

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,

drawing on a range of court records, rich in detail both on the structure of the legal process and on specific cases.

Depositions before the court were written, albeit by third parties, and they form an important set of sources for this study. Without a coherent body of statute law to which they could refer, the courts' judges exercised wide discretion in the adjudication of these cases — a point which Waddams repeatedly underscores with references to wide variances in the number of cases prosecuted, periodic innovations in procedure, and at times contradictory judgements. In general, however, Waddams argues that the defamation jurisdiction provided an important avenue of legal recourse to women, who were overwhelmingly represented among plaintiffs. In part, this is because defamation of a man often could be most barbed when it impugned the chastity of his wife; in such circumstances, the wife was required to initiate proceedings as the defamed party. Waddams's exploration of this theme is thought-provoking, and, although he does not explicitly employ the theory or methods of the "linguistic turn", through this detailed exploration of defamation he undoubtedly underscores the importance of engaging language in an analysis of social regulation and the structure of nineteenth-century gender relations.

This study is structured precisely: a systematic examination of the law is followed by an exploration of the structure of the courts, including a detailed discussion of the various court officers and an effort — greatly limited, as Waddams acknowledges, by sources — to establish a profile of litigants. Sources also impose constraints on the author's efforts to understand the reasoning behind decisions, for, although other aspects of defamation litigation were unusually well documented, decisions seldom were. In the context of these limitations, Waddams seeks to outline the principal arguments upon which the defence relied, teasing out the intricacies of defamation law (by exploring, for instance, how proving the veracity of allegations could not be relied on as a defence). Within the parameters of this legal study, he offers fascinating reconstructions of cases, underlining the complex and often contradictory motives of plaintiffs and defendants and the risky practice of resorting to courts in defence of personal reputation and respectability. He notes that, with a few exceptions, this legal instrument was primarily employed by members of the lower middle classes. Although higher-status groups might have equated the loss of reputation with potentially damaging personal social and economic consequences, the courts could not order the payment of damages. Moreover, many traditional forms of punishment, including the defendant's public reiteration of the allegations, followed by an acknowledgement of their illegality (if not of their falseness), meant that, for many, these courts held out the possibility of a pyrrhic victory at best. Many courts were reluctant to hear defamation cases, and defendants were often offered the incentive of leniency to "submit", or acknowledge the slander, at an early stage in the process. Still, many cases proceeded through the lengthy, relatively costly, and involved process of litigation: for those whose motivations cannot be explained by the defence of personal interests and integrity or by a simple desire to use processes that were at their disposal, Waddams cites considerations such as family — and employer — pressure and the potentially damaging consequences of defamation on marriages and families.

This study is particularly effective in reconstructing the procedural aspects of prosecutions. At times, a wider historical context would be welcome, particularly an exploration of the debates over the legitimacy of the courts' functions, which did seem to animate the political realm. This might illuminate, for instance, the failure of an 1832 Commission to reform or abolish the courts, despite the widespread belief that many of their functions were anachronistic; it would also contribute to an assessment of the overall importance of the defamation jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts in nineteenth-century jurisprudence. A more detailed discussion of the political context of the Methyr Tydfil case, which led to the abolition of this jurisdiction in 1855, might be equally instructive: in arguing for its abolition, did opponents at the local and national levels couple their attacks on the courts with wider critiques of church establishment? What is clear is that a range of forces at work from mid-century effected a broad process of ecclesiastical court reform and removed many of the courts' wider legal functions (such as jurisdiction over matrimonial cases and the probate of wills).

In making his case for the study of these courts and defamation cases, Waddams cites the more frequently studied matrimonial cases and contends that their comparatively small number does not diminish their centrality to an understanding of the legal regulation of marriage and family in the nineteenth century. Although he does demonstrate their singularity in the legal context, the case for these courts assuming a similar importance in British legal history is perhaps more open to debate. Waddams's study, overall, is a welcome one — notable for its thorough exploitation of sources and its thoughtful and systematic analysis.

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