

main purpose, however, is not to analyse the activities of the public at play but to interpret the significance for gender equality of postwar recreation politics. Influenced by socialist feminism and by Habermas, she closes by noting how the hegemony of the “one public” has now been challenged. At the same time, she stresses the need to recognize that aspirations for an inclusive democracy also had roots in the 1950s.

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K. Steven Vincent and Alison Klairmont-Lingo, eds. — *The Human Tradition in Modern France*. Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Press, 2000. Pp. xii, 214.

The editors of this new series have justifiably concluded that the life stories of ordinary people are among the greatest attractions of history for undergraduates. Their approach is a deliberate contrast to highly theoretical discussions or to the use of statistical models of social situations or processes. An impressive gallery of scholars furnishes narratives ranging from the era of the Revolutionary Republican Women (Pauline Léon) to Gérard Blitz and Gilbert Trigano, the founders of Club Med. Despite the valiant effort of Steven Vincent to encapsulate modern French history in a ten-page introduction and despite a highly useful bibliography, this collection, with all its inevitable gaps, cannot possibly replace a textbook. It does provide vivid, compact essays with characters as diverse as the active revolutionary, the actress, and the criminal.

Donald Reid’s subtle discussion of the intellectual odyssey of Régis Debray portrays the dilemma of maintaining “Frenchness”. A would-be guerrilla fighter and companion of Che Guevara, Régis Debray emerged as a respected advisor to François Mitterrand. As an intellectual who broke with the conventional critique of power, Debray championed the centralized Jacobin state and inveighed against American individualism, media culture, and, more jarringly, against multiculturalism and feminism. Debray seems, to borrow Joan Scott’s phrase, to have “only paradoxes to offer”.

Paul Hanson attempts to show the importance of politics for those who lived through full-scale revolution in the 1790s — a Marseille Jacobin, a Bordeaux Sephardic Jew, Pauline Léon, and the ill-fated Lyon Jacobin Joseph Chalier. Hanson pitches these vignettes to a student audience and has no space to communicate his own insights into federalism and the Girondin-Jacobin struggle. Stanley Mellon, in a more felicitous style, but without reference notes, relates the bitter family feud between the pro-Revolutionary dramatist Marie-Joseph Chénier and his ultimately counter-revolutionary brother, the poet André. Both crossed paths with the painter Jacques-Louis David, who appears as one of the most ruthless practitioners of Terror. Only David’s art apparently saved him punishment after Robespierre’s fall.

Mellon’s principals have far more flesh and blood than Steven Vincent’s two late-

nineteenth-century socialists, Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue and Benoît Malon, a founder of the French section of the First International. Vincent attempts to deal with Jacques Rancière's thesis that workers sought intellectual stimulation more than idealizing heroic labour. Lafargue, the dogmatic intellectual Marxist, recognized the right of workers to be lazy. Malon, the ex-proletarian turned reformist socialist, valued work above all. Yet Vincent never raises the question of how workers themselves responded to these divergent views.

Jonathan Beecher's account of the precious personal correspondence of M^{me} Désirée Véret Gay and Victor Considérant reveals an engaging elderly widow fondly recalling her fascination with Charles Fourier, Prosper Enfantin, and her infatuation with Considérant himself. A dressmaker and onetime associate of the feminist journalist Jeanne Deroin, M^{me} Gay personifies Rancière's thesis that workers wished to escape a humdrum existence amid dreams of egalitarian communism.

Three other articles deal with the theory and realities of women's lives. Venita Datta contextualizes the essay on marriage written in 1907 by Léon Blum. At a time of widespread disillusionment with the conventional idealized bourgeois marriage of the experienced male and the virginal female, Blum dared suggest that true equality between spouses would come by delaying marriage. He thought women should seek sexual experience and individual happiness. Clerical and conservative authors were not amused. Lenard Berlanstein discusses another variety of the emancipated woman — the actress, who bravely endured a period of harsh moralizing and social repressiveness from 1848 to 1880. He provides striking details from the long-suffering family of Virginie Déjazet and touches upon the increasing prestige for actresses by the turn of the century.

