

“De toutes mes faibles forces”

La Fronde and Feminism in Transition in Dreyfusard

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The front page of *La Fronde*'s March 26, 1898 issue proudly featured the article "Pro Domo Nostra," which argued for the rights of "la femme-avocat."¹ Asking why women have been barred from the legal profession, journalist Camille Duguet concludes, "la seule, l'unique raison, celle qui domine, c'est la préjugé."² Even when women are not facing specific gender discrimination, their rejection is based "sur des subtilités, des répugnances souvent personnels."³ "Pro Domo Nostra" finds itself between two other articles with female subjects. To the left, a petition signed by women "émues des souffrances de Mme. Dreyfus" urges that Dreyfus' wife be "permis[e] de partager l'exil de son mari,"⁴ emphasizing her supportive duties as a wife. To the right, the poetry and commentary labeled "Interview Céleste" praises the Virgin Mary, "une femme, une épouse, une mère," arguably the most symbolic of mothers in Catholic France, and commemorates her pain as her son's death left her "pénétrée de douleur."⁵ *La Fronde* was a female-led newspaper published from 1897 to 1905 out of Paris, France, and even as it covered daily news informatively, all of its writers were female and wrote from their own experience. The Dreyfus Affair, an 1890s scandal in which a Jewish officer was wrongly found guilty of treason and exiled, not only revealed anti-Semitism within France but also created a new space for female journalism. However, although *La Fronde* took a strongly pro-Alfred Dreyfus, or Dreyfusard, stance, it did not have a set method for representing a "female" perspective in covering news more broadly.

Scholars have long asserted that *La Fronde*'s all-female staff and Dreyfusardism made it a feminist newspaper, and while to an extent they are correct, they also make this claim in broad

¹ Camille Duguet, "Pro Domo Nostra," *La Fronde* (Paris), March 26, 1898, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703230n?rk=1802584;0>.

² Duguet, "Pro Domo Nostra," 1.

³ Duguet, "Pro Domo Nostra," 1.

⁴ Louise France, "Interview Céleste," *La Fronde* (Paris), March 26, 1898, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703230n?rk=1802584;0>.

⁵ Henriette Marchal, "Appel Aux Femmes," *La Fronde* (Paris), March 26, 1898, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703230n?rk=1802584;0>.

strokes. That they have generalized is clear in studying the columns of *La Fronde*, which reveal progressive ideologies but also a persistent clinging to past ideals. During Dreyfus' trial in Rennes, the task of objectively covering the daily proceedings fell upon several members of *La Fronde's* staff, including reporter Jeanne Brémontier and opinion columnist Séverine, who contributed a daily column entitled "Notes d'une frondeuse." During this same period, la Dame D. Voilée also wrote a daily column called "On dit..." which offered an overview of local and national news. Although the Dreyfusard reporters worked in Rennes during this time, the primary audience for both sections of the newspaper was in Paris. Using these two columns and *La Fronde's* broader coverage of the Dreyfus Affair, I study *La Fronde's* depictions of women and of femininity from August 5 to September 15 of 1899, during the period of Dreyfus' trial in Rennes. I argue that *La Fronde* struggled to balance its progressivism with the traditional values of a Parisian readership, often writing to a mixed and sometimes overlapping audience of feminist women and Parisian women holding onto traditional understandings of gender and thus representing feminism in transition more than radical feminism.

Many scholars have studied journalism as a means of understanding fin-de-siècle feminism. Sociologist Louis Wirth explains journalism's power in Paris with his ideas on representation in cities, writing, "Typically in the city, interests are made effective through representation. The individual counts for little, but the voice of the representative is heard with a deference roughly proportional to the numbers for whom he speaks."⁶ Historian Karen Offen applies Wirth's ideas specifically to Paris, writing, "A sure sign of the growth and diversity of French feminism in the 1890s was the proliferation of publications of various political hue."⁷ She

⁶ Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," in *Cities and Societies: The Revised Reader in Urban Sociology*, by Paul Hatt and Albert Reiss (n.p.: Free Press, 1957), 55.

