

story-telling. In doing so, he presents a vivid picture of a plague epidemic but also the mean streets of seventeenth-century London. Some inhabitants are shown to be brave and caring, but many are understandably plain scared, confused and desperate. The most sensational and wicked acts tend to be reported as hearsay with the weekly bills of mortality acting as sobering anchors of evidence.

It ought to be noted that ‘H.F.’ is not the easiest of companions. ‘As I said before’, ‘I mentioned above’ and ‘as I have observed’ are common phrases for a narrator who thinks nothing of digression and repetition. Obsessively noting down the exact route of his journeys is another characteristic. These most human of idiosyncrasies should not detract from the fact that *A Journal* is the most comprehensive account of plague we have. Defoe had done his homework, and the most likely printed sources he used for the novel are listed in the explanatory notes.

This edition has a new introduction by Professor David Roberts, Head of English at Birmingham City University. Roberts is particularly interesting when considering the publishing environment of Defoe’s time. As a new plague epidemic threatened Europe, books on the theme became increasingly popular. Roberts identifies Richard Bradley’s *The Plague at Marseilles Consider’d* as the subject’s bestseller for the period. During 1721 Bradley’s book went into five editions. *A Journal* did not do as nearly so well, with a second reprint only appearing in 1755. In contrast, four editions of *Robinson Crusoe* were published in about as many months when it first appeared. Concentrating on *Moll Flanders* first may have cost Defoe and his publishers dearly. Roberts wonders whether they were a few months too late with *A Journal* to fully capitalise on the market. It is perhaps significant that Defoe’s book was the last substantial title to appear on plague during this period. Whether the swine flu epidemic of 2009–10 inspired this new edition from Oxford University Press is unclear.

A Journal is perhaps Defoe’s most under-valued novel and it is heartening to see *Oxford World’s Classics* repackage it. Whether the indistinct photograph of a sixteenth-century charnel house door from France used for the front cover will stand the test of time is a small detail. The compact font sizes are perhaps more troublesome. Aside from Roberts’s introduction, this edition’s value lies in largely retaining Louis Landa’s exhaustive notes from the 1969 edition. A four-page appendix includes a succinct ‘A medical note’ of the plague with an analysis of Defoe’s understanding of the disease. The topographical index will be sufficient for many but Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert’s *The London Encyclopaedia* (2008) is recommended. A screen with Google Maps or a hardcopy street atlas may also be wise as Defoe’s London is still largely there for the walking.

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John Trevor Hughes, *Henry Power of Halifax; a Seventeenth Century Physician and Scientist* (Oxford: Rimes House, 2010), pp. xii + 120, £20.00, hardback, ISBN: 978-1-874317-04-3.

As a child I remember playing in a friend’s somewhat dilapidated house and enjoying racing around an upstairs gallery and making out the curious shapes on the royal arms

in plaster over the fireplace. Little did I know then that New Hall, Elland, had been the site of some of the earliest experiments to test Harvey's theory of the circulation, or that a hill visible from my junior school's playing field had witnessed important experiments on barometric pressure. Indeed, the name of Henry Power, doctor, scientist and one of the early members of the Royal Society, was unknown in the small town where he once lived and practised. Dr Hughes has done a great service in rescuing this important Restoration scientist from an obscurity that is more than local.

This engaging book clearly describes Power's scientific and medical work, emphasising his wide-ranging curiosity as well as his experimentalism. Indeed, given the author's own expertise, one would have liked to have had more quotations from Power's notebooks, as well as a more detailed comparison of his medical practice with that of other contemporaries. He developed a wide clientele, although several of the places cited by Dr Hughes on p. 69 are closer to New Hall than he implies, and it is unclear whether he went specifically to treat some of his farthest-flung patients or whether they were seen while Power was visiting other acquaintances or on his way to London. His move to Wakefield in 1663–4 will also have been more convenient for a wealthier clientele as well as being half a day's journey closer to the main road south. Wakefield was also at this time developing into a regional centre with claims to gentility. But Power did not live long there; he seems to have abandoned his scientific observations almost at once, perhaps because of increasing ill health, and he died there in December 1668.

There is more that can be said about Henry Power and, indeed, Dr Hughes in his earlier articles has shown how important are the Power notebooks in the British Library for an understanding of science and medicine in the Cromwellian and early Carolean period. Local pride, which compels me to point out that, *pace* p. 28, Halifax is on the tiny Hebble Brook (not river Hebden), which joins the Calder a mile or so upstream of Elland, must also acknowledge a paradox. A distinguished doctor, with metropolitan connections, chose to return, probably for family reasons, to a small and relatively isolated community, ill-served by medical men. He may have prospered, but a cynic might wonder whether his passion for experiment was not also fostered by a lack of patients and the absence of a wider local intellectual community.

With the publication of this elegant volume Dr Hughes has brought Henry Power to a broader notice, and one may hope that future inhabitants of Elland, and others, will not be as ignorant of this important scientist as I was for much of my life.

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Philip Rieder, *La Figure du patient au XVIIIe siècle*, Bibliothèque des Lumières LXXVI (Geneva: Droz, 2010), pp. 592, \$72, paperback, ISBN: 978-2-600-01422-9.

It is now over a quarter of a century since the late Roy Porter made perhaps his most passionate call for a medical history seen not through the eyes of the medical practitioner but 'from below', that is, from the point of view of the patient. Medical history has been through a 'cultural turn' and many other theoretical acrobatics since Porter's 'The Patient's