

Kirsti Niskanen & Michael J. Barany (ed.), *Gender, Embodiment, and the History of the Scholarly Persona: Incarnations and Contestations* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2021). 358 pp.

Despite its many and various claims to the contrary, scholarship has always been particular. Rather than the utopian dreams of a universal and impersonal endeavour, the production of knowledge is necessarily a matter of what the editors of this volume describe as "locally and personally produced articulations" (p. 2). In considering the shifting and historically specific conditions that have shaped such articulations, *Gender, Embodiment, and the History of the Scholarly Persona* seeks to illuminate the making of scholarly identities across a range of national and international contexts. As the terms of its subtitle suggest – i.e. incarnations and contestations – this is a collection of essays principally interested in questions as to how "the work of gendering and embodying" (p. 5) intersect with any process of academic self-fashioning. By taking seriously the apparently trivial yet no less profound insight that knowledge and scholars are made by particular bodies in specific settings, which vary over time and space and entail varying forms of friction, the volume offers a revealing new history of modern scholarly and scientific identities.

The theoretical lens employed to produce such a history is that of the scholarly persona. Drawing upon the influential notion elaborated by historians of science Lorraine Daston and Otto Sibum in 2003, as well as the array of persona studies which have appeared in its wake, the editors emphasise the value of persona as a flexible and wide-ranging tool for sociologically-informed study of identity formation. As Niskanen and Barany suggest in their introduction, the concept fruitfully operates at a level between the individual and collective: enabling analytical focus upon both particular biographies (i.e. specific performances of identity) and broader social practices (i.e. shared institutional conventions and repertoires), in elucidating the situated and embodied character of scientific personae. This agility helps to account for the breadth and diversity of the chiefly nineteenth and twentieth-century case studies that comprise the volume: from the play of young males in a globalising mathematics to the fashioning of online scientific profiles; and from the gendered presuppositions of the philosopher as public intellectual to the role of anatomical studies in the formation of a medical persona.

Structured according to distinct but interconnected themes, the collection is ordered in three parts. The first part is devoted to exploring how travel and knowledge transfers impact upon identity formation, charting "personae on the move". Here we move from the mid-century men of mat-

hematics and the American botanist, William Smith Clark's back and forth to colonial Japan in the late nineteenth century, to the gender exclusions of the Belgian programme for US travel grants in the first half of the twentieth century and the delicate combination of personae deployed by the Hungarian botanist, Erzsébet Kol in establishing herself as a "university woman" (p. 113). The second group of essays shifts focus towards incarnation by drawing our attention to bodies on display: with case studies on the masculinised space of early twentieth-century Finnish medical education, the digital self-presentation of scientists today and late nineteenth-century notions of innate abilities variously exploring the roles of embodiment (and disembodiment) in constructing persona. The volume's final part brings questions of gender centre stage. More specifically, it highlights the pervasive functions of scholarly masculinities in the modern era through essays upon the emergence of the ideal of the pedagogue centred upon the life and early death of the nineteenth-century Swedish figure of Carl Ulric Broocman; contested models of the "whole man" among German historians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; the competing (masculinised) virtues of loyalty and independence in the moral economy of experimental psychology, also in late nineteenth-century Germany; and shifting academic cultures of masculinity in mid twentieth-century Sweden via the lens of philosopher Einar Tegen.

The principal strength of these essays is the sharpness of their focus upon the mechanics of personae, which gives a sense of analytical clarity to the volume as a whole. This incision is evident, for instance, in the nuanced and reflexive discussion of different ways of operationalising the concept of persona and the constellation of individual-personae-institution in Heini Hakosalo's perceptive chapter on anatomical studies and medical personae in *fin-de-siècle* Finland (the particular section on methodology is entitled "speaking of personae", pp. 151–154). The fruits of such a considered and theorised point of departure are apparent in the fine-grained and particular details that illuminate the volume's case studies, such as in Kirsti Niskanen's elucidation of the persona of Uppsala philosophy in the early twentieth century, including the physical descriptions that contemporaries offered of the practical philosopher, Axel Hägerström – "what a philosopher should look like", according to the author Karin Boye (pp. 319–322).

While Niskanen's closing essay provides something of a synthesis of the study's thematic concerns, one thing that the editors opt not to offer is a concluding coda sketching out a sense of: what next? This is not necessarily a point of critique – the collection forms a cogent whole and makes a distinctive contribution as it is – but it does prompt further reflection as to what new lines of investigation might be possible in light of this study. One

hint concerning potential directions for such future work appears in the foreword, where the historian of science Ludmilla Jordanova refers to Professor Brian Cox as "a rock star scientist" (p. viii). The interdisciplinary area of celebrity studies that this gestures towards has already turned towards exploring persona, with doyen in the field David Marshall (who appears here both as reference and recommender) having contributed towards an introduction to *Persona Studies* (2019). Yet it might also be the case that the study of scholarly personae can draw similar inspiration from the vectors of inquiry of celebrity, not least in terms of exploring the notion of "academic celebrity" suggested by the case of Cox among others (cf. Walsh and Lehmann 2021). What types of persona were at play in Michel Foucault and Noam Chomsky's famed debate on Dutch television in 1971, for instance, and what might it mean beyond the history of scientific disciplines and institutions that the YouTube clip of this scholarly spectacle has now accumulated over two million views? How do scholars today become imbricated in the celebrity apparatus and what type of affective relations and new collective identities are enabled for their publics in the process? Such questions are beyond the scope of this particular book, but indicate ways in which studies of the scholarly persona could be integrated into broader forms of media and cultural analysis.

*Gender, Embodiment, and the History of the Scholarly Persona* is a captivating collection with an impressive thematic and conceptual coherence. Taken together, the essays provide a richly suggestive account of how scholarly personae have been made, embodied, contested and re-made over the past century and a half. The contributors' work is uniformly well-written and variously illuminated by visual evidence that serves to reinforce the volume's principal arguments about the necessary situatedness and particularity of identity formation. This is a study that will be much appreciated by scholars working in the intersecting fields of the history and sociology of science and knowledge to which it so deftly contributes; it ought also to be of interest to a considerably wider range of scholars working both within and beyond the academy. For if we are curious about understanding the specific conditions that by turn constrain and enable the making of our work and selves, then thinking reflexively about the construction and embodiment of the scholarly persona is undoubtedly a pertinent place to start.

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