⁷ Karen Offen, "Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France," *The American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (June 1984): 654, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1856120.pdf>.

goes on to list various feminist newspapers from Paris' turn of the century, deeming *La Fronde* "most impressive of all."⁸ Jane Chapman divides the relationship between women and journalism in fin-de-siècle Europe into three distinct categories: "women as readers and consumers, women as journalists, and women as sources of news content, through their actions in society."⁹ Each of these three means of understanding this relationship are relevant to *La Fronde*, but the idea of women as journalists proved to be the most radical.¹⁰ Chapman calls the phenomenon of linking women to the press an example of "cultural citizenship," and she writes that the era from the 1860s to the 1930s was the "'golden age' of newspapers."¹¹

Into this fertile ground entered *La Fronde*, a newspaper for the Parisian middle class that was "entièrement dirigée, conçue, rédigée, composée et administrée par des femmes,"¹² founded by actress-turned-journalist Marguerite Durand in 1897.¹³ Mary Louise Roberts writes that *La Fronde* was "sometimes called 'Le Temps in skirts,'"¹⁴ indicating a high level of both circulation and respect. Even as *La Fronde* served an informational function, its purpose was also innately feminist, for its structure necessitated professional female journalists and reporters.¹⁵ Moreover, Durand recruited many leaders from France's feminist movement to collaborate or to write

⁸ Offen, "Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism," 655.

⁹ Jane L. Chapman, *Gender, Citizenship and Newspapers: Historical and Transnational Perspectives*, Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 25.

¹⁰ As Mary Louise Roberts describes, "*La Fronde* was modeled after the bourgeois daily of the era but with one very important difference: its staff was entirely female. Women edited, wrote, and even typeset *La Fronde*." Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 5.

¹¹ Chapman, *Gender, Citizenship, and Newspapers*, 4.

¹² Annie Dizier-Metz, "La bibliothèque Marguerite Durand," *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 14, no. 3 (1993): 10, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40619547.pdf>.

¹³ Mary Louise Roberts provides more context in *Disruptive Acts*. For more information on the unique founding of *La Fronde*, see footnote 10.

¹⁴ Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 5.

¹⁵ Describing *La Fronde*'s difficulties, Mezier-Ditz writes that "la première sera de recruter les rédactrices, car il existe alors peu de journalistes professionnelles." Séverine, who had previously written for other newspapers, was the exception to this rule. Mezier-Ditz also describes other difficulties *La Fronde* faced, such as working around an 1892 that prohibited women from working at nighttime. Dizier-Metz, "La bibliothèque Marguerite Durand," 10.

columns for *La Fronde*, including Nelly Roussel, Aline Valette, and Marie Bonneviel.¹⁶ Durand biographer Annie Mezier-Ditz summarizes that *La Fronde* sought to be “à la fois le lieu d'expression des revendications féministes, dans ses divers courants, et un journal d'informations générales, politique, économique et culturel.”¹⁷ Séverine, *La Fronde*'s most famous journalist and the second woman in France to receive a “carte de journaliste,”¹⁸ best exemplifies *La Fronde*'s feminism, as she “spearheaded the feminist content of the paper.”¹⁹ Mary Louise Roberts describes Séverine as “a radical republican and a fervent Dreyfusard” who “learned compassion for the poor and oppressed” from socialist Jules Vallès.²⁰ With voices like these serving as the face of *La Fronde*, scholars have overwhelmingly defined *La Fronde* by its feminism.

The Dreyfus Affair, like *La Fronde*, has been heavily linked to feminism. Roberts explains that advocating for Dreyfus “opened new political opportunities for women...as a moral quest for truth and justice.”²¹ While writing that “thinking about anti-Semitism and offering an ‘opportunity’ for women is repugnant,”²² she also finds it necessary to understand the importance of the Affair in giving women, the recognized source of “moral energies,” a space to find political voices through the lens of morality.²³ Roberts indicates that “the ‘Jew’ and the ‘New Woman’ became linked in the cultural imagination...in the 1890s,”²⁴ and while this link sometimes occurred because of negative stereotypes, women became experts on the Dreyfus

¹⁶ Dizier-Metz, "La bibliothèque Marguerite Durand," 12.

¹⁷ Dizier-Metz, "La bibliothèque Marguerite Durand," 11.

