

Christopher E Forth, *The Dreyfus affair and the crisis of French manhood*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, pp. xii, 300, £33.50 (hardback 0-8018-7433-5).

When Captain Alfred Dreyfus was publicly dishonoured in January 1895 his demeanour was the subject of intense journalistic scrutiny. Dreyfus's stoic and unemotional bearing during his degradation ceremony was roundly condemned. His failure to weep or show other signs of repentance or despair was interpreted in ways that reinforced perceptions of his guilt. Yet, Christopher Forth argues, such interpretations were at odds with the cultural norms of the period, since the ability to control one's emotions was central to definitions of adult masculinity in fin-de-siècle France. Masculinity was perceived as a construct, one open to attack and relying on willpower for its maintenance. Why, then, did Dreyfus's self-control disturb his audience as it did?

This apparent paradox is, in Forth's study, the starting point for a nuanced and sophisticated analysis of French manhood. The territories covered in the book are familiar: the Dreyfus Affair and more generally the Third Republic crisis of confidence. Forth illuminates both, bringing a valuable cultural perspective to the analysis of the Dreyfus Affair whilst using it to shed new light on broader cultural concerns. Drawing on a wide range of mostly published sources, including periodicals, cartoons, and advertisements, he shows that the Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards shared a common conceptual language, in which pathology and effeminacy threatened French masculinity and thereby the French state. Both groups broadly agreed on the definition of appropriate masculinity, citizenship and health; for both, Dreyfus's Jewishness was perceived to complicate these categories. Forth demonstrates that the category of "the Jew" was far from stable, and that it was often used metaphorically to represent the intellectual and effeminate characteristics of modernity. Dreyfus's lack of tears was thus interpreted within this matrix to suggest that he felt no sense of honour or passion.

To analyse the Affair purely in terms of the very real anti-Semitism of the period is reductive, however, ignoring the complexity of the symbolic uses to which the figure of Dreyfus was put. Widening his scope of analysis, Forth examines the gender politics of the Affair, and links anxieties over the role of women to those concerning the role of the "intellectual" in French culture. He is particularly strong in his analysis of the ways in which Dreyfusards attempted to re-establish their claim on virile masculinity by distancing themselves, and Dreyfus, from the symbols most commonly associated with effeminacy. However, in co-opting the language of virility, they implicitly accepted its assumptions, especially those concerning the passivity of women and the importance of cultivating the body rather than the mind. Forth demonstrates how these issues were crystallised in Emile Zola's successful battle with his weight, a feat of willpower celebrated by Dreyfusards as a proof of his masculinity and his commitment to the political cause.

In the later chapters of the book, the figure of Dreyfus becomes obscured, a reflection of how far-reaching an influence the Affair had in fin-de-siècle France. Forth considers the rhetoric surrounding the new culture of physical force, with its emphasis on the traditional masculine virtues of physical action and courage, and links from these to the new cult of physical regeneration emerging in France. Here, the degree of influence between the Affair and broader cultural trends, especially that of the crisis of masculinity, could be further elucidated. It would also be interesting to learn more about the cultural influence of the literature surrounding diet, digestion, and strength.

Forth concludes by suggesting that the willingness of Dreyfusards to embrace the cult of physical force ultimately saw their arguments being cited to support the "man of action" over the intellectual. When analysed in terms of gender, as well as anti-Semitism, the Affair emerges as an arena in which competing models of masculinity were evaluated in ways that would

re-emerge in the fascist politics of the twentieth century.

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Susan Broomhall, *Women's medical work in early modern France*, Gender in History, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2004, pp. viii, 288, 49.99 (hardback 0-7190-6286-1)

Susan Broomhall's *Women's medical work in early modern France* takes a diverse look at women's roles in Renaissance health care. She investigates the spaces available to midwives, wives of master surgeons, governesses, nurses, nuns, queens and female healers. In the period under study (1460 to 1630) male control of medical knowledge grew in certain spheres, such as guilds and universities, but women continued to have a dominant role in pregnancy, child rearing and charitable work. Building on the theoretical examination of modern medicine and gender by Londa Schiebinger, Sandra Harding and Ludmilla Jordanova, among others, her book looks at an earlier period in order to examine, in Toril Moi's words, the "variability of gender as a social factor". To do this, she relies heavily on the work of Alison Klairmont Lingo, as well as her own primary research.

The most interesting sections of Broomhall's book are her chapters on childcare and reproductive knowledge. Women had previously been delegated to care for the community's orphans, but with humanism's greater stress on the importance of children came greater emphasis on the quality of that care. Instead of excluding women from paediatric concerns, medical specialists and government officials reinforced their importance and competence based on their experience as mothers. In the sphere of the court (both French and Spanish are examined) elite women used their maternal authority as much as their class status to impose their opinions on physicians and kings. And yet, in certain cases, these women were not able to control their own offspring's care. Diane de

Poitiers (the king's mistress) dominated the care of the royal children, despite attempts made by Catherine de Medici to assert her authority. Yet when it came to her own daughter's pregnancies, Catherine was able to supervise her medical treatments from afar and circumvent the advice of Spanish court physicians. Her earlier inexperience as a young mother (as well as a foreigner) played against her as a wife, but later as a widow she gained credibility and legitimacy as a medical advisor to her own passive daughter.

What Broomhall argues was that gender itself was not a straightforward category by which women were judged for their medical skills and authority. She hopes to prove that women were allowed a variety of medical roles by male commentators and professional university trained physicians, and that these men's judgments about appropriate practices (whether negative or positive) were not always based on gender. Yet the majority of her examples rest on the assumption that the female practitioners in question were legitimate because of their physical nature as women. Queens, midwives, nurses and nuns were judged appropriate caregivers in specific feminized spheres. The role of mother is referred to throughout the book as justification for reproductive and paediatric medical knowledge. The cases that prove the contrary, such as a master barber who passed his profession to his wife and the villagers who supported a female healer, are ones that sparked controversy and court cases. It is unclear to Broomhall if widows of master barbers and apothecaries really intended to take on their husband's profession, or simply protect it for their sons. Successful female healers stressed the charitable (and thus feminine) impulses behind their work and got support primarily from rural people, who were not within the reach of the medical profession. Their detractors were university physicians who targeted these healers not just because they were untrained in their eyes, but specifically because they were women and thus excluded from joining their ranks. Male physicians did not succeed in the Renaissance or even throughout the early modern period in eradicating female (or male) healers, but neither did they respect or authenticate their medical