

Introduction. The Poetics of Media Coverage of the “Conquest of the Skies”

Mélodie Simard-Houde

🔗 <http://interfas.univ-tlse2.fr/nacelles/686>

Référence électronique

Mélodie Simard-Houde, « Introduction. The Poetics of Media Coverage of the “Conquest of the Skies” », *Nacelles* [En ligne], 5 | 2018, mis en ligne le 01 décembre 2018, consulté le 21 mai 2023. URL : <http://interfas.univ-tlse2.fr/nacelles/686>

Introduction. The Poetics of Media Coverage of the “Conquest of the Skies”

Mélodie Simard-Houde

PLAN

1. A Multi-form Object of Research
2. Flight Viewed through the Lens of the History of Media Culture
3. The Press: Fertile Ground of Imaginaries
4. An Approach Based on Analysing the Poetics of the Media
5. Reflexivity and Reciprocal Invention of Flight and the Media
6. Shifting to Other Countries and Time Periods

TEXTE

- 1 The following articles are the revised proceedings of the seminar, “The Press and the Conquest of the Skies: History, Imagination, and Poetics”, held in January 2017 at the Maison de la Recherche, with the support of the *Centre d’histoire du XIX^e siècle* at the Universities Paris 4 Paris-Sorbonne and Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. The origins of this seminar and this special issue must be contextualised within the group of recent studies on the cultural history of flight.

1. A Multi-form Object of Research

- 2 The history of the early days of aviation is not a single story, but several; it can be written and has been written, since the 1990s, from various perspectives: it can be the history of the exploits, lives and accounts of pilots or mirroring that, those of the passengers’ sensorial experiences; it can be the history of technology, its failures, the experiments and progress of inventors, engineers and their teams, or that of the public, their representations and their imaginary of aeronautics. These histories have been initiated and sometimes even treated together, in an intertwined way, by recent research such as Marie Thébaud-Sorger’s on *Laérostation au temps des Lumières*¹ and,

in collaboration with Nathalie Roseau, on the “culture of flight”²; this subject has also been addressed in the work of Robert Wohl, who studied the place of aviation in certain works of Western literary and pictorial culture³; the study of this subject/this history gave rise, in the Azores (Portugal), to two international symposia held in September 2015 and September 2017, as well as a publication of the proceedings of the first of these events on aviator-writers⁴. For a complete review of recent historiography on aeronautics, we can refer to the rich introduction to the collective volume co-edited by Françoise Lucbert and Stéphane Tison; its disciplinary span extends beyond cultural history (although it occupies an important place in this work)⁵. Through the panorama of diverse studies reviewed by these authors, we can appreciate the diversity and importance of French, American and European historiography on flight since the cultural ‘turn’ of the last thirty years. This synthetic review also points to the specificity of “aviation” as a research subject, which interests scholars from different backgrounds and thus does not constitute a unified field of research. This is undoubtedly what makes this kaleidoscopic object so rich, allowing researchers to bring to aviation historiographical insights from other subjects and perspectives. Through such transdisciplinary approaches, the culture of aviation can be studied over the long term and understood at the crossroads of technological progress and the representations that shape and disseminate those advances, through networks of social actors and national spaces, or the variety of cultural media.

2. Flight Viewed through the Lens of the History of Media Culture

- 3 Indeed, cultural history has enabled us to demonstrate the shimmering diversity of representations, images and stories of flight and, more specifically (but not only) aviation within media culture. After the aerostation had embodied the technical prowess and promise of science for enlightened elites and crowds at the end of the *Ancien Régime*, a little over a century later, aviation also renewed the great story of progress and modernity in the wake of the Second Industrial Revolution. The “conquest of the air” (an expression used by aeronauts since the 19th century and then recycled at the dawn of the 20th

century to describe the nascent aviation revolution) has had a profound impact on Western media culture and its various forms, in ways that sometimes overlap and sometimes differ from those that disseminated the culture of flight at the end of the 18th century. The years 1890-1900 were also an important turning point for the media. Many of the mass media forms that covered nascent aviation were themselves emerging at the same time that the first aeroplanes are rising in the sky: the “*Belle Époque*” of aviation in France is also that of cinema⁶, advertising posters⁷, postcards⁸, the toy industry, decorative objects and fashion⁹, not to mention new forms of mass market literature (such as illustrated booklet series¹⁰) and popular genres, such as the novel of anticipation¹¹. In addition, the *motif* of flight also attracted established writers, novelists and poets alike¹². Within this panorama of media and material forms that fell in love with flight and disseminated its imaginary (sometimes triumphant and sometimes worrisome), we find the various genres and media of journalistic discourse. It is these that this special issue explores in a specific way, by inviting historians to look at the role of journalistic poetics in the construction and circulation of the imaginary about flight. “Flight” here is not limited to aviation or the pioneer era (1890-1930) (although it is central), but is understood in a broad technical and historical sense, i.e. from the first balloon flights at the end of the 18th to the most recent space exploration.

