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Strength in Numbers: Population, Reproduction, and Power in Eighteenth-Century France (Hardback)

By Carol Blum

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS, United States, 2002. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In the eighteenth century France became convinced it was losing population. While not technically true (France was merely failing to gain population as rapidly as Great Britain and the German states), the public's belief in a national fertility crisis had far-reaching consequences. In *Strength in Numbers: Population, Reproduction, and Power in Eighteenth-Century France*, Carol Blum shows how intellectuals used natalism as a means of criticizing the monarchy and the Church in their pursuit of social change. In addition to the arguments over celibacy, divorce, and polygamy, other, more radical, proposals were put forward to free potentially fruitful male desire from the tedious ties of European matrimony. The question of whether sexual violence was a crime or rather an imperative of nature was passionately debated, as was the abolition of the incest taboo. Descriptions of exotic locales where uninhibited natives were alleged to copulate freely and procreate abundantly became a popular literary genre of erotic fantasy, made respectable by a framework of natalist discourse. The wish to reject the Church's moral guidance and return to the laws of nature led philosophers such as...



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