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D.L.L. Parry and Pierre Girard, *France Since 1800*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. xii + 277 pp. Maps, figures, list of abbreviations, tables, suggestions for further reading, and index. \$19.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 0-19-925229-7.

Review by Michelle K. Rhoades, Wabash College.

France Since 1800, by D.L.L. Parry and Pierre Girard, is not a work of original research, but an introductory text in modern French history. Written in an approachable, almost chatty style, it is a good choice for the casual reader wishing to augment his or her understanding of French history. Professionals searching for a new textbook for course adoption should be aware, however, that while *France Since 1800* may have some advantages, the authors' incorporation of social, cultural, and gender history is limited.

Parry and Girard have clearly considered the needs of the casual reader or entry-level student and the book's format reflects this. Chapters use topical headers, include clearly-marked conclusions, and begin with a brief summary of previously-introduced materials. Some may find this structure useful for directing students to issues or passages, while students will find the format, list of abbreviations, and easy-to-read chronology helpful study aids. The book includes six chapters which are arranged chronologically. "The new regime: 1800-1824" includes a brief discussion of the French Revolution followed by the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte; "Charles X to Marshal MacMahon: 1824-1877," focuses on economic growth and social change; and "Republic, state, and nation confront the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: 1877-1914" addresses support for republican politics and political solidarity. "The Stranglehold of the Great Patriotic War: 1914-1926" continues the previous chapter's focus on politics and, as one would expect, the final chapters cover the aftermath of war, Vichy, and the French Fifth Republic.

While the work is in a highly accessible format, those considering using it in the classroom should be aware that the emphasis in the text is primarily on economic and political history. When the authors do incorporate recent work in social, cultural, and gender history, they are less than successful. For example, in their discussion of social change and women during the nineteenth century, Parry and Girard explain that nineteenth-century women's work was difficult and underpaid. True enough, but the authors also add that "many women became full or part-time prostitutes..." and while one or two may have mixed with the elite, "...tens of thousands succumbed to venereal diseases" (p. 36). With little context to clarify, this portion of the book seems likely to leave students believing that nineteenth-century French women, while primarily working wives or mothers, more often than not became prostitutes. In addition, more recent periods of French history that experienced intense social and cultural activity are poorly presented by the authors. The student involvement in the May 1968 strikes and riots is hardly mentioned, even though Parry and Girard carefully discuss France's rapid economic growth during the early 1960s and detail the results of the recession that began in 1974 (pp. 232-233).

It is firmly in the realm of French political and economic history that Parry and Girard are most adept. Their presentation of the fall of Charles X is particularly clear, especially when the authors ask readers to consider if his fall from power was inevitable. When addressing this question, Parry and Girard use the opportunity to emphasize the heritage of the revolutionary period in French politics. Political instability, as they put it, “menaced every regime down to and including the Fifth Republic” (p. 54). This theme of political instability is one that the authors revisit as they describe France’s role in the European Union and address the success (and failure) of Jean-Marie Le Pen in the 2002 presidential elections (p. 256).

In their effort to contribute a textbook that links France’s past and present in an accessible style, Parry and Girard have succeeded. However, *France Since 1800* is a limited success because of its poor presentation of social history and misleading presentation of women’s history. Granted, in 261 pages, it is impossible to include everything that one might like. Still, those wishing to offer students a text that effectively integrates France’s cultural, social, and gender history, along with the political and economic, will have to look elsewhere.

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