

The Discursive Construction of a Restrictive Feminine Norm in the Interwar Press: A Case Study of the “Poisoner” Figure

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ABSTRACT: *This article examines how the interwar French press contributed to constructing and naturalizing a constraining feminine norm. Drawing on a textometric analysis of 17 press articles covering the Antoinette Sierrri poisoning case (1925–1926) - supplemented by coverage of the Violette Nozières affair (1933) - we show how media discourses do not merely represent female criminals but actively produce them as deviant against an implicit gender norm. Using discourse analysis tools (Mainqueneau, 1987, 2004; Amossy, 2000; Rabatel, 2008), we apply a structured coding protocol to four analytic categories (lexical fields, modalizations, topoi, argumentative structures) and identify the discursive mechanisms through which the “monstrous woman” is constructed, legitimized, and internalized. The literary counter-discourse - from Mauriac’s Thérèse Desqueyroux to the Surrealist reception of Nozières - is examined as a site of resistance to these mechanisms.*

KEYWORDS: Crime News, Discourse Analysis, Female Poisoner, Gender Norm, Interwar Press, Naturalization, Textometrics.

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Introduction

The first third of the twentieth century was a pivotal and contradictory period for women in France. While significant social transformations were underway - the gradual opening of certain public spaces, early economic emancipation, and fierce parliamentary debates over women's suffrage (the right to vote was not granted until April 1944) - deeply entrenched patriarchal structures persisted. Under the Napoleonic Code, married women remained legally subordinated to their husbands until the reform of February 18, 1938. Divorce, though legalized since 1884, was socially stigmatizing, and access to paid professions remained severely restricted. It is precisely within this tension - between formal legal progress and persistent social subjugation - that the corpus under study is situated.

The interwar press, particularly through the lens of crime news, provides a privileged observatory for normative discourses on femininity. As Cerquiglini (2022) observes, the news item "confronts us with our fears. A story that society tells itself, it is society's morbid mirror, displaying everything that disturbs (monstrosity, evil, death)" (p. 884). Yet this mirror does not merely reflect: it also constructs, frames, and circulates norms.

Our thesis is that these discourses do not merely describe deviant behaviors: they construct a norm by delimiting what is thinkable, sayable, and possible for women. At this pivotal period, women were above all objects of discourse, caught in a web of discursive determinations that constituted their horizon of existence.

Our argument unfolds in five stages. We first present the theoretical framework articulating discourse, norm, and constraint (1), before introducing the corpus and methodology (2). We then analyze the mechanisms of crime news writing and their normative logic (3), followed by the discursive construction of a feminine norm and its rhetorical devices (4), before examining the effects of identity assignment and the counter-discourses they generated (5).

1. Theoretical Framework: Discourse, Norm, and Constraint

1.1. Discourse as a Site of Social Production

Against a conception of language as a mirror of reality, discourse analysis posits that discourse *constitutes* the social as much as it expresses it. Maingueneau (1987) insists that texts are inscribed within *discursive formations* - regularities that determine what can and must be said in a given context.

This perspective, rooted in Michel Foucault, considers discourse not as a vehicle of meaning but as a device that produces effects of power. In *Les Anormaux*, Foucault (1999) demonstrates that "the monster is the exception that denounces an order" (p. 57): by naming the monster, discourse defines the norm of which this anomaly is the reverse.

Applied to the criminal press, this conception implies that each article about a female poisoner implicitly states what a woman is supposed to be (wife, mother, guardian of the home) by constructing, by contrast, the figure of what she cannot be without becoming monstrous.

1.2. Norm and Naturalization

The notion of discursive norm refers to what a community takes for granted. Amossy (2000) distinguishes the stereotype as a fixed shared representation from the *doxa* as a set of unquestioned presuppositions that underlie exchange. The norm operates precisely as an implicit given - the undiscussed background against which discourse stands out.

To make this concrete: when *Le Petit Marseillais* (April 13, 1926) opens its coverage of the Sierr poisoning case by describing Antoinette Sierr first as a "mother" and "wife" before labeling her a "female poisoner," the sequence is not incidental. The implicit logic is that her

crime is rendered more monstrous precisely because it violates a natural order. This is what Barthes (1957, pp. 235–239) calls naturalization: the transformation of what is historical and contingent into what appears natural and necessary. The claim that "women are naturally gentle" or that "their place is in the home" is thus an ideological construction that discursive repetition has rendered self-evident.