- 4 The articles here closely link the history of aviation culture to the history of journalistic media, whether written, or later audio-visual and digital, whether generalist or trade press (sports, technical, or even aeronautics). This special issue thus crosses a vast span of the culture of air flight, from the media coverage of the first hot air and hydrogen balloon flights in 1783 to the voyage of the Rosetta space probe launched in 2004. In so doing, nearly two centuries of media evolution are also covered, from the newspapers of the late *Ancien Régime* to the press of the 19th and 20th centuries, from the radio broadcasts of the 1930s to the magazines distributed on board Air France aircraft, and finally to digital media.
- 5 The choice to privilege such broad span of history was taken to set the scope of this special issue first and foremost on the history of the media. First, the long term allows us to better understand certain continuities and, second, the reconfigurations in the way the media

represented flight from the end of the *Ancien Régime* to the present day. This long time span also hinders us from focusing solely on technical breakthroughs, which we might otherwise perceive as more fundamental than they were. While being able to orient and control balloons, then the invention of motorized flight at the dawn of the 20th century, were certainly major innovations, but they must not be allowed to obscure another chronology that is more specifically media and cultural. While the imaginary of flight was reconfigured at the turn of the century as a result of these successes and changes in the media and forms of the press, it was already an object of discourse and journalistic representations at the end of the *Ancien Régime*. The evolution of aeronautical techniques was constantly monitored by the press throughout the 19th century, as mentioned in the first article of this issue, which provides a synthesis of the history of aeronautical journalism. The imaginary of flight, therefore, unfolds over the long term while being reconfigured, over decades and centuries, by the state of the media system; in other words, this imaginary is inseparable from what can be said (and in what form, and by whom), and inseparable from major events that draw the interest of a multitude of audiences in the media forms that are available at a given time.

3. The Press: Fertile Ground of Imaginaries

- 6 Thus, the question that arises is: why, out of all the possible sources, privilege the press? There are at least two reasons. First, a vast number of studies have already focused on other cultural productions, such as cinema or literature (especially that produced by well-known authors). However, the panorama of literary and cinematographic representations of aviation remains incomplete, and cannot be fully understood, due to the lack of a perspective englobing all media and their interactions. Such an approach would show how various *motifs* are formed and circulate between the variety of discursive and visual ensembles, among which the press is primordial. The second answer seems self-evident to historians of media and print culture, who knows the extent to which mass media journalism is fundamental in forming the “social imaginary¹³” of Western societies, particularly

since the 19th century. With the rise of the “newspaper civilization”¹⁴, the spread of literacy, and the rise of mass culture¹⁵, as well as the development of technology and media for reproducing images, the entire economy of representation was disrupted in one century.

7 Journalistic media, which were increasingly present in the daily lives of contemporaries, played a central role in Western societies where aviation began. These media disseminated the techniques of flight, encouraged debate, depicted the pioneers, portrayed the spectacle of crowds attentive to a new form of performance in an urban environment¹⁶, and disseminated the first aerial photographs. These media established a completely new grammar to express the social meanings of flight in keeping pace with changes in the techniques, layout, sections and content of the papers, and as new types of activities and registers of speeches were invented, such as scientific popularization, reporting or, at the very end of the 19th century, the sports press and news photography. Through its rapid production and wide distribution, the press thus became an important vector of modern myths, moulding the collective imagination. The press thus preceded literature, which shaped and fashioned stereotypes, weaving together the developing narratives of heroic lives, such as those of René Fonck, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and José Manuel Sarmiento de Beires. The various articles in the present issue by Damien Accoulon, Olivier Odaert and Isabel Morujão examine this subject while situating these narratives within the broader field of heroic representations of the aviator and aviation history. The very redundancy and the speed of the press’ production ensured its effectiveness in producing imaginaries, as did the variety of the press’ forms (newsletters, reports, interviews, portraits, columns, testimonies, popular scientific sections, and iconography). Even classified ads and readers’ letters created social ties and representations of aviation, as Claise-Lise Gaillard’s article shows, since the aviator is one of the seductive portrait types that easily fit into press interface for finding a romantic partner.