¹⁸ Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr, eds., *A 'Belle Epoque'?: Women and Feminism in French Society and Culture, 1890-1914*, Polygons: Cultural Diversities and Intersections (n.p.: Berghahn Books, 2007), 38. Chapman agrees that Séverine “had a national reputation as a reporter.” Chapman, *Gender, Citizenship, and Newspapers*, 83.

¹⁹ Holmes and Tarr, *A 'Belle Epoque'?*, 38.

²⁰ Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 132-133.

²¹ Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 245.

²² Roberts, *Disruptive Acts* 164.

²³ Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 164.

²⁴ Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 13.

Affair because they were perceived as experts on morality. Jeanne Humphries agrees with Roberts' depiction of the Dreyfus Affair as uniquely female, studying the letters sent to Émile Zola, who published a defense of Alfred Dreyfus entitled "J'Accuse," during the Dreyfus Affair, the topics of those letters, and the gender of their authors. Humphries finds that 93% of the letters written to Zola by women expressed support for Dreyfus,²⁵ which she divides into admiration, encouragement, and a desire to participate. To Humphries, Zola's letters demonstrate that the Dreyfus Affair was "a women's affair."²⁶

The Dreyfus Affair officially began with Captain Alfred Dreyfus' arrest on October 14, 1894.²⁷ Convicted quickly and without sufficient evidence, Dreyfus was exiled and received little public attention until Émile Zola's 1898 article "J'Accuse," published in *L'Aurore* on January 13, 1898.²⁸ Ending "J'Accuse" with an explanation for his motive in writing— "Je n'ai qu'une passion, celle de la lumière, au nom de l'humanité qui a tant souffert et qui a droit au bonheur. Ma protestation enflammée n'est que le cri de mon âme."²⁹—Zola reveals the injustices and fabrications within Dreyfus' first trial and urges a retrial.³⁰ Along with drawing national attention to the Affair, "J'Accuse" sparked *La Fronde*'s first reaction, as Durand chose to publish the text of Zola's letter in January 14's issue of *La Fronde*. Explaining in a preamble the choice to publish "J'Accuse," *La Fronde* writes that one needs no particular political persuasion to respect Zola's integrity and bravery, concluding, "Des femmes sont heureuses de saluer, par de temps de

²⁵ Jeanne Humphries, "The Dreyfus Affair: A Woman's Affair," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 438, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41299353.pdf>.

²⁶ Humphries, "The Dreyfus Affair," 433.

²⁷ Frederick Busi, "A Bibliographical Overview of the Dreyfus Affair," *Jewish Social Studies* 40, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 26, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4466985.pdf>.

²⁸ Historian Frederick Busi writes that the Dreyfus affair only "inflamed public opinion after Emile Zola published his sensational open letter" and "forced his opponents' hand by a masterful stroke of journalism." Busi, "A Bibliographical Overview," 27.

²⁹ Emile Zola, "J'Accuse," *La Fronde* (Paris), January 14, 1898, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703156j/f1.item.r=la+fronde>.

³⁰ Zola ends with the wish, "Qu'on ose donc me traduire en cour d'assises et que l'enquete ait lieu au grand jour!" Zola, "J'Accuse," 2.

veulerie et de lâcheté, un acte de courage morale."³¹ On January 15, *La Fronde* published a letter from Mme. Lucie Dreyfus,³² which marks the beginning of *La Fronde*'s Dreyfusardism. By the time of Dreyfus' second trial in Rennes August of 1899, *La Fronde* publicly supported his cause,³³ which gave reporter Jeanne Brémontier access to both the trial and to Lucie Dreyfus herself. The Rennes trial lasted from August 5 to September 8, and throughout this time and for a week after, *La Fronde*'s staff, led by news reporter Jeanne Brémontier and columnist Séverine,³⁴ published detailed reports for their audience in Paris of daily proceedings and individuals' speeches that required judicial knowledge as much as writing skills. On September 10, while Brémontier offers a thorough narrative of the day's events and Dreyfus' second conviction, Marguerite Durand wrote an editorial expressing the difference between the verdict's intent and its effect, saying, "dans leur triste mentalité ils ont cru condamner un homme: par esprit de corps, pour sauver les généraux--c'est le divorce de la France pensant et du militarisme qu'ils ont prononcé."³⁵ Her editorial, entitled "Désespérance," proclaims of the court, "Ils n'ont pas su voir, ils n'ont pas su comprendre."³⁶ *La Fronde*'s coverage of Dreyfus' trial in Rennes was extensive, respected, and Dreyfusard.