1.3. Enunciation and Positioning

Rabatel (2008) distinguishes the *locuteur* (the one who takes charge of the enunciation) from the *énonciateurs* (the voices whose positions the discourse relays or contests). This distinction is crucial for analyzing how the press constructs its effects of neutrality and authority.

The criminal press of the interwar period operates according to what Maingueneau (2004) calls an *ethos discursif* - a self-image constructed by and in discourse. The journalist (the *fait-diversier*) presents himself as an objective witness and spokesperson for public opinion. This posture legitimizes his judgments while presenting them as observations: the condemnation of a female criminal appears not as a subjective speech act but as the expression of a collective, natural truth.

2. Corpus and Methodology

2.1. Corpus Presentation

The primary corpus consists of 17 press articles covering the Antoinette Sierr poisoning case (1925–1926), drawn from six distinct titles: *La Lanterne*, *L'Action française*, *Le Rappel*, *L'Œuvre*, *Bonsoir*, *L'Écho d'Alger* (1925 group); *Le Petit Marseillais* (multiple issues), *Le Nord Maritime*, *Le Journal*, *Excelsior*, and *L'Écho de Paris* (1926 group). These sources are all accessible via the digitized archives of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Gallica) and the Retronews platform.

This primary corpus is supplemented by a secondary set of articles on the Violette Nozières affair (1933), drawn from *Détective*, *Le Petit Journal*, and *Paris-Soir* - a magazine created in 1928 by Gallimard and a key laboratory of crime news as a journalistic genre, to which figures such as Joseph Kessel and Francis Carco contributed (Chabrier & Thérenty, 2017). These sources are complemented by judicial archives and a literary corpus: *Thérèse Desqueyroux* by François Mauriac (1927) and the Surrealist collection dedicated to Violette Nozières (Breton et al., 1933), which constitutes an explicit literary counter-discourse.

2.2. Selection Criteria

Texts were selected according to three criteria. First, they concern women who were accused, tried, or convicted and raise questions about their gender identity. Second, they exhibit a heterogeneity of production contexts (national vs. regional press, daily vs. specialized magazine) enabling the identification of transversal regularities. Third, they cover multiple distinct criminal cases, which makes it possible to distinguish the singular treatment of one case from the stereotyped structures that recur across different criminal cases.

2.3. Method of Analysis

Our method is qualitative and discourse-analytical, grounded in a textometric analysis of the Sierr corpus. The analysis proceeded in three stages. *First*, a systematic close reading of all 17 articles was conducted to map the full lexical landscape of designation terms used for the accused. *Second*, a structured coding protocol was applied across four analytic categories: (a)

lexical fields - semantic categories associated with the monstrous versus the domestically feminine; (b) *modalizations* - evidentiality markers and epistemic operators that naturalize normative claims; (c) *topoi* - recurring argumentative commonplaces such as "feminine nature," fragility, and cunning; and (d) *argumentative structures* - the systematic relationship between factual description and moral evaluation. *Third*, a cross-case comparison was conducted between the Sierri and Nozières corpora to identify regularities and variations.

The textometric analysis of the Sierri corpus identified 26 distinct designation terms, with the following dominant frequencies: *la femme* (25+ occurrences), *l'accusée* (20+), *elle* (80+, the most frequent), *empoisonneuse* (15+), *mère* (15+), *monstre* (12+), and the geographic marker *de Saint-Gilles* (12+). The frequency and distribution of these terms, combined with an analysis of the binary oppositions they construct (e.g., maternité naturelle ↔ maternité contre-nature), provide the evidentiary basis for the arguments in sections 4 and 5.

3. The Grammar of the Crime News Item: *Placere* and *Movere*

3.1. A Stereotypical Narrative Mechanism

Laurent Demanze (2019) notes that Zola described the nineteenth century as "an age swept up in a fever of investigation, marked by the rise of reporting, the invention of the detective novel, the development of the social sciences, and naturalistic field research" (p. 11). It is within this context that journalists and novelists drew on crime news to comment on society.

The mass-circulation press of the interwar period seized upon criminal cases with the primary goal of selling papers. As Piazza (2023) points out, "the mass-circulation press took a daily interest in the murders that bloodied Paris and its suburbs, making them front-page news to fuel what had become a burgeoning section on criminal news" (p. 15). This dynamic had developed with *La Gazette des Tribunaux* in the nineteenth century, where news items were frequently repurposed by "cut-and-paste" journalism (Thérenty & Gonon, 2022).

