



Disorder in the Court: Trials and Sexual Conflict at the Turn of the Century

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At the turn of the century, a spate of sensational trials kept French and English readers spellbound and ignited bitter tugs of war over marriage and divorce laws, women's rights, temperance, gay prostitution, and lesbian literature.

The chapters in **Disorder in the Court** each focus on a specific high-profile trial, and the public debates surrounding it, in order to address the role of the state in regulating sexual morality. The authors draw on police archives, records of coroners' inquests, magistrates' courts, and news coverage to bring to life social conflicts sparked by differing ideologies of class, gender, and sexuality. Also explored is the role of the police and 'scientific' methods of criminology in an era when working class marital conflicts were resolved by an axe blow, unwanted middle class spouses were dispatched with an arsenic diet, and government agents scanned sensational novels or loitered in Paris urinals in search of vice.

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