Séverine's writing—both the daily column "Notes d'une frondeuse" and her standalone articles—reveals not only the well-studied connection *La Fronde* found between republican values and its own feminism but also the importance of traditional femininity to *La Fronde*'s progressivism, which she both uses and embraces. Her September 1 article, "Pipelets!," provides

³¹ *La Fronde* staff, "J'Accuse," 1.

³² Lucie Dreyfus, "Lettre de Madame A. Dreyfus a M. Cavaignac," *La Fronde* (Paris), January 15, 1898, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703157z.item.r=la+fronde>.

³³ Beyond the newspaper itself, Mary Louise Roberts notes that "the domestic and foreign press alike had noticed the flowers sent by *La Fronde* to Madame Dreyfus." Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 107.

³⁴ Marguerite Durand joined later during the trial. Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 108.

³⁵ Marguerite Durand, "Désespérance," *La Fronde* (Paris), September 10, 1899, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703760h/fl.item.r=la+fronde.zoom>.

³⁶ Durand, "Désespérance," 1.

her most explicit stance on the Dreyfus affair, as she writes, “En mon âme et conscience, de toutes mes faibles forces, de toute l'énergie de ma sincérité, je crois Alfred Dreyfus innocent!”³⁷ Describing anti-Dreyfusards in August 14's “Le Byzantinisme du Général Mercier,” Séverine criticizes, “ainsi ce ne sont point des adversaires qui se sont montrés le plus empressés à venir ici, aux sources mêmes, chercher la précision et l'exactitude du fait. Je le regrette.”³⁸ Even in the early days of the trial, she writes that her greatest wish for “tous ceux que l'on a abusés, trompés, que l'on trompe et que l'on abuse encore” is that they attend the trial in order to, “comme Saint Thomas,” see and to touch the misreported truths of the case.³⁹ Séverine is passionate and convicted, but her writing revolves around the language of feeling which readers would be used to hearing from a woman. Language like “mes faibles forces” and asking readers to see and to touch⁴⁰ the truth demonstrates all-encompassing passion, but it also abandons the rational argument of the pro-Dreyfus evidence in favor of an emotional approach. However, Séverine intentionally validates a personal and emotional approach to the Rennes trial by celebrating it in those around her, like in September 9's “L'Adieu aux amis,” referring to her friends from the trial. She writes of their work, “Ce n'est pas le travail banal...Des regards brillent, s'embuent, s'assombrissent... des mots jaillissent, involontaires, brefs, qui tout bas révèlent des états d'esprit tumultueux.”⁴¹ For these people, she deems it “juste et galant de rendre hommage.”⁴² Although an accomplished journalist,⁴³ Séverine did not seek to persuade her audience with her understanding of the judicial process, but rather to legitimize feeling and morality, values both

³⁷ Séverine, *Vers la lumière... impressions vécues: affaire Dreyfus* (Paris, 1900), 421, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k112804z/f3.item>.

³⁸ Séverine, *Vers la lumière*, 369.

³⁹ Séverine, *Vers la lumière*, 368.

⁴⁰ Séverine, *Vers la lumière*, 365.

⁴¹ Séverine, “Notes d'une frondeuse: L'adieu aux amis,” *La Fronde* (Paris), September 9, 1899, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703759v.item.r=la+fronde>.

⁴² Séverine, “Notes d'une frondeuse: L'adieu aux amis,” 1.

⁴³ Over the course of her career, Séverine wrote over 6,000 articles and published them in over one hundred newspapers and journals. Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 133.

traditionally associated with women, as means of analysis. In her reporting on the Rennes Trial, Séverine did not revolutionize female journalism, instead using what was already expected of women in a new sphere and thus bringing it credibility.

