

exception, students of this period will be hard-pressed not to find at least a passing reference to their favorite revolutionary. As an additional benefit to the reader, Ponder includes a full text of *Common Sense* in the appendix.

As the lines of communication between disciplines open, expect to see a good deal of crossover melding otherwise distinct disciplines. In this regard, Ponder is ahead of his time and provides a wonderful example of how interesting and engaging good interdisciplinary scholarship can be.

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Lessons from America: Liberal French Nobles in Exile, 1793–1798. By DOINA PASCA HARSANYI. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010. 216 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$80.)

According to Doina Pasca Harsanyi, it was not easy being a liberal French noble in the age of the French Revolution. Bred to think of themselves as the vanguard of enlightened reform, these patricians took a central role in the abolition of feudalism and the creation of the constitution of 1791. Yet as the tide of revolution moved forward, these same nobles found themselves characterized by Jacobins as neo-foreign, obstructionist “aristocrats” (15). As a result, a number of them migrated to the United States (via the United Kingdom), where they ruminated on various features of their temporary home as well as on the possibility of returning to France and redeeming the political reform they helped initiate.

Most of the liberal nobles’ meditations took place in social gatherings modeled on Parisian salons, and Harsanyi focuses on the cohort that gathered in Moreau de Saint-Méry’s Philadelphia bookstore. Unlike thousands of contemporaneous Saint Dominguan refugees, who organized themselves along the lines of previously established trade networks, this group “was formed of individuals whose principal common bond was” the fact that they “had all been part of the Patriot faction at the Constituent Assembly and all had moved from the left to the center in the face of Jacobin intransigence” (56). This particular political orientation helped shape the exiles’ response to American society. More specifically, while French liberal nobles sympathized with Americans’ tolerant attitude toward religion and speech, they feared social disorder and lamented the absence of an enlightened elite not preoccupied with money. Disdain for supposedly widespread American vulgarity endeared individuals like Talleyrand and the Duc de Liancourt to Federalists, who likewise prioritized “a self-selected elite” and polite society (85). But in the end, French liberal exiles resisted drawing close to followers of George Washington because they could not abide harsh criticism of the French Revolution; “they were too connected with the Revolution to allow it to be scorned” (85).

The sense of alienation experienced by liberal nobles influenced their business ventures and travels in the United States. In terms of the former, the “noble ethos held sway . . . and they understood social utility not as productive work but as the duty to provide the masses with enlightened ideas and models of behavior, even at the expense of success in a new line of activity” (114). In terms of the latter, the “émigrés of Moreau’s circle took up traveling more to help pass the time than to educate themselves on the state of the republic” (68). Considering this less than fully invested approach to their activities in the United States, it is no wonder that the exiles returned to France as soon as they were “persuaded that social and political conditions had become compatible with their way of thinking” (106).

This short review fails to capture many of the nuanced insights put forth by Harsanyi. She is particularly adept at explaining the ways in which her subjects supported equality before the law, but not egalitarianism. Indeed, Harsanyi writes, members of Moreau’s coterie were liberty-loving “liberals, not democrats,” and their efforts to oppose both “popular democracy and monarchical absolutism” anticipated Tocqueville (20, 111). By providing the fullest, smartest, and most judicious account of French liberal nobles in the United States, Harsanyi has written a book that will be of keen interest to scholars of the French Revolution, the early American republic, the Atlantic world, and the development of modern political ideologies.

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Tom Paine’s America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic. By SETH COTLAR. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011. 264 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$35.)

How much economic inequality can a republic accommodate before turning into an oligarchy? How can the people exercise their sovereignty between elections? Should political allegiances be tied to the nation or reach beyond to all mankind? These were some of the questions raised during the 1790s by democratic printers, newspaper editors, and booksellers and their audience of poor-to-middling laborers and farmers. Inspired by the French Revolution and the English and Irish reform movements, they sought to reopen debate on basic principles of governance that many believed had been settled by the ratification of the federal Constitution. Seth Cotlar’s rich, spirited, and provocative account expands the intellectual history of the 1790s in two directions: across the Atlantic and down the socioeconomic ladder.

While several recent books have examined the international dimensions of early American politics, they have focused mainly on members of the political