

Likewise, he cannot possibly know the ultimate fate of Isaac Anderson and Frank Patrick, who were sentenced to be hanged for their part in the failed rebellion of 1800, yet he confidently writes: “In the usual way, the bodies remained on the gibbets for some days ... being eaten by the hyenas” (p. 382). There was no “usual way” for hangings in Sierra Leone, because no one had ever been executed before, and no evidence is presented that the executions even took place at all. Furthermore, there were no hyenas in Sierra Leone in 1800. Schama is simply making it up.

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SMITH, Jay M. — *Nobility Reimagined: The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth-Century France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005. Pp. 307.

In his rich and stimulating study based on the reading of a variety of eighteenth-century publications, Jay M. Smith argues that “analysis of the meanings of honor, virtue, and patriotism” reveals contemporary attitudes toward the French nobility and thus provides a means of understanding “the initial conflicts and the long-term origins of the French Revolution” (p. 16). Underlying all debate on these concepts was the fascination with the ancient republics of Greece and Rome and the widely shared understanding that these societies had flourished because of the virtuous conduct of their citizens, who placed the well-being of the *patrie* above their own self-interest. Smith demonstrates that increasing concern throughout the century regarding the persistence of monarchical despotism, the character of a nobility debased by luxury and recently ennobled officeholders, and the declining military fortunes of France encouraged publicists to look to the ancient world with its reliance on virtue, and the patriotism associated with it, for models of reform. Convinced that only the nobility could serve as the agent of monarchical reform and moral regeneration in France, these writers insisted that the second estate must possess the same desirable characteristics as those associated with the citizens in those ancient republics.

Beginning with Fénelon, a number of publicists had written that the virtue of the ancients must be developed within the French nobility if monarchical despotism were to be destroyed. As Smith reveals, even the appearance of Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* in 1749, which had insisted that honour, not virtue, was the guiding principle in monarchies and implied that republican values were incompatible with monarchy, did little to dampen the enthusiasm for associating the attributes of classical republicanism with the French nobility. The abbé Coyer claimed that the nobility’s entrance into commerce would, in Smith’s words, result in the merging of “the values of honor and virtue in a patriotic mix” (p. 116). In response, the chevalier d’Arc insisted that commerce, with its penchant for luxury, and virtue were incompatible and that virtuous noble conduct required selfless dedication to military service. The military debacle of the Seven Year’s War focused even more attention on the role of the nobility, now responsible for reversing France’s military fortunes. Authors emphasized the necessity of replacing the nobility’s attraction to luxury,

vanity, and money with a commitment to military service and a love for the *patrie*. A number of publications suggested variants of classical republican equality by insisting that commoners displaying the military attributes of virtue and patriotism be honoured and ennobled. However, other writers asserted that the attributes of military leadership could only be found among those with long, noble pedigrees.

In Smith's analysis the importance of this eighteenth-century literature dealing with noble honour, virtue, and patriotism lies in its influence on the origins of the French Revolution. Specifically, he is interested in explaining "the rapidly deteriorating image" of the nobility after September 1788 when the order had so recently been associated with the patriotic defence of the nation against the despotism of the royal ministers (p. 227). According to Smith, the explanation of this phenomenon lies in "the network of ideas" within which events took shape, and he is convinced that "the broad rhetorical continuities" between post-1750 patriotic publications and the pre-revolutionary pamphlet literature demonstrated to contemporaries the necessity of redefining "privilege and social distinction in light of the supposed requirements of a patriotic morality" (pp. 226–228). However, the insistence of the Parlement of Paris on organizing the Estates General in the 1614 form signalled noble refusal to redefine privilege along patriotic lines, which in turn led to the attacks by the third estate on noble privilege. Smith then proceeds to analyse various pre-revolutionary publications to demonstrate the continuities he describes.

Smith's emphasis on "the network of ideas" or the "ideational context" of events leads him to analyse ideas regarding noble patriotism within a very general political context, while dealing only superficially with the ideological contests that Keith Baker, Dale Van Kley, and others have demonstrated played such an important role in the late 1780s (p. 226). However, minimizing the importance of the ideological basis of these pre-revolutionary pamphlets, and the active participation of the ministry and the patriot party in their publication, ultimately distorts their meaning. An excellent illustration of such a distortion can be found in Smith's analysis of the Parisian lawyer Target's pamphlets on the Estates General, produced as part of the publication campaign of the Society of Thirty in 1788. According to Smith, Target's pamphlets, which favoured the maintenance of noble honour but opposed pecuniary privilege, demonstrated that "privilege could finally be eliminated and equality and honor could happily coexist" (p. 230). Target had in fact written these pamphlets specifically to convince the members of the Second Assembly of Notables that accepting a doubling of the third estate in the Estates General would not lead to an attack on all noble privilege. Target may have utilized language from the literature of noble honour and patriotism, but he was ever conscious of shaping it in a manner to achieve a specific political end: the creation of an alliance between the nobility and the third estate designed to challenge ministerial authority. To demonstrate more concretely that such an alliance would not end all noble privilege, Target drafted a model *cahier* in early 1789, to which Smith makes no reference, that specifically preserved the nobility's seigneurial rights. Thus Smith implies that Target was motivated by the eighteenth-century ideas associated with noble honour when in fact he was simply massaging this concept to achieve his political objective.

Nobility Reimagined does not make a convincing argument that the network of

ideas surrounding noble honour and patriotism was at the heart of the conflict between the nobility and the third estate in 1788. However, this argument is confined primarily to one chapter, and the remainder of the book provides valuable analysis of the extensive literature on the eighteenth-century intellectual conceptualization of the French nobility and its role in the moral regeneration of France. In addition, Smith has considerably expanded our understanding of the attraction that the ideals of classical republicanism held for eighteenth-century social critics, as well as broadening our understanding of patriotism as it was understood during the old regime. Finally, *Nobility Reimagined* reveals much on the general origins of revolutionary language regarding patriotism, virtue, and military service, marking the study as an important contribution to current interpretations of the era.

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TENTLER, Leslie Woodcock — *Catholics and Contraception: An American History*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004. Pp. 335.

Many historians of the United States in the twentieth century take the fact that the Roman Catholic Church opposed the birth control movement as a truism that needs no investigation or explanation. Leslie Woodcock Tentler's meticulously researched new book should certainly encourage those historians to take another look — not at the notion that the institutional church opposed birth control, but that such a stance was simple and uncontested. Tentler takes readers inside the American Catholic community, allowing them to examine the perspectives of both the clergy and the laity as they struggled with the demands of Catholic moral teaching on marriage and family throughout the twentieth century. Hence Tentler's exhaustive research includes source material from pastoral literature (homilies, manuals, and confessor's guides), Catholic lay publications, and extensive interviews with 56 priests, all of which allow her to tell a story that comes as close as possible to revealing how the clergy and laity experienced the Church's teaching. This struggle eventually led to an irreparable crisis of authority in the Church that continues to this day. In doing this work, Tentler measurably contributes to well-established literatures on the history of reproductive politics and the growing literatures that address Catholic social and intellectual history.

Tentler begins her investigation of the Catholic encounter with the birth control issue with a discussion of pastoral practices. During these early years, from the last quarter of the nineteenth century through the end of World War I, Catholic mission preachers delivered a confident message about contraception in their instruction to married Catholics. While these visitors to American parishes tackled difficult subjects, parochial clergy rarely addressed contraception from the pulpit or in the confessional. By the 1920s, the tide had turned on public reticence about contraception, and increasingly a number of Catholic clergy, press, and laity mobilized to articulate a stance against the use and legalization of birth control, even as many lay persons