In the same way that Séverine sought to establish legitimacy for female journalism within traditional values for women, so did *La Fronde* broadly seek to legitimize the at-times radical nature of Dreyfusardism with a traditional character: the wifely Madame Lucie Dreyfus. This way of framing support for Dreyfus began long before the Rennes trial. *La Fronde*'s first Dreyfus-related publication after their printing of "J'Accuse" appeared on January 15, 1898: a letter from Mme. Dreyfus to M. Cavaignac, the minister of war, publishing letters from her husband and declaring him "un martyr" and "un innocent" who proclaimed his innocence "héroiquement."⁴⁴ Thus, *La Fronde*'s first demonstrated support for Captain Dreyfus came through the mouth of a wife supporting her husband. On March 26, *La Fronde* printed a petition, "Appel aux femmes," urging that Madame Dreyfus "soit permis de partager l'exile de son mari."⁴⁵ The women who signed, "émues des souffrances de Mme. Dreyfus," connected their petition to "la defense des droits de la femme."⁴⁶ Although speaking in the language of feminism, "rights of women," the all-female petitioners used this language to advocate for Mme. Dreyfus' right to live with her husband, a traditional desire. By the time of the Rennes trial, it was clear that *La Fronde* either mentioned Lucie Dreyfus to elicit sympathy and understanding for her husband or did not mention her at all. The latter held true for most of the trial, as Séverine never mentioned Mme. Dreyfus in "Notes d'une frondeuse" or in her larger articles. On September 10, *La Fronde* features her reaction to her husband's second conviction. They

⁴⁴ Lucie Dreyfus, "Lettre de Madame A. Dreyfus a M. Cavaignac," *La Fronde* (Paris), January 15, 1898, 1-2, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703157z.item.r=la+fronde>.

⁴⁵ Henriette Marchal, "Appel Aux Femmes," *La Fronde* (Paris), March 26, 1898, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703230n?rk=1802584;0>.

⁴⁶ Marchal, "Appel Aux Femmes," 1.

applaud that “la vaillante jeune femme, préparée depuis quelque jours a tout évènement, a supporté son nouveau malheur avec le courage dont elle a toujours preuve,” adding that “elle a un très grand empire sur elle-même.” *La Fronde* supported Mme. Dreyfus explicitly and portrayed her positively, but each mention highlights her feminine character traits and wifely support.

Running parallel to *La Fronde*'s coverage of Dreyfus' trial at Rennes are the newspaper's regular columns. Covering daily news broadly rather than focusing on the Dreyfus Affair, the column “On dit” mentions feminism or feminist ideas a limited number of times throughout the Rennes Trial, drawing attention to causes such as women's education and international women's alliances. Two such articles surfaced within the first few days of the trial coverage. On August 5, the first day of *La Fronde*'s coverage of Dreyfus' trial in Rennes, “On dit” provides the headline “Le féminisme en Alsace-Lorraine,” which covers the University of Strasbourg becoming co-educational. Although la Dame D. Voilée concedes that “les professeurs pourtant conserveront le droit de refuser l'accès des cours aux femmes,” she still calls the university's movement toward integration “une décision extrêmement importante.”⁴⁷ A section simply entitled “Féminisme” in the August 6 issue opens with the line, “les femmes soudanaises ne sont pas oubliées par les femmes françaises,” before going on to describe the philanthropic efforts of L'alliance des femmes Orientales et Occidentales.⁴⁸ These two early articles demonstrate *La Fronde*'s comfort with and support of feminism.

Although “On dit” did not mention feminism by name again during the Rennes Trial, it continued to discuss feminist issues. On September 12, as *La Fronde*'s coverage of the Rennes trial concluded, “La reine Victoria et l'Affaire” studied the perspective of British Queen

⁴⁷ La Dame D. Voilée, “On dit: La féminisme en Alsace-Lorraine,” *La Fronde* (Paris), August 5, 1899, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703724n.item.r=la+fronde>.

⁴⁸ La Dame D. Voilée, “On dit: Féminisme,” *La Fronde* (Paris), August 6, 1899, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k67037252.item.r=la+fronde>.