8 Here, the interest of case studies is to highlight the ability of a genre or media to reshape the representations of flight depending on its own particular requirements and means. For example, (but it is only one illustration among others) there is radio, which uses sound elements (background sound effects or sound effects and musical illustrations) to evoke the revolution of flight, and in that way sketches

out an imaginary of aviation that is specific to radio, as shown in Marine Beccarelli’s article. For this reason, it is important to examine how the forms and media of journalistic discourse, with their reiteration and renewal and their particular rhetoric, narrative constructions and poetics, determined the aeronautical imaginary; and how that imaginary differed from or, conversely, mirrored representations constructed in other spheres of contemporary discourse and culture.

4. An Approach Based on Analysing the Poetics of the Media

- 9 This approach remains largely new and is therefore a significant contribution to the history of the representations of flight. Indeed, the role and influence of the journalistic media have hardly been taken into account to date in the cultural history of aerostations, aviation and space. There are some exceptions, which should be mentioned in introducing this issue. Some historians interested in military aviation have used the press as a source to retrace the history of the “aces” of the war and their media representations. This is the case with the work of Jean-Pierre Dournel and Patrick Facon on *La Guerre aérienne illustrée*, a specialized weekly magazine founded and run by the multi-talented Jacques Mortane¹⁷, or in research by François Pernot on the French heroes of the First and Second World Wars¹⁸. However, to this history of flight that periodically plunges into the press as if it were an archive to find images and speeches, we must add the history of the poetics of flight in the media. Such a history views the press less as a source and more as a medium that determined writing characteristics and that shaped representations according to the special needs of the press and serialisation, with its possible techniques and constraints. This type of research, which has involved historians of the press and media, has been initiated in previous studies. Thierry Gervais focused, for example, on the role of editorial policy, photo reporters’ practices, and layout in the publication of aerial views in the new illustrated weeklies of the *Belle Époque*¹⁹. Benoît Lenoble analysed the specificities of the imaginary around the origins of flight constructed by the French press at the beginning of the 20th century, and compared that to representations conveyed by other actors, such as inventors, and in other discursive spheres²⁰. These

studies show this: we must shift the main focus of our research to examine the interactions between the poetics of the media and the *motif* of flight. In so doing, we can understand how the latter, by its connotations and by the imagination it engages, lends itself particularly well to the arrival of the modernity of those poetics and to the evolution of their language.

- 10 To exist, this methodological perspective needed to be founded on the history of the media and, more particularly, on the cultural and literary history of the press. This cultural history has grown considerably over the past fifteen years, following on from the work of 18th century scholars. Since then, Alain Vaillant, Marie-Ève Thériault²¹ and others have followed suit. This research uses both the methodological tools of cultural history, accustomed to working with large corpora, and literary studies, with their macroscopic and poetic approaches. The time is now ripe to revisit the history of aviation culture in this light. In order to initiate a movement (which calls for future research), this special issue brings together specialists in literary studies, the press and media culture, inviting them to examine aviation culture from within their disciplines. Moreover, we invited scholars in aviation and space history to take the opposite approach and consider their subject through the specific lens of the media. This meeting at the crossroads sheds new light on the history, imagination and poetics of the origins of flight.

5. Reflexivity and Reciprocal Intervention of Flight and the Media

- 11 Aeronautics, as can be seen, for example, when leafing through the inter-war press, occupied an important place in journalistic discourse: reports on raids and pilots regularly made the headlines, sections covered the progress of aviation, a great many journalists dedicated themselves to this subject, and many specialized periodicals were founded. As a result, and also outside this particular period, the mass of aeronautical representations in the press is immense, both repetitive and abundant. The aesthetic issues that avant-garde artists attributed to the imaginary of flight (which, at the beginning of the 20th century, for them embodied aesthetic shifts and modernity²²), were transposed into the press and were reconfigured in the process.

Another form of reflexivity replaced aesthetic meanings: aviation, as a symbol of technological progress, speed and reducing distance of the modern world, allowed media to express their own modernity and their role in communication, since both flight and media, each in their own way, reshape perceptions of space and of human relationships. In addition, the reproducibility and technical progress of the planes echoed the series of media production. The aeronautical imaginary, therefore, is inseparable from the development of mass culture. It was shaped by that culture and speaks about that culture. This imaginary activated a variety of cultural and media series: a series of aviation heroes and raids, a series of periodical issues that followed the series of aerial tests, and stereotypical images of pilots reproduced in the press as well as in journalistic writing, with its metaphors, formulas and set scenarios.

