REVIEW


Due to an editorial oversight, two reviews of this book were commissioned. Both reviews have been published with the permission of the reviewers, to whom the Editor is grateful for their understanding.

In *Gender and Enlightenment Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, Rosalind Carr has presented a new view into the way that the philosophies and changing social landscape of the eighteenth century influenced the perception and roles of gender, femininity, masculinity and politeness. In the introduction of the book, Carr draws the reader’s attention to the roles of urbanization, industrialization, and trade, which in turn created a unique atmosphere for social change. Carr states early in her introduction that the purpose of the book is to place the Scottish Enlightenment into the urban culture that was developing at this time (p. 2). In her introduction, Carr is thorough in discussing—and at times refuting—the leading ideas and commentary on gender and Enlightenment culture.

As Carr points out, the Enlightenment in Scotland was different than elsewhere in Europe, primarily due to the influence of the Presbyterian Church. Because of this, women did not participate in public spheres of discourse or learn in Scotland as they did in places such as France. This exclusion of women from some public discourse created different views of the masculine and feminine, the definitions of which Carr examines in detail.

Carr divides her study into four separate parts. In the first chapter, “Homosociality and Intellectual Culture,” the author looks at the gender norms in academic societies and how those groups not only created spaces for gathering and discussions of intellectual topics, but that they also helped to create the ideal concept of masculinity, identity, and manhood. Because of this, according to Carr, these perceptions of masculinity that emerged from the exclusive intellectual societies and clubs also created a definition of
femininity and also of civility and politeness that defined eighteenth century social interactions.

As the book progresses, Carr goes on to discuss in the second chapter, “Women and Intellectual Culture,” the way that women interacted with these same societies. Like her previous discussion, Carr spends a great deal of time discussing the current theories and perceptions of women’s roles in Enlightenment culture and then digs deeper to apply those ideas to the unique nature of the Scottish Enlightenment. Carr discusses the obstacles that women had to face in education and in gaining access to intellectual discourse in a society in which they had very specific gender roles.

In the third chapter “Urbane and Urban Sociability in Enlightenment Edinburgh,” Carr once again brings together the ideas of politeness, social interactions, culture and gender roles. This time, instead of intellectual societies and clubs, Carr focuses on more public arenas such as the theater, taverns and other forums. She looks at the way that these public venues influenced society, created avenues for social advancement and for networking. In addition to the more refined gathering places, Carr also looks at how drunkenness and prostitution were perceived through lenses of class, wealth and gender.

In the last chapter, “Enlightened Violence, Elite Manhood and the Duel,” Carr also addresses how the ideas of culture, social behavior, gender norms, and status in the Enlightenment have also changed the acceptance and perception of honor and violence. Altogether, Carr has created a detailed examination of the role of the Scottish Enlightenment had on perceptions of gender, class and social interaction. This book is highly recommended for anyone studying the eighteenth century in Scotland, philosophy or gender studies.

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