Victoria, who was telegraphed immediately after Dreyfus's second conviction. "On dit" publishes Queen Victoria's response: "Je vous remercie de m'avoir fait connaître le déplorable jugement prononcé contre ce malheureux capitaine, " and declares her opinion "l'opinion du monde civilisé."⁴⁹ Voilée summarizes, "Cette opinion, hélas! est un cri de réprobation contre le peuple française."⁵⁰ As the Dreyfus Affair became a feminist affair over its course, it gave weight to the opinion of one of the most powerful women of *La Fronde's* day. "À L'Étranger," published on September 13, studied the Congrès international des orientalistes in Rome, noting that among the eight hundred attendees, "on compte bien une soixantaine de dames, la plupart femmes ou filles des professeurs, mais aussi plusieurs au titre de leurs études spéciales." The article then discusses plans for "une Exposition de l'activité de la femme," which would be "la première en ce genre." Voilée writes of this Congrès as a depiction of "la femme moderne." On September 14, Voilée covers the proceedings of la Société d'utilité publique des femmes, a conference of 150 women that boasted 14,500 francs in funding. Although the society reached no conclusion during this particular session, Voilée writes that they debated entry into the Red Cross as a way of extending these women's "utilité publique."⁵¹ These later articles represent high levels of activity by Parisian women in the public sphere, feminist actions which "On Dit" reported upon frequently and in a positive light.

That comfort celebrating the feminist only went so far; the rest of the column's coverage of women sought to represent traditional notions of womanhood rather than challenging them. Although one month later "On dit" reported on Queen Victoria's perception of the Dreyfus Affair, on August 10 it saw fit to report on another aspect of the queen: her hats. In "Les

⁴⁹ La Dame D. Voilée, "On dit: La reine Victoria et l'Affaire," *La Fronde* (Paris), September 12, 1899, 2, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703762b/f2.item.r=la+fronde>.

⁵⁰ Voilée, "On dit: La reine Victoria," 2.

⁵¹ La Dame D. Voilée, "On dit: La société des femmes," *La Fronde* (Paris), September 14, 1899, 2, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k67037645/f2.item.r=la+fronde>.

chapeaux de la reine,” Voilée criticizes, “Jadis les dames anglaises n'auraient jamais songé à porter de chapeaux en visite ou en voiture, sinon a la campagne,” conceding that at least “la forme des chapeaux de la reine n’a jamais varié.”⁵² She then describes the hat worn on a recent visit to Raghot, discussing color, fabric, feathers and style. Voilée does not mention the reason for the queen’s visit. On August 21, “Un mariage sensationnel” similarly focuses on the bride’s sartorial choices, calling her “délicieuse en sa robe de dentelle crème, avec son chapeau Louis XIII de gaze noire.”⁵³ While her husband is described as an “ardent républicain et Dreyfusard à outrance malgré ses attaches familiales,” the only other description of the bride is as “une charmante Parisienne... dont la grâce et l’élégance ont été fort remarquées.”⁵⁴ In each of these cases, Voilée highlights women’s fashion and elegance as their most noteworthy feature for her Parisian audience, a distinct difference from her articles on feminism.

Not only discussing preferred aspects of women, “On dit” also reinforces these roles in the advice it chooses to share with Parisian women. August 8’s article “Pour les ménagères” asks women to “se méfier de l’invasion américain” and to buy fish from French fishermen rather than American fishermen.⁵⁵ The word “ménagère,” and thus the article, refers specifically to housewives. On August 21, “Indices d’une femme bien faite” speaks explicitly to the importance of female beauty, classifying women’s hands and their implications for the woman’s character. According to the article, “Quand la main d'une femme est court, le poignet mince, les doigts gras et fuseles, je said que cette main est celle d'un beau corps.”⁵⁶ While “les doigts longs” indicate

⁵² La Dame D. Voilée, “On dit: Les chapeaux de la reine,” *La Fronde* (Paris), August 10, 1899, 1, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703729q.item.r=la+fronde>.

⁵³ La Dame D. Voilée, “On dit: Un mariage sensationnel,” *La Fronde* (Paris), August 21, 1899, 2, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703740r/f2.item.r=la+fronde>.

⁵⁴ Voilée, “On dit: Un mariage sensationnel,” 2.

⁵⁵ La Dame D. Voilée, “On dit: Pour les ménagères,” *La Fronde* (Paris), August 8, 1899, 3, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703727w/f3.item.r=la+fronde>.