The writing of the news item adheres to two Aristotelian principles. The *placere* (to please and entertain) relies on short sentences, fronted clauses, dissonance, and a lively rhythm; the "sensational" headline borrows from the conventions of the detective novel. The *movere* (to move emotionally) builds reader loyalty through suspense and plot twists. As Gonon (2011) notes, "it is precisely the creation of suspense that will then generate emotion as the reader engages with the news item" (p. 129).

3.2. The News Item between Fiction and Reality

The news item is, by its very nature, in tension between authenticity and fictionalization. Gonon (2011) identifies two significant narrative features: the first "reconstructs the story of the crime, sometimes entirely from scratch and disregarding the factual truth, to present a clear, linear narrative." The second "disrupts the social order by presenting an unknown culprit, uncertain causes, and an ongoing investigation" (p. 129).

The August 29, 1933, issue of *Le Petit Journal* illustrates this mechanism in the Nozières case: "Violette Nozières was arrested last night in a brasserie near the École Militaire. Taken to the criminal investigation department, she confessed to her horrific crime and swore she had no accomplice." The phrase *crime horrible* (literally "horrible crime" in the original French) is analytically significant: it is not a judicial finding but a pre-emptive media verdict. Linguistically, *horrible* functions as an axiological evaluative adjective (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1980) - a term that encodes a moral stance within an ostensibly factual report, performing what Barthes (1957) calls the naturalization of ideology: the contingent moral condemnation is passed off as a self-evident factual description.

Marcel Proust subtly described this ambivalence of the reader toward news stories, referring to "that abominable and voluptuous act called reading the newspaper" (Proust, 1919, p. 198). Marie-Ève Thérénty (2022) points out that the news item is published in the newspaper alongside fictional works that may themselves be criminal in nature, producing a cross-pollination between reality and fiction, between Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* and the crime sections of major daily newspapers.

4. The Construction of a Feminine Norm

4.1. Being "the Wife Of"

The construction of a feminine norm in the interwar press operates obliquely, through texts that address anomalies: by defining what the female criminal is *not*, the press delineates what a woman is supposed to be. The textometric analysis of the Sierrri corpus illustrates this with precision.

Across the 17 articles examined, the dominant designation for Antoinette Sierrri is *la femme* (25+ occurrences) - a generic gendered designation that constructs her primarily as a representative of a category ("woman") rather than as an individual. Crucially, the corpus shows a systematic co-occurrence of this designation with role-based terms: *mère* (15+ occurrences), *épouse* (6), and *mère dénaturée* (3). The sequence is revealing: she is first designated as mother and wife before being labeled as poisoner, constructing her crime as a betrayal of a natural order. *Le Petit Marseillais* (April 13, 1926) opens its article with a description of the criminal within her family environment - an opening move that assumes, as self-evident, that the woman is first and foremost a being defined by domestic relationships.

This normative assumption is already operative in the very first sentence of the serialised account. The opening of episode I of *L'Histoire d'un monstre* (*Le Petit Marseillais*, April 11, 1926) begins without preamble: «*Donc, Marie-Antoinette Sierrri et son nouveau seigneur et maître, le charretier Joseph Rossignol, s'étaient installés à Béziers.*» The phrase *seigneur et maître* ('lord and master') encodes the conjugal norm as self-evident common parlance: the journalist does not comment on the expression, does not signal it as archaic or ironic. It functions as naturalized language - the kind of formulation that, as Barthes (1957) observes, passes history off as nature. The criminal transgression of Sierrri is thereby constructed as a deviation not merely from the law, but from an order that the language itself presents as natural.

Piazza (2023) has shown how the mass-circulation press constructs archetypes that encapsulate social anxieties (p. 45). In the case of women, these figures are defined by their failure to fulfill their legitimate roles. The binary opposition identified in the Sierrri corpus - *maternité naturelle* (natural motherhood) ↔ *maternité contre-nature* (unnatural motherhood) - is not incidental: it is the ideological core around which the normative construction is organized.

