

regarding medical opinion and procedure. Yet, even here, Doms is hesitant to draw any clear conclusions, and simply acknowledges the difficulties in determining the focus (for example, treatments themselves or the persons and/or professions offering them) of satirical attacks. Nevertheless, while unable to make absolute judgements concerning Grimmelshausen's evaluation of Galenism, Paracelsianism, and learned medicine, it is clear that he regarded a balance of humours and attention to the six non-naturals as fundamental to health. His characters also reveal a mistrust of iatromagic and sometimes relate Paracelsian approaches to avarice and deceit. Most interesting are the instances in Grimmelshausen's stories in which health and illness are related to a person's moral situation. This pertains as much to the treatment of one's own body as to the relation between the physician and the sick. Anabaptists, for instance, reach a more advanced age because their moral commitments help shape a healthy body. Given the varieties of causes of illness, including miasmas, contagions, an imbalance of humours, immoderation as well as divine affliction, Grimmelshausen seems to have concluded that diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy required a lot from the physician making healing as much a disciplinary as an ethical challenge.

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A W Bates, *Emblematic monsters: unnatural conceptions and deformed births in early modern Europe*, *Clio Medica* 77, Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2005, pp. 334, illus, €68.00, \$85.00 (hardback 90-420-1862-3).

In this engaging book, Alan W Bates surveys monstrous births in Europe between 1500 and 1700. The book has two central arguments. First, based on internal evidence and modern knowledge of birth defects, Bates argues that the accounts of monstrous births in early modern broadsheets, sermons, tracts, and learned journals describe real cases and that their

authors strove to be as accurate as possible. Second, these monstrous births were interpreted in the framework of the emblem tradition that was all the rage in early modern Europe. In turning monstrous births into emblems, early modern Europeans interpreted them as signs or portents. They did not invent monsters to make a point, but they believed that God did so.

Bates's first chapter sets out parallels between emblems and accounts of monsters. The second addresses the popular literature on monsters, such as broadsheets, ballads, and chapbooks, while noting that these works also appealed to elite audiences. The third addresses how monsters were treated in learned works, including "wonder books", as well as medical and natural philosophical treatises; the fourth chapter discusses accounts in late-seventeenth-century scientific journals. In the fifth chapter Bates examines early modern theories of how monsters were formed, while in the sixth he addresses the life-cycle of monstrous humans, including those, such as conjoined twins, who might survive and even prosper. The seventh chapter compares early modern descriptions with modern birth defects to demonstrate that the former are medically plausible accounts of real individuals.

The strength of this book is in the later chapters, when Bates brings his medical expertise to bear. Aware of the dangers of retrospective diagnosis, he makes a convincing case that the deformities described in broadsheet, learned treatise, and journal correspond to known types of birth defect: that descriptions of a child with a cat's or rabbit's face, for instance, far from being fanciful, refer to a cleft lip. The frequency of types of conjoined twins in early modern accounts corresponds with modern clinical observations. An appendix provides a lengthy (though not exhaustive) list of documented monstrous births in Europe from 1500 to 1700, and hazards retrospective diagnoses. By following monsters from cradle to grave (and even to anatomical preparation), Bates reminds us that they were subjects, sometimes long-lived, as well as objects to be described and interpreted.

The emblematic interpretation of monsters is less convincing. An emblem combines an apothegm, an illustration, and an epigram to convey a moral precept in more or less concealed form. Emblems were concrete expressions of poetic imagery; self-referential, their meaning could be puzzled out by comparing the three elements. Monstrous births, on the other hand, were signs, not images. Whether interpreted as divine punishments, as portents of disaster, or as the product of natural causes (interpretations that were not mutually exclusive), monsters pointed outward, not inward. Bates makes too much of the formal resemblance between emblems and printed broadsheets announcing monsters; the headlines on the latter scarcely correspond to the apothegms or mottos on the former. At the same time he downplays the semantic differences between them. The late seventeenth-century anatomical preparations of Frederik Ruysch are the clearest instance of an emblematic setting of monstrous births—but they come at the very end of Bates's story.

A few other claims go beyond the evidence. Bates contrasts Protestant accounts of monsters as wonders and signs, with Catholic writers who treated them as the product of natural causes. But Bates's Protestants are sixteenth-century writers of wonder books, while the Catholics he considers in depth are medical authors, largely from the seventeenth century. Chronology and genre must explain some of the difference; moreover, sixteenth-century Protestants insisted that God produced signs by natural means, not miracles. Bates suggests that printing contributed to the popularity of both emblems and monster descriptions, but the first emblem book was published over eighty years after printing was invented. And in two different chapters, Bates argues against Martha Ornstein's 1938 claim that early modern universities contributed little to scientific developments—a claim that was long ago laid to rest by more recent scholars. The cautious reader can learn much from this book but only if its broader claims are weighed judiciously.

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Kathleen P Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World Series, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, pp. x, 268, illus., £50.00, \$100.00 (hardback 978-0-7546-5609-8).

Hermaphrodites fascinated early modern scholars, poets and physicians, yet few studies have taken a broad view of their place in Renaissance culture. This book promises an interdisciplinary approach: updated versions of four of Kathleen Long's previous articles and new chapters on hermaphrodites in Renaissance France (despite the title, the rest of Europe is mentioned only in passing) explore early modern thinking on sex and gender, through diverse accounts of "the ultimate sexual dissidents" (p. 243).

The first three chapters, on the "scientific" and medical works of Ambroise Paré, Caspar Bauhin and Jacques Duval, focus on the difficulties of accommodating the hermaphroditic body within a "two sex" system, where it was forced to fit, as science did not admit "a more complex continuity of nuanced genders" (p. 55). While medical writers struggled with ambiguity, others celebrated it: chapters four and five consider the hermetic androgyne, the alchemical rebis sacrificed and reborn in the works of Paracelsus and Clovis Hestean de Nuysement, where the hermaphrodite is a symbol of hope, a theme further explored in lyric poetry from the court of Henri III. Contrasting hermaphroditic imagery from poems and pamphlets satirizing Henri as a royal hermaphrodite is then used to link ambiguous sexuality and hermaphroditism, and a concluding chapter on Thomas Artus's novel *L'Isle des hermaphrodites* summarizes the protean symbolism of the hermaphrodite in turbulent times.

Long effectively conveys the ambiguity of hermaphrodites through a sort of Zen-like paradox—the hermaphrodite is "not identical to itself" (p. 4) and all speech about it is necessarily a lie (p. 234)—though this device is less happily employed in textual analysis, for example when Artus's language of hermaphrodites is described as "at once a richly abundant and inventive self-supplement, and a sort of annihilating anti-supplement" (p. 233).