- 12 Because of the stereotypical and iterative nature of the discourse and the representations it conveys, the press was part of the formation and dissemination of a “social imaginary” of aviation, which, from one era to another, kept certain features while partially reinventing itself. This imaginary, woven of narrative scenarios, symbolic meanings, figures, metaphors and intertexts, circulated. It was appropriated by different actors, including journalists, serial writers, photographers, page editors, editors, and aviators themselves. Each of them modified that imaginary according to his or her history, aims and personal interests. For example, Jacques Mortane, in *La Guerre aérienne illustrée*, tended to blend together the features of the pre-war ace fighter pilot and the sports aviator, partly because he himself made his mark in the sports press of the 1900s, as Damien Accoulon explains. By helping establish an imaginary while adding their own touch, these producers contributed to a set of circulating representations, which had a real impact on the social world: influencing perceptions of space, time, the development and use of techniques, and the reception and the symbolic capital of airmen in areas outside of aviation (such as the dating market, the political field to which René Fonck converted, or the literary field²³). As for the latter sphere, the case of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, studied by Olivier Odaert, clearly shows the extent to which his social and symbolic prestige and media coverage supported his literary success; the two were constructed in tandem. The imaginary is indeed performative, which is what this im-

mersion in the press aims to shed light on while providing an important missing link in aeronautical representations: another way to describe the goal of this thematic issue. To do this, we needed to break away from the well-worn paths of mass published works and literature (well-studied from Bui Xuân Bào’s²⁴ dissertation fifty years ago to more recent works and articles²⁵). Instead, we wanted to highlight serial publications, periodicals, which became increasingly massive from the last third of the 19th century, and listen to radio broadcasts, even to consider media strategies in the age of social networks and digital media. In short, it was important to explore the rich media discourse on flight and to comprehend it by looking for traces of the shaping of the imaginary, rather than a detailed examination of its aesthetic qualities.

- 13 Studying the origins of flight through the prism of the press also means, in this sense, to see it as a media event, an event constructed in the media, with its actor-characters, its stereotypical narratives, its key images, its network of meaning, its particular temporality, its poetic traits. It also means thinking about how the press has, in part, worked not only to express but also to invent the “conquest of the air”, by promoting balloon and aeronautical events, sometimes even using them to ensure its own self-promotion as it did with other modern sports, such as car and bicycle racing. The beginnings of aviation provided a windfall for the major dailies that began organizing and financing competitions. From the 1900s onwards, the role of the press as mediators was more important than ever in building an aviation culture among the general public during the golden age of circulation for the daily press. Because it was a moment of aeronautical and media excitement, the first third of the 20th century is the focus of many articles in this special section. It was at the same time the era of sports aviation, of fighter pilots, of the creation and growth of the first commercial airlines, the invention of the epic of aviation, and that of a specialized mediator – the aviation journalist – who contributed to a wide range of columns and specialized periodicals. The weaving together of the worlds of aeronautics and print was thus rooted in the press. Moreover, this gave rise to new initiatives, such as the promotional periodicals created by airlines and distributed to passengers during flight, studied by Guillaume Pinson. We can see, with some irony, a kind of pendulum reversal, when commercial avi-

ation takes advantage of the printed press and integrates it into its uses, after the press had played such an important role in the development and invention of aviation.

6. Shifting to Other Countries and Time Periods

- 14 It should also be stressed that in the dissemination of this imaginary of pioneering aviation, the French press was not alone. The case of France is not singular, even though it occupies a central place in this issue. Rather, this phenomenon more broadly affected all the media of Western countries; yet this last statement is cautious and needs to be tested in the framework of a global history. The articles by Dominique Faria and António Monteiro as well as that of Isabel Morujão offer a salutary shift of perspective by showing how the Azorean and Portuguese press treated airmen in times of raid flights and the development of commercial aviation. Their studies show that some of the main *motifs* of this imaginary were shared among different geographical areas, but there were also local and national specificities, in particular issues related to history, heritage and politics.
- 15 Finally, the last four articles in this special issue – which we have chosen, on the whole, to present chronologically – have in common the building of bridges between pioneering aviation and the early 20th century on the one hand and on the other, the periods of the triumph of commercial aviation in the 1940s to 1970s, the development of fighter aircraft and then space (up to the most recent history of space in Florence Chiavassa’s paper on the media coverage of the Rosetta mission, from 1993 to 2014, which led the European Space Agency to use social networks). These new directions reveal several significant changes: as we move away from the time of dangerous raids and adventure, associated with the golden age of reporting in the 1900s to 1930s, another concept of travel emerges, presenting commercial flight as a time to take a break, as entertainment, even luxury, a new kind of “travel sitting still” for a new pool of passengers that the major airlines were acquiring. The *Air France Revue* studied by Guillaume Pinson sheds light on the changes in representations of travel and the sensitivities attributed to passengers from 1930 to 1970. Moreover, during this period, although the heroism of pilots never completely