4.2. Suspicion and Danger

The link between female emancipation and perceived criminal danger - while not uniform across all press titles in our corpus - emerges as a convergent pattern, particularly in the Nozières case (1933). By 1933, France had witnessed a decade of cautious social modernization: women had gained partial access to higher education, certain liberal professions, and spaces of urban sociability. Yet the Civil Code still legally subordinated wives to their husbands, and the public sphere remained heavily masculinized. Within this context, Violette Nozières's visible independence - her nocturnal social life, her sexuality, her financial autonomy - was read by the press as a form of social dangerousness.

The textometric evidence is unambiguous: *Déetective* headlines "Le monstre en jupons" [The Monster in Skirts], while *Le Petit Journal* evokes "l'Ève perverse" [the Perverse Eve]. *Paris-Soir* (September 1, 1933) declares: "As we advance in our knowledge of what one might call the psychology of Violette Nozières, the impression of dread, far from diminishing, increases. This monster in skirts had, if one can say, the candor of her vices." These designations - drawn from multiple publications - construct an implicit causal logic: female autonomy breeds crime.

This pattern is reinforced by a silencing mechanism. As Demartini (2017) notes, the press constructs a myth "by summoning figures that elevate the female criminal to the embodiment of a universal female danger," describing Violette's statements as both "abominable" and "fantastical" (p. 112). When Violette Nozières spoke of incest, multiple papers refused to believe her, interpreting her words as yet another manipulation strategy - a systematic discrediting of female speech that runs across our corpus.

4.3. Hierarchizing Behaviors

In accounts of criminal cases throughout the corpus, the victim is almost always presented as the embodiment of domestic virtues that the female criminal betrays. This contrast produces a moral judgment that precedes and informs the judicial judgment. Demartini (2017) has shown this clearly: female criminals are subjected to a double condemnation - that of the tribunal and, prior to it, that of public opinion.

These three movements - definition of legitimate roles, disqualification of deviations, hierarchization of behaviors - form a coherent system which, through its repetition across successive criminal cases, constitutes a norm whose force lies in its regularity.

5. Discursive Mechanisms of Constraint and Their Effects

5.1. Topoi and Stereotypes: The Naturalized Feminine

The first mechanism of constraint is the use of topoi - argumentative commonplaces that draw normative conclusions from implicit premises. The textometric analysis of the Sierrri corpus identifies three structurally central topoi.

The *topos of feminine nature* presupposes an essential female nature (gentle and maternal) from which the criminal has monstrously deviated. In the Sierrri corpus, this topos is anchored by the term *mère dénaturée* (3 occurrences, *Le Petit Marseillais* and others) - a designation that simultaneously invokes the norm (the "natural" mother) and marks its transgression (the mother who has gone against nature). The *topos of fragility* constructs the image of woman as a vulnerable being who, without masculine protection or a normative "guardrail," becomes dangerous: this topos is evidenced in the corpus by the term *pauvre femme*, which pathologizes the accused rather than imputing rational agency to her. The *topos of cunning* associates the feminine with dissimulation - evidenced lexically by terms like *sournoise* and by the very choice of poison as the signifying crime: an invisible, domestic, feminine weapon.

Lombroso and Ferrero (1893/2000) had described the female poisoner as corresponding to "the incarnation of the born criminal in its feminine version," employing the present tense of general truth: "female poisoners are naturally not lacking among hysterical criminals" (p. 636). Though Lombrosian criminology was contested by the 1920s, its conceptual framework - the notion of a naturally criminal female type - continued to permeate popular press representations, as evidenced by the pseudo-scientific vocabulary of degeneration found across our corpus.

This Lombrosian vocabulary does not disappear after the verdict. A 1931 article in *Détective* (June 18, n° 138) titled «Empoisonneuses» reports a visit to the Montpellier prison where Sierrri - condemned to death and subsequently reprieved - is still incarcerated five years later. The journalist describes her thus: «*Bien portante, haute en couleurs, des cheveux noirs en bataille au-dessus du front. Elle me regarda durement. Oh ! l'affreuse impression que faisait cette mégère.*» The body is offered to the reader's gaze as a legible sign of criminal nature. Pressed for an explanation, a prison informant supplies the following: «*Cette femme porte en elle l'instinct du meurtre. Ici, en prison, elle pollue les aliments des prisonnières qu'elle haït. Elle essaie de les empoisonner !*» The phrase *instinct du meurtre* is the clearest journalistic echo of Lombrosian doctrine in the entire corpus: five years after the trial, the press still reads Sierrri's criminality not as an act but as an essence - an inborn disposition that neither imprisonment nor time can alter. The discursive formation thus persists well beyond the event itself, continuing to circulate its normative logic through a popular magazine whose readership extended far beyond the Sierrri affair.

