

that is usable in this material. Those who teach courses that contain a generous helping of English political ideas (political theory, Tudor and Stuart England, etc.) will find the essays both challenging and beneficial, although some of the ideas are too specific for these classes as well. While certainly not for the general reader, the books are essential for any library with good history and political science holdings.

Anyone who teaches a graduate seminar on the Tudor or Stuart period can expect that students with strong British history backgrounds will find the essays very thought provoking, and the ideas developed should generate considerable discussion. But, please remember, impecunious graduate students will not appreciate being asked to buy a book that costs \$59.95.

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Arlette Farge. *Fragile Lives: Violence, Power, and Solidarity in Eighteenth-Century Paris*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. Pp. 314. Cloth \$49.95; paper, \$17.95.

As Director of Research in Modern History at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris and already the author of three other books on various aspects of Early Modern French social history, Arlette Farge offers a study of eighteenth-century Parisian behavioral patterns. As the author reminds the reader frequently, her monograph is not based on memoirs, chronicles, treatises, or novels, but exclusively on the judicial archives of the eighteenth century.

Fragile Lives contains fascinating information, some of which is useful as supplemental readings for advanced undergraduate classes and as a source for an instructor's lectures. The chapter "Invitations to the Crowds" offers a subtle yet graphic assessment of the role of punishment within eighteenth-century society that will capture the attention of student audiences. Here Farge gives an insightful analysis of why signs, rituals, and symbols were so important in capital punishment. "Girls for Marrying" and "Seduced and Abandoned" are two chapters that offer information, not available elsewhere, for potential lectures. Farge provides thoughtful assessments of the relationship between parents and children. She confirms the generally accepted assumptions about the inequity of sexes before the laws and customs of eighteenth-century society, particularly in concubinage where daughters and/or wives were imprisoned on demands by the family or husbands whereas sons and/or husbands usually escaped the wrath of law or society. The sections on life within workshops could be valuable, but it will require placing some of the sophisticated ideas within the proper historical context.

Fragile Lives does not follow the usual *Annales* School pattern of quantifying the bits and pieces garnered from the archives and interpreting them through a mass of charts, tables, and graphs. Clear prose should therefore be the means that makes archival material come alive. In spite of the book jacket claim that this book is "elegantly written and skillfully translated," the reader must struggle too many times through obfuscated prose. Such sentences as "it is of these encounters that I have attempted a considered account" or "Three gent's [sic] handkerchiefs have apparently gone missing . . ." appear too frequently. A work based on such detailed research and filled with illuminating conclusions deserves a wider audience than this book will ever have.

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