

and do not do justice to the rest of this large, admirable book.

Hufton's approach is panoramic and sweeping: a large brush applied to a Rubenesque canvas surveying many countries over many centuries. She locates women, particularly ordinary women, within the generations of poverty, plague, and epidemic. She views them vis-à-vis the entrapment of the female body ("the female body was colder [than the male's] and wetter and her sex organs were internal rather than external", p. 40) rather than as self-reflecting subjective selves, let alone as cognizant patients being treated by particular doctors. To coin a Greek analogy, she surveys the Phoenician women rather than Antigone or Alcestis or Sappho. Her women are primarily peasants rather than aristocrats, and her view of medicine privileges the universal trend rather than the aberrant case or individual prognosis. Hufton demonstrates what the early modern female condition was: what it then felt like to be a woman (*any* woman) rather than the individualized female response. Her conceptual categories are health and the body rather than doctors and patients, or medicine as a field of knowledge, a laudable aim given her desire to chronicle the European global female predicament rather than comment on the local facts of women's medical history. But this emphasis should not indicate any slackness in her scholarship which does not refrain from telling us—for example—about Kaspar Hofman's commentaries on Galen's *De usu partium corporis* or Cesare Cremonini's discussion of Aristotle's theories of sex difference.

If there is weakness in this approach it lies in the elucidation of *patients* who are not yet significant categories on this canvas because so little is known about their individual responses, or neglect of the new methodology of patient-doctor relations, overlooked because there is less extant narrative in the Renaissance than one would hope. A project like this documents again the need for a *medical* history of women despite the recent proliferating "histories".

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Alexander Monro (*Primus*), *The professor's daughter: an essay on female conduct*, transcribed, with introduction and notes by P A G Monro MD, *Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, January 1996, vol. 26, no. 1, Supplement No. 2, pp. xi, 237, illus., £7.50 (incl. postage), orders to Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 9 Queen St, Edinburgh EH2 1JQ.

Alexander Monro (*Primus*) (1697–1767) was the first of a dynasty of brilliant anatomists who dominated the subject at the University of Edinburgh from 1720 to 1846. One of the chief architects of its medical school, and a founder of such institutions as the first modern hospital, the Philosophical Society (later the Royal Society of Edinburgh), and the Select Society (along with David Hume and Adam Smith), Munro not only helped to make Edinburgh Europe's foremost centre of medical education, he was also a fully-fledged member of the Scottish Enlightenment.

P A G Monro (also an anatomist), traces the origins of this conduct book for women to his ancestor's lesser known private life and his role as companion and teacher to his three sons and daughter. Margaret, "the professor's daughter", received an education from her father and from her brothers' tutors, which, though not equal to that of the men, far exceeded that of most female contemporaries. The *Essay* consists of a series of letters written by Monro to Margaret, probably when she was between twelve and nineteen years old (1739–46), and designed to provide her with a special, compensatory education. In part to develop her writing skills, Margaret had to copy the letters and have them corrected and amended by her father.

Monro's essay includes not only traditional topics such as female education and conduct, relations with men before and after marriage, domestic duties and religion, but also an introduction to politics. The author portrayed himself, quite plausibly, as a fond, indulgent father; a friendly critic in matters intellectual and a trustworthy confidant in affairs of the

heart. Margaret was not left in doubt about the risks, benefits and responsibilities of the rational, male education she was receiving. Her learning was to be of purely private benefit. She was warned not to pursue her academic interests to the detriment of those domestic duties for which nature had providentially formed her, or to reveal the extent of her learning to female friends or “ignorant foplings”. Revelation invited the stigma attached to the character of female virtuosi or pedants.

Like other contemporary experts on female conduct, Monro promoted the traditional virtues of a passive and amiable character. He seems aware, however, of the physical and psychological risks of female subjugation. One even suspects that he at times viewed his daughter’s prospective lot in life as something like the proverbial dirty job that someone had to do. There are strong words on the value of female courage and the importance of independent judgement. He placed a high value on the freedom to choose who, or even whether, to marry and he promised his daughter that the income from her inheritance would make it unnecessary that financial considerations should play any role in these decisions. Like one famous predecessor in this genre, Sir George Savile (Lord Halifax), Monro also depicts a version of the worst possible scenario—a colourful gallery of such debauched and profligate potential suitors as the “whore-master”, “gallant”, “drunkard” and “gamester”, whom any prudent woman must immediately reject. After reading his harrowing account of the snares and pitfalls of courtship and marriage, one is relieved to discover that Margaret avoided all of these as well as the less venal, “ninnies” and “frothy coxcombs”. She married at the age of thirty, a respectable judge, nine years her senior.

P A G Monro’s edition of *Primus’s Essay* is a welcome addition to the literature on women’s conduct in the eighteenth century. His Introduction and discussion of the manuscript’s provenance are both interesting and helpful. Printed for the first time, the work is a valuable source of information about the nature of this

genre in Scotland before the publication of Rousseau’s *Emile*. As a species of the sub-genre, “women’s conduct books written by medical men”, it raises questions about the physician’s evident assumption of general expertise on women and about the possible role this played in their subsequent usurpation of women’s medicine.

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**David J Rothman, Steve Marcus, Stephanie A Kiceluk** (eds), *Medicine and western civilization*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1995, pp. xiii, 442, \$50.00 (hardback 0–8135–2189–0), \$22.95 (paperback 0–8135–2190–4).

**William G Rothstein** (ed.), *Readings in American health care: current issues in socio-historical perspective*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1995, pp. xiv, 412, £44.95, (hardback 0–299–14530–1); £16.00 (paperback 0–299–14534–4).

After reading these two volumes during the summer vacation, I arrived at the unavoidable conclusion that these are not books suitable for summer vacation reading. Unless, that is, one is evaluating classroom reading for next term. Both of these volumes are designed for use as textbooks.

Rothman *et al.* present a grand design in their opening introduction to *Medicine and western civilization*: they will illustrate and illuminate “the many ways in which medicine and culture combine to shape our values and traditions” (p. 1). (Presumably the “our” reflects back on the western civilization restriction of the title, and excludes readers from, say, Africa or Indonesia.) The authors call for recognition of the inextricable web connecting medicine and culture, and propose a set of readings appropriate for the teacher of a history of medicine course which will demonstrate this relationship. They are particularly intrigued with “the history of the body”. Accordingly, there are sections on the