faded, their place in the media narrative of the aviation and space epic tended to give way to machines and technology, as Dominique Faria, António Monteiro and Florence Chiavassa point out. This is a remarkable fact, insofar as a similar change (giving a predominant place to technology) also occurred in the media imaginary during the 20th century. In fact, recording by technical equipment (whether image, photograph, film, or sound) and the quest for “live” were becoming increasingly important, as they too are able to perform feats of prowess that echo the exploits of the first pilots, as Marine Becarelli shows about the radio reporting done on board aircraft. Despite these changes, the reflexive relationship between aeronautical and media imaginaries remains. This is less a coincidence and more the result of a continual process of co-construction of the representations of the media (the imaginary of the media) and the subjects that the media represents (such as flight); in treating these subjects it formats them. And that is why, studying the mediated history of flight, the authors of these articles also show how the media, while constantly scanning the heavens over time, also speak a little about themselves.

NOTES

- 1 M. Thébaud-Sorger, *L'Aérostation au temps des Lumières* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires, 2009).
- 2 N. Roseau, M. Thébaud-Sorger (eds.), *L'Emprise du vol. De l'invention à la massification: histoire d'une culture moderne* (Geneva: MétisPresses, 2013).
- 3 R. Wohl, *A Passion for Wings: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1908-1918* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); *The Spectacle of Flight: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1920-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
- 4 A. Monteiro, M. de Fátima Outeirinho, D. Faria, J. Domingues de Almeida (eds.), *Aviateurs-écrivains. Témoins de l'histoire* (Paris: Éditions Le Manuscrit, 2017).
- 5 F. Lucbert, S. Tison (eds.), *L'Imaginaire de l'aviation pionnière. Contribution à l'histoire des représentations de la conquête aérienne, 1903-1927* (Rennes: Presses universitaires, 2016).

- 6 P. Gourdin, 'Image de l'aviateur dans les films français de l'entre-deux-guerres', *Guerres et conflits (xix^e-xxi^e siècle)*. *Actualité de la recherche et de l'édition en histoire*, 2012 [online] <http://guerres-et-conflits.over-blog.com/article-l-aviation-de-l-entre-deux-guerres-98011514.html>, accessed 13th Nov. 2018.
- 7 G. Hartmann, F. Leloup-Perier, *Affiches de l'histoire de l'aviation* (Paris: Citadelles et Mazenod, 2009).
- 8 G. de Syon, 'La grande nouvelle aérienne. Passion et peur de l'aviation au travers de la carte postale (1890-1914)', in N. Roseau, M. Thébaud-Sorger (eds.), *L'Emprise du vol. De l'invention à la massification...* op. cit. 89-102.
- 9 P. Ory, *La Légende des airs: images et objets de l'aviation* (Paris: Hoëbeke, 1991).
- 10 M. Simard-Houde, 'Voyages dans l'espace et avions électriques: l'imaginaire aéronautique comme figuration de l'écriture sous contraintes dans le roman d'anticipation en fascicules' in V. Stiénon, M. Letourneux (eds.), *COn-TEXTES: L'Anticipation dans les discours médiatiques et sociaux*, n° 21, 2018 [online journal], <https://journals.openedition.org/contextes/6629>, accessed 13th Nov. 2018.
- 11 R. Wohl, 'War in the Air', *A Passion for Wings...* op. cit. 69-94.
- 12 In addition to research on famous authors who wrote about aviation (such as Joseph Kessel, Henri Bordeaux and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry), see A. Montandon, *La Plume et le Ballon* (Paris: Éditions Orizons, 2014): he locates the origin of the poetics of flight to the aerostat (balloons) starting in the 18th century; although somewhat dated, see also the exhaustive doctoral thesis by X. Bào Bùì, *Naissance d'un héroïsme nouveau dans les lettres françaises de l'entre-deux-guerres, aviation et littérature* (Paris: A. Dubin, 1961); as well as the articles in A. Monteiro, M. de Fátima Outeirinho, D. Faria, J. Domingues de Almeida (eds.), *Aviateurs-écrivains. Témoins de l'histoire...* op. cit.
- 13 For more about this concept, which refers to an historical, collective imaginary formed from large repertoires of representations, which establish society and are also established by it, see the recent works in cultural history. A. Gagnon, *La Communauté du dehors: imaginaire social et crimes célèbres au Québec xix^e-xx^e siècles* (Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2016); D. Kalifa, *Les Bas-fonds. Histoire d'un imaginaire* (Paris: Seuil, 2013); P. Popovic, *La Mélancolie des Misérables. Essai de sociocritique* (Montreal: Le Quartanier, 2013); G. Pinson, *Histoire et fiction du journal au xix^e siècle* (Paris:

