

sections of Evans' study, for example, lies in her astute analysis of the development of gendered distinctions in the language used to describe sexual deficiencies and infertility. According to Evans, the development of gender-specific language reflected the growing tendency of anatomists and medical writers to reject the one-sex model that traditionally depicted women's bodies as imperfect variations of the male body. In texts such as John Ball's *The Female Physician* and Nicholas Venette's *Conjugal Love Reveal'd*, for example, there is a clear tendency to ascribe the category of impotence to men and barrenness to women. However, as Evans points out, this dichotomy is somewhat paradoxical, because although male and female procreative roles were clearly delineated, the use of aphrodisiacs was not inherently sexed.

In an era of high infant mortality, reproductive health and anxieties about fertility were exceptionally common. As Jennifer Evans has skillfully asserted, a deeper analysis of the ways in which medical writers and popular practitioners sought to mitigate such concerns yields important insight into the construction of gendered bodies, attitudes toward the family, and medical theory in early modern England. Inasmuch as Evans' study dovetails effectively with existing scholarship on the culturally-specific elements of early modern medicine, it will undoubtedly be of great interest to those seeking to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the emergence of modern attitudes toward sexuality and the ways in which the spread of Cartesian rationalism intersected with and ultimately dismantled the early modern association between lust and procreation.

Sarah F. Williams. *Damnably Practises: Witches, Dangerous Women, and Music in Seventeenth-Century English Broadside Ballads*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. xii + 225 pp. + 12 illus. \$109.95. Review by JULIE D. CAMPBELL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY.

In this examination of ballads focused on witchcraft and female malfeasance, Williams reminds her readers that most English citizens saw, sang, or heard ballads on a daily basis and that this common experience "straddled oral and literate culture, the material and the

ephemeral, and print and performance” (1). Drawing on the work of historians Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford as well as that of musicologist Linda Austern and literature and theatre scholar Bruce Smith, Williams explores what the modern reader/listener might glean from consideration of this composite art form. She notes that the broadsides examined here “feature stories of witchcraft, husband-murder, and scolding—transgressions that intertwine the fears of female power, musical and acoustic disorder, loquacity, and social imbalance” (4). A central question of the book is how such women were represented in the ballad trade as “musical—and acoustic—disorder,” illustrating the “sound of witchcraft and a society turned upside down” (5). While the book is concerned with historical accounts of such women and the general acoustic world of ballads, Williams also considers the intersections between ballad-performance and theater, as well as specific tunes and typical woodcut illustrations that were repeatedly used for such broadsides.

In the first chapter, Williams addresses the textual content of the stories presented in the ballads, noting that the information inevitably came from “medical tracts, incendiary treatises, court documents, trial accounts, folkloric beliefs and superstitions, Biblical stories, and contemporaneous dramatic works” (14). She points out that James I’s *Daemonologie*, Reginald Scot’s *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, and his teacher, Johann Weyer’s *De praestigiis daemonum*, along with works by numerous others “circulated information on the perceived efficacy of witches’ powers, their acoustic qualities, and methods of identification” (14). She also explores pamphlets and trial accounts addressing scolds, the “scold’s bridle,” and connections between the devil and scolds, as well as how the language and imagery found in these sources may also be seen in xenophobic texts addressing Catholics and “popish” rituals (41).

Williams next examines ballad culture. In her second chapter she discusses its presence wherever people gathered and its use as a conduit for news. Moreover, she examines its appearance in dramatic texts, such as Margaret Cavendish’s *The Comical Hash*, in which Lady Censurer offers to perform ballads, and Samuel Rowley and Thomas Dekker’s 1634 drama *The noble souldier*, “which includes mention of ‘the hanging tune,’” a popular ballad melody well-known to “ac-

company grisly stories of murderers and hangings” (49). She includes samples of music and lyrics to illustrate meter in broadside texts and provides useful tables of ballads that use the tunes “Fortune my Foe,” “Bragandary,” and “The Ladies Fall”—three key pieces of music used for songs about women’s witchcraft and malfeasance. In the tables, she provides ballad titles, dates, English Short Title Catalogue numbers, and subjects. Williams argues that there were “specific tunes to accompany narratives of witchcraft and associated female domestic crime” (86) and that these three were in frequent use, as her tables illustrate.

In the third chapter, Williams examines the “acoustic profile of female transgression” and the “power of wicked voices and injurious speech” (89). She does so through close-reading of broadsides, especially commenting on ballad writers’ consultation of court trials and confessions. She also observes that broadside ballads drew their norms for appropriate feminine behavior from conduct books and marriage guides, such as William Whately’s *A bride-bush* and William Gouge’s *Of domesticall duties*. . . . Moreover, she points out how the popular medical assertions based on work by Aristotle and Galen arise in ballad contexts, as writers draw upon their notions that, as a sex, “women were considered more apt to experience excessive passions. . . . and unruly natures” (98). In this chapter, she also discloses the backlash to ballads, pointing out, for example, that Thomas Brice in *Against filthy writing and such like delighting* “rails against the ‘rimes’ sold in London’s shops as nothing but ‘wanton sound and filthie sense’” much as Thomas Lodge did in his *Defence of poetry, music and stage plays* (100).

Williams argues in her fourth chapter that the visual and performative display of broadsides in early modern culture “was crucial to disseminating stereotypes of female transgression” (111). Here, she comments on how the “public theater and the ballad trade worked in concert, and competition, to publicly communicate depictions of feminine malfeasance” (112), noting the ballad monger characters in Shakespeare’s *Winter’s Tale* and Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*. She also assesses woodcuts frequently used in the broadsides, surveying popular images from *Damnable Practises*, *Anne Wallens Lamentation*, *The Devil’s Conquest*, *Witchcraft Discovered and Punished*, and *The Unnatural Wife*. Additionally, she briefly considers typology and “its implications for assessing a ballad’s oral (and aural) performance” (127).

*Damnable Practises* is a valuable addition to studies of seventeenth-century popular culture. Detailing many textual, visual, musical, and performative elements of a group of ballads that offer cautionary and sensational information about women accused of witchcraft, murder, or general unruliness, Williams offers a fascinating glimpse into the world of ballad-making and ballad consumption. In addition to her erudite commentary, Williams' book includes useful appendices that contain samples of ballad verses. Her work has much to offer scholars interested in music history, women's history, and literary history of this period.

Jonathan Healey. *The First Century of Welfare: Poverty and Poor Relief in Lancashire 1620-1730*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014. xvi + 319 pp. \$29.95. Review by TY M. REESE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the early modern English state became concerned with the welfare of the deserving poor. The resulting acts, known generally as the Poor Laws, became a national system of poor relief and created, according to Jonathan Healey, the first welfare state.

While the Poor Laws hold an important place within Healey's work, he is more concerned about understanding how people became poor. The reaction to this poverty, the Poor Laws, served as a way to alleviate the adversity of the newly poor or deserving poor. This work is a history from below that explores how, within this newly developing national system of welfare, things worked on a local level. While Healey is concerned with the poor, he creates an engaging work that explores the entire system including both how people became deserving poor and how local officials/structures dealt with them. Healey avoids theory and in doing so provides a straightforward and engaging work that explores the place of poverty within early modern England. Healey relies upon a case study of Lancashire to better understand first how people became poor and then how poor relief functioned on a local level. According to Healey, one of the most important aspects of the Poor Laws was that they developed a system that recognized the