

Anthony Copley — *Sexual Moralities in France, 1780-1980. New Ideas on the Family, Divorce and Homosexuality*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. Pp. xi, 283.

Anthony Copley's *Sexual Moralities in France* is an historical study of the libertarian value of personal autonomy, and its concomitant, guilt, in sexual morality. From the late eighteenth century to the present, Copley traces changing French attitudes towards sexuality by splitting the focus between divorce and homosexuality. The double focus arises from Michel Foucault's argument in *The History of Sexuality* that social regulation of sexuality shifted from kinship to the body itself. Accordingly, Copley suggests that as divorce became more accepted, the interest in, and repression of, homosexuality increased. The pivotal period of the study is the *fin de siècle* when, after a hiatus of sixty-eight years, France reinstated divorce, and when, for the first time, homosexuality became a major topic of debate.

Framing the narrative are brief investigations of four French thinkers whom Copley identifies as key to understanding the development in France of libertarian attitudes towards sexuality, especially toward homosexuality: the Marquis de Sade, Charles Fourier, André Gide and Daniel Guérin. Of them, only Sade and Gide are well known for their explorations of sexuality and guilt. Copley demonstrates, however, that Fourier's original contributions deserve wider recognition. He shows Fourier's direct influence upon Alfred Narquet, who introduced the divorce legislation in 1884, and on Guérin. Of the four, Guérin is the odd man out. Although he wrote on sexuality (*Kinsey et la sexualité*, published in 1955, for example), Guérin is best known, to historians at any rate, as an historian of popular politics. Copley draws most of his insights into Guérin's moral stance from interviews rather than from Guérin's published work. To what extent Guérin influenced or reflected French attitudes toward sexuality is not entirely clear. His place in the book is as counterweight to Sade, to mark the definitive fall of guilt, still central to Gide, and the ultimate triumph of libertarian autonomy.

Copley's book is thoroughly engaging and well-written, with many fascinating portraits and provocative insights. Its strongest section is the juncture of the twin topics in the *fin de siècle* with the Narquet divorce law in 1884 and the debate on homosexuality at the turn of the century. Within the larger framework of the argument, one would expect the libertarian views which would eventually triumph after World War II to emerge at this point. Instead, as Copley demonstrates, the discourses surrounding divorce and homosexuality were rarely cast in libertarian terms. Key issues in the divorce debate were social welfare, especially the birth rate, the prevention of adultery and illegitimacy. The discourse of both advocates and opponents of divorce was about guilt and innocence, fault and punishment. Divorce was not positioned as a positive liberty, but as an escape from an intolerable situation, created by the fault of the guilty party. Arguments from feminist advocates of divorce as well as from Catholic opponents subordinated self-fulfilment to family, society and polity. Copley shows that although divorce has been a major item on the libertarian agenda, its attainment does not invariably indicate an upsurge in libertarian attitudes. Consequently, it is no surprise to discover that when the debate over homosexuality arose a decade later, it similarly focused on social responsibilities rather than on personal rights. The main thrust, as developed in both medico-legal and psychiatric discourse, was to distinguish between innate homosexuality, therefore legally irresponsible and medically incurable, and an acquired "perversity" which society had the duty to

eradicate through punishment or treatment. The shift in attitudes toward homosexuality from crime to illness did not constitute a libertarian victory.

The idea of looking at attitudes toward divorce and homosexuality as measures of the strength or weakness of libertarian views presents such interesting and valuable perspectives, but it also poses many serious problems. The main one is that, although attitudes towards divorce and homosexuality waft within the same moral climate, the sectors largely differ. Copley's main interest is not simply libertarian attitudes, but libertarian attitudes toward sexuality. For this, homosexuality is right on target, but divorce is in left field. The book makes increasingly clear, despite Copley's repeated claims to the contrary, that the discussion of divorce rarely touched on sexuality. Instead, the context of the arguments were marriage, family, children, attitudes towards women, femininity and the gender division of labor. Not until after World War II did sexual liberation figure at all prominently in attitudes towards divorce. As a result, until the book reaches its penultimate chapter, the discussion of divorce and homosexuality stands apart with little to say to one another. One wonders why Copley chose divorce as his topic when adultery would seem a much more productive entrée.

A second failing is the lack of discussion of gender. Here is fertile soil into which both homosexuality and divorce sink roots. The categorization of homosexuals by sexual practice and the denigration of passive homosexuality (and Guérin's later attempts to undo this stigma) betray how fundamental attitudes toward masculinity and femininity are to sexual morality. But the problematic of gender is an issue with which libertarian philosophy does not deal particularly well. Libertarianism presupposes an autonomous self to which gender is irrelevant. In fact, as numerous feminist philosophers have pointed out (see Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (1983), for example), this self is not gender-free, it is male. Femaleness, with its portent of pregnancy, childbirth and lactation, is deficient in autonomy. Copley does not attempt to tackle this issue and seems almost unaware of it although he does acknowledge in the epilogue that childhood may be "too awkward" for libertarianism (229). But the consequences of its omission are obvious. Sexuality in this book, particularly homosexuality, is male, as are all of the moralists examined; their perspectives, with the equivocal exception of Fourier, are relentlessly masculine.

