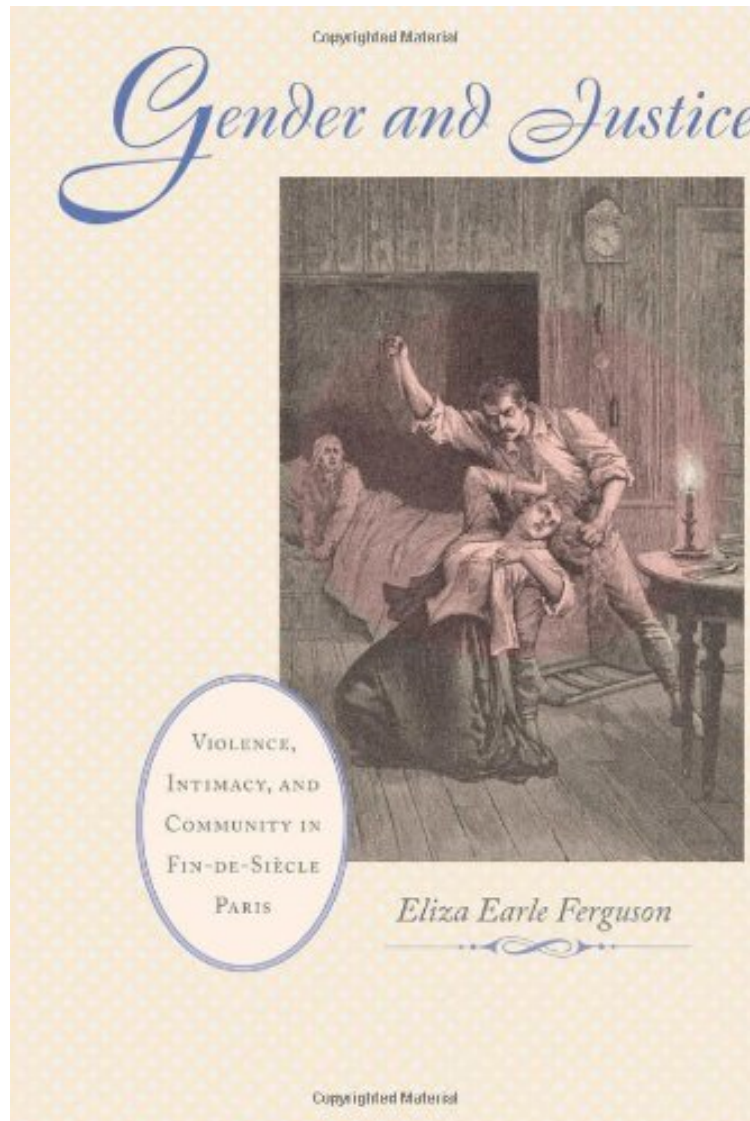


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## Gender and Justice: Violence, Intimacy, and Community in Fin-de-Sicle Paris (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science)

*Eliza Earle Ferguson*

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**Eliza Earle Ferguson : Gender and Justice: Violence, Intimacy, and Community in Fin-de-Sicle Paris (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gender and Justice: Violence, Intimacy, and Community in

Fin-de-Sicle Paris (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An excellent and innovative study  
By Nikopol  
Numerous scholars have typically approached the "crime of passion" through the influential works of historians like Ruth Harris and Ann Louise Shapiro. These scholars employed a largely Foucauldian critique to demonstrate the central role of medical discourses and melodramatic narratives in structuring how such crimes were perceived by the reading public and, most importantly, the juries that often acquitted perpetrators if "love" seemed to be the dominant force beyond their violent deeds. Without disputing the important insights into the construction of crime that Harris, Shapiro, and others have offered, Ferguson takes issue with the acquittals themselves, which she claims refer to entirely different factors. While her book is technically "about" these crimes, Ferguson uses the ample testimony contained in these dossiers to gain access to the intimate lives of working Parisians with a level of detail rarely offered by social historians. The project as a whole is highly successful and fascinating, and makes an excellent contribution to the social history of gender relations. Ordinarily I am a little suspicious of the glowing endorsements one reads on the dust jackets of books, but in this case one can safely believe the hype. *Gender and Justice* is indeed a most impressive work that breaks new ground both in methodology and interpretation. By combining the more "discourse" oriented scholarship on gender with a social historian's eye for detail, Ferguson has produced a landmark book on the "crime of passion" as well as key work in the history of French domestic violence generally. Her book is also compulsively readable, engaging the reader's attention from the outset and making it quite suitable for classroom use were it to appear in paperback. Highly recommended.

Historian Eliza Earle Ferguson's meticulously researched study of domestic violence among the working class in France uncovers the intimate details of daily life and the complex workings of court proceedings in fin-de-sicle Paris. With detective-like methods, Ferguson pores through hundreds of court records to understand why so many perpetrators of violent crime were fully acquitted. She finds that court verdicts depended on community standards for violence between couples. Her search uncovers voluminous testimony from witnesses, defendants, and victims documenting the conflicts and connections among men and women who struggled to balance love, desire, and economic need in their relationships. Ferguson's detailed analysis of these cases enables her to reconstruct the social, cultural, and legal conditions in which they took place. Her ethnographic approach offers unprecedented insight into the daily lives of nineteenth-century Parisians, revealing how they chose their partners, what they fought about, and what drove them to violence. In their battles over money and sex, couples were in effect testing, stretching, and enforcing gender roles. *Gender and Justice* will interest social and legal historians for its explanation of how the working class of fin-de-sicle Paris went about their lives and navigated the judicial system. Gender studies scholars will find Ferguson's analysis of the construction of gender particularly trenchant.

"Careful and beautifully written study." (Robert A. Nye *The Journal of Law and History*) "Eliza Ferguson's meticulous reading of 264 dossiers of the Assize Courts in the Archives of Paris has yielded a fascinating and engagingly written pointillist picture of the intimate lives of the Parisian popular classes. *Gender and Justice* reveals significant details of love, sex, betrayal, failed expectations, dishonor, violence and retributive justice that comprised working people's daily lives. Ferguson places her keen insights into their intimate lives within the broader context of gender relations, the family economy, and the community culture of late nineteenth-century Paris." (Rachel G. Fuchs, author of *Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France*) "Gender and Justice is original not just in its analysis of crimes of passion, but in the way it uses the assize court records to glean and synthesize extensive information about daily life." (Elinor Accampo, author of *Blessed Motherhood, Bitter Fruit: Nelly Roussel and the Politics of Female Pain in Third Republic France*) "Drawing on more than 250 cases of Parisian domestic violence, Eliza Ferguson takes a revealing new look at the fin-de-sicle crime passionelle. By carefully analyzing the testimonies of witnesses in these cases, Ferguson provides us with a fascinating, vivid window on working-class community and gender relations." (Mary Louise Roberts, University of Wisconsin, Madison) "[An] innovative study. This book is indispensable to scholars working in legal and social history, gender studies, and the history of modern France." (Holly Grout) "An eloquent account of the everyday lives of the Parisian popular classes, the vibrancy of their neighborhoods, and how violence permeated their domestic arrangements... Ferguson's book is ambitious, thoughtful, and smart." (Elisa Camiscioli H-France) About the Author Eliza Earle Ferguson is an assistant professor of history at the University of New Mexico.