

impowered to access the mind and interpret the final thoughts of a dead king.

Thomas M. Lennon. *Sacrifice and Self-Interest in Seventeenth-Century France: Quietism, Jansenism, and Cartesianism*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 304. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xvii + 300 pp. \$139.00. Review by ELISSA CUTTER, GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY.

Thomas Lennon's *Sacrifice and Self-Interest in Seventeenth-Century France* makes a welcome contribution to the growing corpus of English-language scholarship on the religious history and spirituality of seventeenth-century France. His focus is on the debate over the "pure love" of God and its role in the moral theology and spirituality of the period. This topic is framed as a debate between two seventeenth-century movements—both ultimately deemed heretical—Jansenism and Quietism. Lennon, however, approaches this topic from the perspective of philosophy, though he does admit the debate was "philosophically rather inconsequential" (xi). In this, Lennon makes a connection between these two religious movements and a third intellectual movement of seventeenth-century France, Cartesianism. Lennon thus identifies, in the prologue, Cartesians as supplying "the conceptual terms of the debate," namely the idea of the will as expressed in René Descartes's philosophy, while the Jansenists were antagonists and the Quietists protagonists (x). In some ways, this book serves as an apology for Descartes and the misuse of his ideas by others. Importantly, this approach illustrates the way in which the disciplines of philosophy and theology blend together and interact with each other in this period of French intellectual history. In all this, Lennon's goal is to make the history of this debate and its significance more well known among English-language readership, and he succeeds in meeting that goal.

The first chapter examines the foundational idea of pure love, especially by setting the debate in the historical, political, and religious context of seventeenth-century France. As Lennon explains, many at the time in France "were concerned that their love of God be of the right sort, that it not be merely self-serving" (2). Here, he introduces

the “Impossible Supposition,” a test of one’s pure love. This theoretical debate was over whether one could love God so purely that one’s own salvation or damnation would no longer matter. This chapter also traces relevant concepts back to Augustine, whose thought was particularly influential in this period of French history. The second chapter then goes more into the philosophical details raised by the Impossible Supposition, while the third chapter traces the development of this idea in relation to the history of Quietism through major figures and debates in the controversy. An important topic addressed in this chapter is the controversy over the sufficiency of attrition vs. contrition in confessing sins and its connection to the debate over pure love.

Chapter four begins Lennon’s analysis of the philosophical concepts, focusing on freedom, spontaneity, and indifference. He sets up the two opposing philosophical perspectives here: the Molinist-Quietist perspective on one side and the Jansenist perspective on the other, examining the thought of Descartes in relation to both. Chapter five focuses on the Jansenist side, examining Jansenius’s *Augustinus* both in terms of its intellectual history and its positions on grace and free will, as contrasted with the Molinist positions. Chapter six then continues the discussion of the understanding of the will, looking at Descartes’s position. As Lennon notes, this chapter “takes a non-libertarian stance on Descartes” (147), while also aiming to set out the way Descartes is relevant for the debate over Quietism. In chapter seven, Lennon introduces other thinkers into the debate—focusing particularly, but not exclusively, on a lesser-known debate that took place between Nicolas Malebranche and François Lamy. This chapter reintroduces the topic of love, providing an overview of the ways love of self was talked about in the seventeenth century (*amour propre* vs. *amour de soi*) and then using Malebranche and this debate to connect it to his main philosophical focus, namely the will.

Chapter eight turns to the role of Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet. Given the framework that Lennon sets up between Jansenism and Quietism in the controversy over pure love, he identifies Bossuet as a Jansenist—a debated identification for this figure. He introduces this attribution in the prologue, claiming that “if the overall argument of the book is correct, then the principal opponent of Quietism, Bossuet, should be a Jansenist” (xvi, see also 203). So, this chapter, while recognizing

all the problems involved in identifying *anyone* as a Jansenist in this period of French history, looks at the reception of Bossuet's ideas and the way they are presented in scholarship, before turning to Bossuet and his historical context to respond to this query. Lennon looks at Bossuet's writings on the will and in other theological controversies in which Jansenist authors were involved. Lennon's conclusion is that Bossuet shared some views with the Jansenists—especially related to grace and free will—but ultimately submitted himself to all the official declarations of the church on the topic and, in some ways, it's that submission that leads him to be categorized as “Jansenizing” and not fully Jansenist.

Chapter nine, “The Dénouement,” describes the effects of the controversy on the major parties involved. Lennon discusses Descartes, Jansenius (by which he really means Jansenism since Jansenius was long dead by this point), and Fénelon, through which he examines the way the controversy became more clearly Quietist vs. Jansenist. Chapter ten provides a conclusion, summarizing and analyzing the key ideas of pride and pure love, self-interest and selflessness, both in terms of Quietism and their relevance for broader intellectual history. The text is followed by a helpful chronology and two useful appendices: the five condemned Jansenist propositions from *Cum occasione* (1653) and the twenty-three condemned Quietist propositions from *Cum alias* (1699).

Although this book raises a lot of ideas that are worth pondering about the pure love debate in seventeenth-century France, this reader was disappointed by the author's refusal to include in a substantial manner the writings of Jeanne Guyon, who was at the center of the controversy. He describes her writings, like those of Francis de Sales, as “mainly devotional” (xii), and therefore not including sufficient philosophical reflection. He does talk about both of these figures in the third chapter that traces the history of Quietism but does not engage with their ideas in the same depth as some of the other figures in the controversy. As Lennon explains, “[Guyon's] works certainly make for fascinating reading if one has interests rather different from those here” (65). This choice reflects a deeper problem in the history of philosophy and theology of the lack of sufficient attention paid to women's writings because they are not in the same systematic style used by male

authors. The work of John Conley on women as philosophers in this same period of history—and in the Jansenist controversy—shows how women wrote about the same philosophical concepts as men (see Conley, *Adoration and Annihilation: The Convent Philosophy of Port Royal*, Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2009). In the case of the Quietist controversy, ignoring Guyon's work gives an incomplete picture of the historical debate. Lennon does recognize the artificiality of the distinction between spirituality and theology; for pure love, Lennon asserts that this concept cannot be fully, or only, understood as a spiritual concept, separated from the theological concepts of grace and free will. However, as is often common with the writings of female authors, he places Guyon's writings firmly in the category of spirituality and thus not of interest for theology or philosophy.

Another problematic aspect of this text is a lack of sufficient distinction, in places, about theological issues that have relevance for Lennon's analysis of this debate. Of course, Lennon makes a point early in the text to argue for the philosophical—not just theological—significance of this debate, putting his work in the category of philosophy more than theology. However, at times his analysis of theological ideas makes use of secondary sources that do not fully distinguish between teachings of different denominations of Christianity. Lennon identifies this conflict as an “intramural event among Cartesians” (16), but this debate was an intra-Catholic debate, and one in which the participants would have all been concerned to maintain their Catholicity. That framework needs to be kept in mind in the analysis of seventeenth-century French religious history. This issue is related also to the way Lennon presents his analysis of secondary sources related to the themes of the debate. In another place, Lennon shifts from an analysis of the theological virtue of hope in the debate over the *Augustinus* and Quietism, to an analysis of the way the idea is discussed in an article about pure love, published in 1980, without much distinction between the historical debate and the modern analysis. From a historical perspective, more careful attention to contextualizing the ideas being analyzed would have been helpful.

In spite of these critiques, however, this book is an excellent contribution to the growing corpus of English-language scholarship on religion in seventeenth-century France and would be of interest to specialists in the religious and intellectual history of that period.