

the triumph of rationality. The possibilities of chemical transmutation still had a hold on Enlightenment thinkers, just as Principe's volume shows that they do for scholars today. *Chymists and chymistry* is a nicely produced conference proceedings and a significant addition to the history of chemistry.

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Eve Keller, *Generating bodies and gendered selves: the rhetoric of reproduction in early modern England*, In Vivo: The Cultural Mediations of Biomedical Science, Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 2007, pp. xi, 248, £17.99, \$30.00 (paperback 978-0-295-98641-8).

The western, liberal, individualized, interiorized, and normatively masculine self was assembled during the mid-sixteenth to early-eighteenth centuries. Here, Eve Keller offers a genealogy of that subject's supra-material autonomy. She draws our attention to profound similarities between Galenic and post-modern imaginings of the self. The early modern period is shown to stand in between: as a refutation of the "premodern" and "posthuman" (p. 20) notion of the self as extending beyond the envelope of the skin, to include not just language and comportment but also artefacts, spaces, places and objects. The fantastic and "alarming" (p. 31) imaginings of those neuroscientists, cyberneticists and philosophers of mind who suggest "embodiment, embeddedness and distributed capacity" (p. 23) are shown to be unsettling only from the liberal humanist perspective that we have inherited from the early modern period. Keller convincingly demonstrates this to be so through a lucid survey of some recent critical work carried out within cultural and science studies, which she compares to Galen's writings upon a materially-dependent soul of multiple components. The contrary humanist self is a "disembodied, vacuum-sealed centre of cognition and volition" (p. 44)

and an enduring legacy of early modern thought. Keller's finely detailed investigation of vernacular medical texts in a variety of genres explicates the invention of this all-too-familiar self through the thought and practices of early modern physiology, anatomy and what we now call gynaecology and obstetrics. These practices produce an asymmetrical gendered human being. The materiality of the male serves his unified and disembodied supervenient self. The materiality of the female is a definitional body part (the womb) that her self is more or less conterminous with. Keller's concrete examples of seventeenth-century anatomical theories and practical physic for women evidence the success of such thinking, which survived the decline in Galenic models in favour of chemical medicine and mechanical philosophy. Although an enduring "thought style" (p. 13), to use the phrase Keller adopts from Ludwig Fleck, this gendered subjectivity was also problematic and troubling. For Keller, both the heroic and idealized images of masculinity and the investigative methods of the physician, the anatomist and the microscopist were fabricated in response to the perceived inadequacies of paternity and patriarchy. In the field of embryology, for example, animalculist theory is championed over ovist theory because it posits an independent, unified and self-affirming miniature person empowered—from the moment of his conception—to direct his own course. The autonomy and self-determination of the seventeenth-century self was threatened, she tells us, by mechanical conceptions of human physiology. The human machine is "a living object acted on by forces beyond its control" (p. 154). Thus, in response to this, the human is claimed as more than a machine.

The final chapter of the book is located in the birthing room and provides a refreshing alternative to the often-rehearsed account of the rise of the man-midwife as either a triumph of scientific reason over ignorance or as the forcible ejection of capable female practitioners by "self-serving and avaricious" men (p. 160). Keller does not view such

accounts as wrong, but rather as inadequate and partial. Her focus is upon specific and singular events that enable her to examine the rivalries and negotiated divisions of labour, so to speak, between the midwife, the surgeon and the physician in the early eighteenth century. For Keller, this is far from being merely a battle of the sexes. However, despite Keller's assertions to the contrary, there is some sense throughout this book of early modern aims regarding the self as having an epistemological and political essence: one of patriarchy as an organizing and orientating means for us to understand what happened and continues to happen when medicine addresses generation and childbirth. It would be fascinating to see explanations of how gender was assembled and distinguished that do not assume underlying and pre-given interests: those of males. None the less, *Generating bodies and gendered selves* is a brilliant example of how early modern history can benefit from a thorough and sustained engagement with the best scholarship in the fields of cultural theory and science studies.

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Alfons Zarzoso, *L'Exercici de la medicina a la Catalunya de al Il·lustració (segle XVIII)*, Manresa, Publicacions de l'Arxiu Històric de les Ciències de la Salut (PAHCS), 2006, pp. 184, illus., no price given (paperback 84-611-2808-7).

This book won the Catalanian History of Medicine Prize "Oleguer Miró i Borrás" (2005), awarded by the Barcelona Medical Council (Colegio Oficial de Médicos de Barcelona), which publishes the prize-winning works in the Publicacions de l'Arxiu Històric de les Ciències de la Salut series. Alfons Zarzoso specializes in the study of medical practice in Catalonia in the eighteenth century. This was also the subject of his doctoral thesis, *La Pràctica mèdica a la Catalunya del segle XVIII* (2003).

Following an introduction to the historiography of medical pluralism during the final period of the Ancien Régime, Zarzoso analyses medical practice and the relationship between society and physicians by studying the contracts of these professionals with the town councils and the mutual aid associations. He studies the extent to which university-taught medicine was introduced in eighteenth-century Catalonia, and how this reflects the political changes caused by the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1713). The disappearance of the Estudio de Barcelona and the establishment of the University of Cervera by the new Bourbon dynasty marked a change in the choice of university by medical students: thenceforth most Catalanian students (55 per cent) graduated from the University of Huesca, compared with 28 per cent from the new University of Cervera. The remaining 17 per cent attended other universities such as Saragossa, Valencia, Orihuela, Gandía or Montpellier. But the establishment of the Royal College of Surgeons of Barcelona in 1760 meant that Barcelona became the centre for the teaching of surgery.

Zarzoso's analysis of the medical professionals in the province shows that, during the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century, as a consequence of the system of *conducció* or *contractació*, university-taught physicians were present in rural areas. Under this system, the municipalities of the Crown of Aragon contracted physicians as well as surgeons and apothecaries specifically to work in the countryside, thus guaranteeing health care even in remote areas. The economic and demographic growth of Catalonia in the eighteenth century led to an increase in the purchasing power of the town councils and of the population in general, and so also to an increase in the medicalization of society.

The author reviews the documentation between 1722 and 1820 preserved in the Archives of the Real Audiencia relating to the municipal medical contracts. The result clearly shows the regulatory mechanisms for health care professionals, physicians, apothecaries