Fourier, much to Copley's own surprise, emerges as the hero of the study. His effort to envision a society which would promise personal fulfillment to all led Fourier to balance the value of autonomy with that of community. What resulted is a humane project which, while not free of the masculine bias of his age (and of ours), nonetheless tried to take gender into account. Fourier's ideal of harmony stands in sharp contrast to the coupling of autonomy and predatory exploitation so central to Sade and still apparent in Gide and even in Guérin.

A third problem derives from the book's construction as a national case study of moral attitudes. Copley recognizes that France was not a moral world to itself and reminds readers of the influence of the British divorce law of 1857 and of the international context of French discussion of homosexuality. Nonetheless, he insists that the French case is sufficiently distinct to justify separate inquiry. This argument makes sense for divorce where the Revolution and the divorce law of 1792 shaped all subsequent argument, even the Lecanuet Law of 1975. Attitudes towards homosexuality, however, do not appear to have been shaped by any uniquely French experience, not even, despite Copley's claim, by pronatalism.

This is an odd, dare I say perverse, book. Despite its historical agenda, its concerns and context are current anxiety about the sexual morality of libertarian values. This anxiety is raised most dramatically by the AIDS epidemic, but also by the sexual abuse of children and the impoverishment of divorced mothers. In many ways, the book recounts Copley's personal journey of discovery and so it is not out of place that the epilogue includes his jottings on the Parisian gay scene in 1979. It is the product of a research for an affirmation of libertarian values in the historical record, a search which, as Copley confesses, came up troubling short.

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André Corvisier (Mélanges) — *Le soldat, la stratégie, la mort*, préface de Pierre Chaunu, publié avec le concours du Centre National des Lettres. Paris : Economica [c 1989], 491 p., index.

L'histoire militaire a connu durant les trente dernières années une évolution considérable dont le principal artisan et inspirateur a été, sans conteste, le grand historien André Corvisier. C'est à celui-ci, en effet, que l'on doit l'émergence d'une nouvelle discipline historique, l'histoire des militaires, ainsi qu'il l'a si judicieusement nommée. Des amis, des collègues et des élèves ont voulu lui rendre hommage par la publication des « Mélanges Corvisier » qui ont paru sous le titre *Le soldat, la stratégie, la mort*. Cet ouvrage constitue un complément naturel au recueil d'articles choisis de Corvisier publié en 1985 sous le titre *Les hommes, la guerre et la mort*. Parmi les moissons qui en ont résulté, on compte ces « Mélanges », qui lui font honneur, bien que ce livre soit aussi à son tour un livre de semailles, comme l'a noté Pierre Chaunu dans son hommage à « Corvisier, chef de file » (8).

On ne saurait rendre compte ici de toutes et chacune des contributions que forment les « Mélanges » tant elles sont nombreuses (34), mais ces textes ne sont pas seulement remarquables par leur quantité. Répartis sur toute la période allant du XV<sup>e</sup> au XX<sup>e</sup> siècles, ils portent sur de nombreux pays d'Europe. L'ouvrage collectif attire aussi l'attention par la multiplicité des sujets abordés et les genres historiques pratiqués. On y trouve également un texte de nature méthodologique, ouvrage du Suédois Gunnar Arteus, qui propose « un modèle ' expérimental ' pour l'étude de la professionnalisation des militaires » et qui souhaite, à juste titre, que des collègues l'adoptent dans un cadre différent de celui pour lequel il a été créé (187). On ne saurait non plus passer sous silence le plaidoyer de Jean Meyer en faveur de l'analyse coordonnée de l'histoire militaire et de l'histoire navale, trop souvent étudiées isolément l'une de l'autre, ni sa remise en question de l'historiographie française relative à la politique navale incomprise de Louis XIV. D'où la nécessité de « revoir notre manière d'aborder l'ensemble de la politique de Louis XIV, avec et après Colbert » (77). Avec ces textes, ce livre montre bien que l'histoire militaire et l'histoire des militaires sont complémentaires et ont chacune leur sens.

Dans un ouvrage publié en hommage à Corvisier, il est normal de voir les deux tiers des contributions consacrées au soldat et à sa mort plutôt qu'à la guerre elle-même. Mais que l'on se place du point de vue de ce thème ou des deux autres, le livre