⁵⁶ La Dame D. Voilée, “On dit: Les indices d'une femme bien faite,” *La Fronde* (Paris), August 21, 1899, 2, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703740r/f2.item.r=la+fronde>.

that "les jambes sont élégantes," "des doigts courts et peu charnus, correspondent à des formes moins heureuses."⁵⁷ An American impresario offers this advice, noting that he would never hire a woman with ugly hands for his ballet, but Voilée adds that he is "très expert dans la question donne le moyen de reconnaître les femmes bien faites," endorsing his advice on being a well-made woman.⁵⁸ On September 15, the article "Pour être belle" opens with the question, "Savez-vous ce qu'il faut pour être belle et...pour rester toujours belle?"⁵⁹ Readers are then provided with a recipe for a face wash, which promises that the face "sera belle subtile, tendre, gentille autant qu'il est possible."⁶⁰ While the recipe is quite extensive, even more jarring is the article's title itself, which points again to the value of physical beauty for women. In the same column that had championed women's causes, its author targets advice for women toward housekeeping and beauty tips. However, while surprising, this subtle trend mirrors the more intentional choices of the Rennes trials' writers regarding how to portray women, as both balance feminist progressivism with playing into traditional femininity.

Throughout Alfred Dreyfus' trial in Rennes, *La Fronde*'s reporting staff used femininity as a means of rendering its progressive Dreyfusardism palatable. Although less obvious, the same trend can be applied to general news coverage, in which Voilée interspersed feminist stories with stories highlighting women's beauty or fashion. Mary Louise Roberts argues that, in 1890s Paris, the fate of the Jew and the New Woman became "linked in the cultural imagination," as both were criticized for being "a cosmopolitan, foreign influence that threatened France's moral and national integrity."⁶¹ To earn Parisian support for its causes, Dreyfusardism

⁵⁷ Voilée, "On dit: Les indices," 2.

⁵⁸ Voilée, "On dit: Les indices," 2.

⁵⁹ La Dame D. Voilée, "On dit: Pour être belle," *La Fronde* (Paris), September 15, 1899, 2, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6703765k/f2.item.r=la+fronde>.

⁶⁰ Voilée, "On dit: Pour être belle," 2.

⁶¹ Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 13.

and feminism, *La Fronde* needed to convince its audiences of its innocuity. In this manner, Brémontier's report on Lucie Dreyfus' steadfast courage and support for her husband after the verdict hides the "heures d'angoisse"⁶² and "désespérance"⁶³ of *La Fronde*'s reporters themselves, who continue to insist that "Dreyfus, d'une voix rauque, crie encore son innocence."⁶⁴ In this way, attention to Queen Victoria's hats⁶⁵ allows Voilée to also report on her opinion of Dreyfus' reconviction.⁶⁶ Rather than a bastion of feminism, *La Fronde* represents a feminism in transition that sought to alienate none of its metropolitan audience as it pushed its causes forward.

Although "Pro Domo Nostra," the editorial advocating for women in law, concedes that "c'est la toute la loi qu'on invoquait et qu'on invoque contre nous... Ne nous illusions pas, il sera long à renverser," its author ends with a promise of hope: "tenons bon, l'avenir est au progrès."⁶⁷ Thus, with its eye toward the future, *La Fronde* published this perspective between an article on wifely dependence and another on maternal pain and morality. In fin-de-siècle Paris, represented by the era of Alfred Dreyfus' trial in Rennes, *La Fronde* chose to soften controversial ideas by simultaneously giving its audience what it expected from women: emotional and morality-based argumentation, information on traditional women's interests, and heroic portrayals of women who supported the men around them. Regardless of their findings, however, *La Fronde* definitively saw itself as a progressive newspaper with a broad and diverse audience. Wirth's theory on representation in cities describes *La Fronde*, for by creating a consistent mixed message, it could be "heard with a deference roughly proportional to the numbers" for whom it

⁶² Séverine, *Vers la lumière*, 454.

⁶³ Durand, "Désespérance," 1.

⁶⁴ Séverine, *Vers la lumière*, 458.

⁶⁵ Voilée, "On dit: Les chapeaux de la reine," 1.

⁶⁶ Voilée, "On dit : La reine Victoria et l'Affaire," 2.

⁶⁷ Duguet, "Pro Domo Nostra," 1.

spoke.⁶⁸ Although it clung to past ideals even as it pushed specific causes forward, it is clear that *La Fronde* in 1890s Paris felt comfortable declaring, “Tenons bon, l’avenir est au progrès.”⁶⁹

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⁶⁸ Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," 55.

⁶⁹ Duguet, "Pro Domo Nostra," 1.

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