Chabrier and Thérenty (2017) have detailed the way in which *Détective* functions as "a genuine laboratory of the stereotype," where headlines, summaries, and illustrations construct stock figures that circulate throughout the press (p. 67). The figure of the female poisoner - cold, calculating, domestically menacing - is precisely such a stock figure.

5.2. Modalizations and Evidences: Saying without Asserting

The second mechanism is the use of evidentiality markers that presuppose the reader's agreement rather than soliciting it. In the Sierrri corpus, phrases such as "it is natural that," "one understands that," and "as we all know" appear systematically when the journalist draws normative conclusions from criminal behavior. These constructions pass value judgments off as descriptions and participate in what Barthes (1957) calls the naturalization of myth: the ideological presents itself as the biological.

5.3. The Erasure of the Enunciator: The Effect of Universal Evidence

Normative judgments are formulated without a subject or attributed to a vague collective subject ("opinion," "common sense") that confers universal scope on affirmations. This mechanism is particularly striking in headlines: "L'histoire d'un monstre" (*Le Nord Maritime*, April 15–17, 1926 - a three-part series that narrativizes the Sierrri case as a *feuilleton*), "Pour 30 empoisonneuses, plus de 500 victimes !" (*Détective*, 1931). Through the present tense of general truth, these formulations assert a "truth" that sustains the imaginarium surrounding so-called "deviant" women.

5.4. The Reduction of the Field of Possibilities

When the press systematically constructs female emancipation as a precursor to crime, it renders unthinkable the idea that a woman might legitimately desire a life outside the home. Criminal discourse thus functions as a warning addressed to all women - which is precisely what the etymology of *monstrum* means: not only to show but to warn.

5.5. The Figure of the Female Poisoner: Imaginarium of a Dark Flower

It is in this context that the figure of the female poisoner emerges as an archetype constructed at the confluence of the press and literature. The textometric analysis reveals that in the Sierrri corpus, the term *empoisonneuse* (15+ occurrences) systematically constructs the opposition *soin/nourriture* ↔ *poison*: the woman who should nourish is recast as the woman who poisons.

Like Circe or Medea, the female poisoner combines transgression of domestic roles with mythological resonance - a "dark flower" at the intersection of the domestic and the monstrous.

Rabosseau (2015) explains: "If there is one fantasy pursued by many novelists and feuilletonists in the nineteenth century, it is indeed that of a female criminal who would trap man in the snares of an all-powerful and dangerous femininity" (p. 109). The Sierr and Nozières cases demonstrate that this literary fantasy continued to structure journalistic representation well into the twentieth century.

5.6. Identity Assignment and Counter-Discourses: The Nozières Case and Its Literary Extensions

Even before the trial had rendered its verdict, the press had constructed Violette as a *monstrum* (Demartini, 2017, p. 78). Media discourse anticipates judicial judgment because it does not judge acts but condemns above all the nature of the one who committed them. The formula "This monster in skirts had, if one can say, the candor of her vices" (*Paris-Soir*, September 1, 1933) encapsulates this logic: the characterization of Violette is ontological, not merely juridical.

This discursive mechanism generates a dialectical response in literature - and examining this counter-discourse reveals the full stakes of the press's normative logic. François Mauriac, evoking his character Thérèse Desqueyroux (inspired by the Canaby case), declares: "I borrowed from her case the material circumstances of the poisoning, but I took only a silhouette" (Mauriac, 1927/1989, p. 133). This formula is precise: the press had constructed a normative outline - an identity assignment - which literature takes up in order to interrogate rather than reproduce.

Where media discourse fabricates a monster by suppressing psychological complexity, Mauriac's novel restores that complexity. Thérèse Desqueyroux is not monstrous by nature but suffocated by the norms of her milieu. The act of poisoning is not a sign of innate criminality but the only available language for a subjectivity denied all legitimate expression. Butler's (2005) work on gender performativity illuminates this dynamic: norms constitute subjects by hailing them. Thérèse has so thoroughly internalized the norms of her bourgeois, provincial environment that she can formulate her desires for freedom only through the criminal act. The novel thus performs a critical operation on the press's discourse: it takes the same "silhouette" - the female poisoner - and fills it with the psychological opacity that journalistic dehumanization had erased.