Perhaps the most provocative article on women's lives is Nina Gelbart's meticulous recounting of Charlotte Corday's assassination of Marat. Gelbart suggests Corday's act may have been a catalyst for anti-feminist agitation later in 1793 (including the targeting of Olympe de Gouges and Madame de Roland). Yet the furore over Corday could have been more a symptom of anti-feminism than a decisive element in eliciting it. Gelbart's interest seems primarily due to Corday's cold determination to transcend conventional gender roles. Gelbart comes close to suggesting the assassination was an exemplary response to perceived tyranny, though she admits it had unintended consequences (both for women and for hastening the Terror). In the end, any conceivable empathy for Charlotte Corday is a highly politicized emotion, since it reflects the degree to which Marat represents tyranny and Corday represents a justified assertion of the popular will.

The other more unsettling article in its evocation of a murderer as victim is Susan Ashley's story of the serial killer Vacher in southwestern France in 1897 and 1898. In an atmosphere of hysteria about alleged anarchism and degenerates, the medical and legal establishments seemed eager to convict him and to foreclose an insanity defence which modern scholars feel may have been legitimate. This tale seems in some ways reminiscent of Foucault on Pierre Rivière. But Ashley seems to miss the point of recent articles by Laurent Mucchielli and Marc Renneville on the chief medical expert in Vacher's case, Alexander Lacassagne. As a partisan of a modified form of biological determinism, Lacassagne's assertion of Vacher's responsibility

went beyond his usual enthusiasm for the medicalization of crime and for the theory of “irresistible impulses” of criminals.

Two articles evoke the ever timely issues of Eurocentrism and the meaning of race. Lloyd Kramer’s gemlike description of Victor Jacquemont’s travels in India from 1829 to 1832 reveals a young man bent on forging his own career as a scientist and ethnographer. Like an incarnation of Edward Said’s Orientalist, Jacquemont constantly indulged his European superiority complex in his contempt for the peoples of India and in considering the allegedly worthless religiosity and metaphysics of Indian classical literature. For Jacquemont, British dominance was salutary.

Tyler Stovall contrasts two African Americans who lived in Paris. Charles Anderson, a Foreign Legion veteran who had emigrated to France in 1884, never aroused comments on his identity. His life illustrates the real possibility of assimilation of the non-colonized Other. William Gardner Smith, a writer who interviewed the nonagenarian Anderson in 1951, was a rather more pessimistic expatriate who associated primarily with other African Americans in Paris. In the era of the Indochinese and Algerian conflicts and of decreasing tolerance for immigrants, Gardner took a far more critical view of the relationship of the French and the colonized.

Finally, Ellen Furlough investigates the new culture of leisure and of the body in her description of the founders of Club Med. In its early days it was a shoestring operation based on surplus U.S. Army tents, a culture of sarongs and spontaneity, and anti-Establishment egalitarianism. Club Med later became a tightly managed corporation comfortable with consumerism and commodified mass culture.

Despite some uneven sections, this volume maintains high scholarly standards and touches upon varied and significant themes in modern French history. Consequently, it deserves a privileged place on the recommended reading lists of colleagues in French history.

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S. M. Waddams — *Sexual Slander in Nineteenth-Century England: Defamation in the Ecclesiastical Courts, 1815–1855*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. Pp. xiii, 315.

Sexual Slander in Nineteenth-Century England explores the functions and operation of consistorial courts in regard to prosecutions for defamation — an area of law over which the courts exercised exclusive jurisdiction until 1855. The scope of defamation over which the courts exercised authority was limited: only those allegations of sexual impropriety, and more specifically sexual intercourse, were admissible, and only when the allegations did not form part of a wider defamation involving a civil-court jurisdiction. S. M. Waddams contends that the courts’ role in adjudicating cases of sexual slander endowed them with a wider importance in the regulation of social and sexual relationships — a theme which has been largely ignored by historians of law and gender in nineteenth-century England. He offers this corrective,