Classiques Garnier, 2012); M. Simard-Houde, *Le Reporter et ses fictions. Poétique historique d'un imaginaire* (Limoges: Presses universitaires, 2017). See also the proceedings from the conference 'Le Concept d'imaginaire social: nouvelles avenues et nouveaux défis', organised by Alex Gagnon and Sylvano Santini, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, 14-16 September 2017 [online] <http://oic.uqam.ca/fr/evenements/le-concept-dimaginaire-social-nouvelles-avenues-et-nouveaux-defis>, accessed 13 Nov. 2018.

14 D. Kalifa, P. Régnier, M-E. Thérenty, A. Vaillant (eds.), *La Civilisation du journal. Histoire culturelle et littéraire de la presse française au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2011).

15 Historians date this to the 19th century, although with some variations. I should highlight the turning point toward the low-cost daily paper, which occurred in 1863 in France (with the *Petit Journal*), and a few decades earlier in the United States.

16 This latter point is brilliantly analysed in M. Thébaud-Sorger, *L'Aérostation au temps des Lumières... op. cit.*

17 J-P. Dournel, 'L'Image de l'aviateur français en 1914-1918. Une étude du milieu des aviateurs d'après la revue 'La guerre aérienne illustrée', *Revue historique des armées* (nr. 4, 1975), 59-83; P. Facon, 'L'Image des aviateurs à travers l'œuvre de Jacques Mortane', *Revue historique des armées* (nr. 183, June 1991), 93-102.

18 F. Pernot, 'Le destin médiatique des chevaliers du ciel, de Georges Guynemer à Tanguy et Laverdure', *Douleurs, souffrances et peines: figures du héros populaires et médiatiques*, *L'Ull Critic* (Lleida: Éditions de la Universitat, 2003, nr. 8), 181-193; 'L'Image de l'aviateur dans la presse française 1940-1944: la recherche d'un modèle', *Revue historique des armées* (nr. 2, 1993), 85-95.

19 T. Gervais, 'Un basculement du regard. Les débuts de la photographie aérienne, 1855-1914', *Études photographiques*, n° 9, May 2001 [online] <http://etudesphotographiques.revues.org/916>, accessed 13 Nov. 2018; 'L'Exploit mis en page, la médiatisation de la conquête de l'air à la Belle Époque' in M. Poivert (ed.), *L'Événement, les images comme acteurs de l'histoire* (Paris: Hazan, 2007), 60-83.

20 B. Lenoble, 'L'Aéroplane et le ballon vus par le journal. Technique aérienne et imaginaire médiatique en France, de 1906 au début des années vingt', *Hypothèses* (Paris, vol. I, n° 1, 2006), 209-220.

21 M-È. Thérenty, A. Vaillant, 1836, *l'an I de l'ère médiatique* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2001).

22 In fact, the motif of the airplane, which was part of the new aesthetic language and the exploration of forms of breaks with traditional codes, was employed by cubist and futurist painting and free-verse poetry. The metaphor for flight thus became a symbol of the shift in art toward the abstract. For European examples of this use, see R. Wohl, ‘Painters Take Flight’, in *A Passion for Wings... op. cit.* 157-200.

23 On the performativity of the social imaginary, see the works cited in note 13, as well as the conclusion to this issue.

24 X. Bào Bù, *Naissance d'un héroïsme nouveau... op. cit.*

25 See note 12.

AUTEUR

Mélodie Simard-Houde

Chercheure associée au RIRRA-21 Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier

3melodie.houde@gmail.com