often been restricted to the 'ghetto' of the women's pages, fashion and other domestic columns. On TV, women have found it easier to get employment as weathergirls than hard-nosed reporters, and it is axiomatic that while male newscasters may grow grey and fat with age, their female counterparts must remain junior, in status as well as years. Even in journalism education, women teachers have struggled to achieve parity with men; for example, through much of the twentieth century American journalism students were 'tracked' according to gender, and women teachers found themselves teaching women students how to write for a women's page and a female audience, while the men did everything else. The book details the individuals who made it in a man's world, on men's terms, such as war correspondents like Kate Adie. Yet it also shows how some women turned their typecasting to their advantage, such as the newspaper columnists of the 1960s and 1970s who wrote about the personal in a way that was political. It also demonstrates ways in which women have created alternative forms of journalism, such as feminist and lesbian periodicals, cable TV and online forums, creating imagined communities for like-minded women and reinforcing their sense of feminist identity.

The book covers such a wide area, in terms of both space and time, that it is not unexpected that some parts are rather more edited highlights than the whole story. The early women's advocacy press in the United Kingdom, for instance, is reduced to the single example (Annie Besant), although it was almost as wide-ranging in its topics and to whom it was addressed as the American case, not simply all about the franchise as it appears here. This makes comparisons between the two countries' media industries difficult, and the authors draw very few themselves, choosing not to enter into the difficult task of deciding on a single measure to be used for both cases, and leaving this reader with the impression that the book is primarily intended for its collection of facts and figures, rather than its argument.

Yet the book is most interesting when it does enter into debates, such as those on how the entry of women into the journalistic profession has changed the way in which newswriters define their product. The dispute over the so-called 'feminization' of news began before the turn of the twentieth century, and after the turn of the twenty-first century shows no sign of being concluded. In his review

of this book, the well-known media scholar, Brian McNair (2006) condemns the authors for their disapproval of 'new girl' columnists (as exemplified by Candace Bushell and 'Bridget Jones'), suggesting that they have swallowed the idea that women's journalism has 'dumbed down' the media as a whole. Yet they themselves state that 'news is not inherently feminine or masculine. It is therefore not helpful to refer to the postmodern shift to infotainment as a "feminisation" of news' (p. 230). It would appear that they are attempting a more complex argument in which market forces are driving news towards the personal and emotional ('soft' news), which has historically been seen by the male editors and owners as the women's realm, thus creating more job opportunities for women, but only if they play up to the stereotype. From their feminist point of view, therefore, the authors consider it as both a positive and a negative development.

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reference

McNair, B. (2006) 'Book review: Women and journalism', *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 1: 153–154.

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Femme fatalities: representations of strong women in the media

Rikke Schubart and Anne Gjelsvik, editors; Nordicom, Gothenburg, 2004, 233p, ISBN 91-89471-25-3, \$25

Femmes Fatalities: Representations of Strong Women in the Media is an anthology of essays addressing and questioning the alleged rise of powerful women in the media fictions of the 1990s. This highly eclectic collection of twelve essays ranges geographically from Scandinavia to South America, and covers the wide range of genres and sites that comprise the contemporary field of media reception and analysis.

Obviously covering all bases (and contributions) is beyond the confines of a single review, but in general the very diversity of *Femme Fatalities* is part of its strength – but primarily its weakness. This is a very mixed bag divided into three somewhat arbitrary sections (New Media and Postfeminist Aesthetics, Genre Fictions and From the Margins). The collection is marred by a lack of theoretical focus or direction, in the absence of which the editors have latched onto the term 'postfeminism' as a catch-all umbrella term for the project.

As Rikke Schubart and Anne Gjelsvik write in their introduction: 'Taken together, the essays in this anthology are representative for [*sic*] a postfeminist approach