The closing pages of the novel offer the most precise textual illustration of this critical operation. Freed by Bernard and left alone on the boulevards of Paris, Thérèse does not confess, repent, or return to domestic order. She simply exists: she drinks a half-bottle of Pouilly, asks for cigarettes, accepts a light from a stranger, and walks at random through the city. Mauriac's prose gives her an interiority that the press had systematically denied: «*Rien ne l'intéressait que ce qui vit, que les êtres de sang et de chair*». This sentence is structurally impossible within the press's discursive framework, where the female criminal is defined precisely by her lack of legitimate desire, her deviation from natural feeling. Mauriac restores to Thérèse what the press had confiscated: a subjectivity oriented toward life, not pathology.

Mauriac's retrospective commentary deepens this reading. In his *Souvenirs retrouvés* (29th interview, pp. 214–219), he recalls having considered calling the novel «*Sainte Locuste*» - Locusta being the Roman poisoner of antiquity. The intended title is revealing: where the press constructs Thérèse's double (the female poisoner) as a monster, Mauriac's working title frames her as a potential saint, a figure «*coupée de tout, de tous les côtés, sauf du côté de Dieu, sauf du côté de l'Infini*». This is not an inversion of the press's verdict but a dissolution of its

entire categorical framework: the same act - poisoning - is removed from the register of monstrosity and relocated in a theological and psychological register where guilt and transcendence are inseparable. What the press presents as legible evidence of a criminal nature, Mauriac presents as the symptom of an absolute, inarticulate desire for freedom. The two texts thus operate on the same material - the figure of the female poisoner - but within irreconcilable semiotic systems.

This counter-discourse is not monolithic. Jean Genet (1947) draws inspiration from the Papin sisters' case for *Les Bonnes*, transforming a crime news item into a meditation on servitude and class revolt. Marguerite Duras' *L'Amante anglaise* (1967) likewise appropriates a criminal case to explore the relationship between female silence, madness, and subjectivity. More recently, Ivan Jablonka's *Laetitia* (2016) and Philippe Jaenada's *La Serpe* (2017) propose counter-investigations that restore agency to figures the press had reduced to types.

In the 1930s, the Surrealists took the most radical counter-position, describing Violette Nozières as "mythological to the fingertips" - making the female criminal a figure of absolute revolt and erotic transgression. However, this reversal, confined to an avant-garde circle, leaves intact the underlying structure of the myth it seeks to invert: the female criminal remains exceptional, mythological, outside the ordinary. What varies is the sign attributed to this exceptionality - from monstrosity (the press) to heroism (the Surrealists) - but the logic of singularization persists. Mauriac's approach is more fundamentally subversive: rather than inverting the sign, he dissolves the category.

Conclusion

The textometric analysis of 17 press articles covering the Sierré case (1925–1926), supplemented by coverage of the Nozières affair (1933), has enabled us to identify a three-stage discursive mechanism: the construction of a feminine norm by contrast with criminal deviance; the naturalization of this norm through precise rhetorical and enunciative devices; and the constraint exercised on female subjectivities through identity assignment.

These mechanisms do not operate uniformly across all press titles, and further research could profitably examine the variations between national and regional press, or between popular and specialist publications. Nevertheless, the convergent patterns identified across 26 designation terms and multiple press titles suggest that these mechanisms constituted a recognizable discursive formation in the interwar period - one that drew on the pseudo-scientific authority of Lombrosian criminology, the narrative conventions of the serialized novel, and the ideological presuppositions of patriarchal society.

Cerquiglini (2022) defined the news item as a mirror "that confronts us with our fears" and reveals "the state of a society" (p. 885). One must go further: female criminal news functions also as a matrix. It does not merely reflect the fear of the emancipated feminine: it produces it, legitimizes it, and perpetuates it.

The literary counter-discourses examined in section 5.6 demonstrate that the press's normative logic was neither seamless nor unchallenged. Yet these challenges were largely confined to elite literary circles, leaving the dominant media discourse broadly intact. The relevance of this analysis is not limited to the interwar period: the mechanisms of naturalization, enunciative erasure, and identity assignment remain detectable in contemporary media discourses about women, suggesting a continuity of the underlying discursive formation across different historical conjunctures.

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