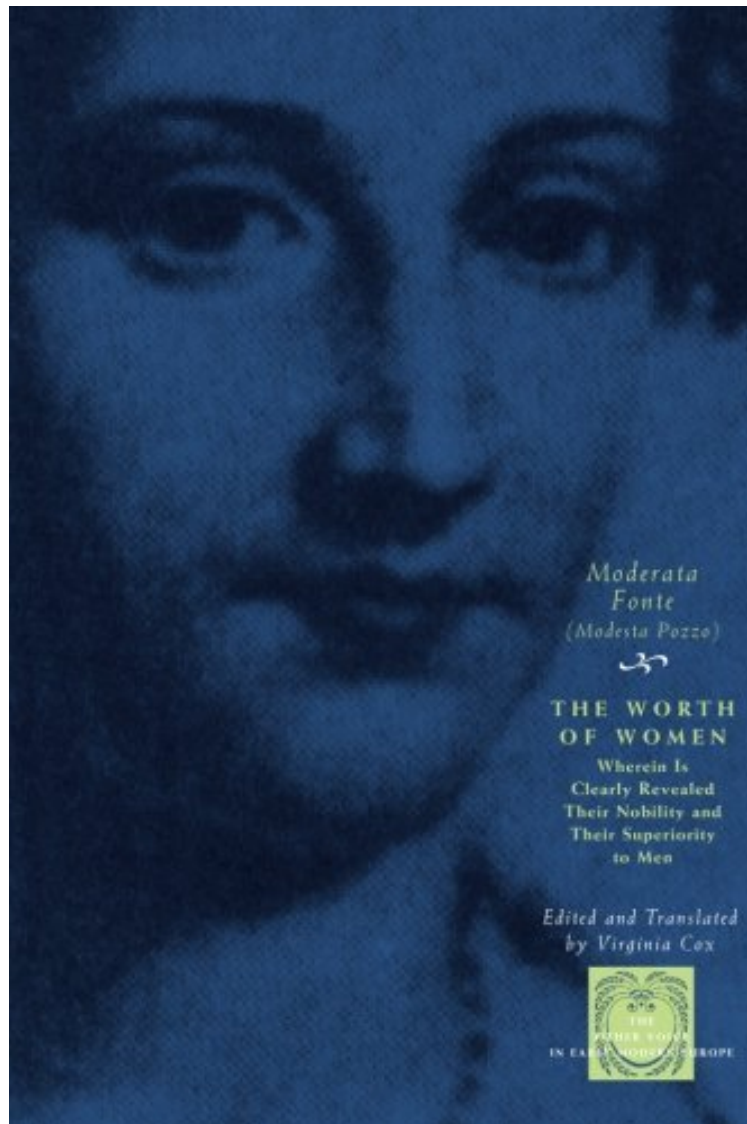


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## The Worth of Women: Wherein Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe)

*Moderata (Modesta Pozzo) Fonte*  
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#322856 in Books Moderata Modesta Pozzo Fonte 1997-08-18 1997-08-18 Original language: English PDF #1 9.00 x 1.30 x 6.00l, .98 #File Name: 0226256820318 pages The Worth of Women Wherein Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men | File size: 24.Mb

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whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Worth of Women: Wherein Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men* (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book:By Julian ElsonToday, any advocate of womankind operates under the shadow of feminism. Some react against it, some seek to extend and refine it, and some seek to preserve it. Either way, they must respond to some claims, going back to Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, and other early feminists, such as:-many of the behavioral differences between men and women are socially constructed, not biological-the path to sexual justice lies in the diminution of gender roles (i.e. "seperate spheres") in favor of free choice-most fundamentally, men and women are of equal moral worth.Moderata Fonte existed before the feminist movement as we know it. As a result, she did not think in the same terms as we would about sexual justice. For example, she never challenges the idea that differences between men and women are intrinsic, as far as I can tell. Similarly, she does not attack gender roles: rather, she asserts that the woman's proper gender role as homemaker, mother, and teacher is undervalued by patriarchal society, and the man's gender role as conqueror and ruler is overvalued. She does not claim men and women are moral equals: she claims women are superior.The book is written as a three way dialogue. Sometimes, the conversation drifts (realistically) to other topics, unrelated to Fonte's main point. This may be frustrating to readers expecting concision, but the diversions can also be interesting, offering insights into the culture of the time.8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Fun BookBy A CustomerReally. This book was a lot of fun to read and, despite the claims of the "Kirkus" review, it really isn't heavy reading at all. It does require some minimal knowlege of the life during the Renaissance era, but ample footnotes are provided to explain the numerous classical references and anything else that the reader might find confusing.One thing to be aware of. While the title of the book is "The Worth of Women", the dialogue spends FAR more time talking about the lack of worth of men. (The author's basis thesis seems to be that women are virtually perfect, so the occassional "bad" woman is either an utter anomoly, or has been made "bad" due to the influence of men; while men are basically evil, and the even rarer "good" man is an anomaly.) I will confess that the constant harping on the evils of the male sex got a little tiresome after a while.If you don't want to read that men are incapable of love/kindness/caring/intelligence ... this isn't the book for you.

Gender equality and the responsibility of husbands and fathers: issues that loom large today had currency in Renaissance Venice as well, as evidenced by the publication in 1600 of *The Worth of Women* by Moderata Fonte.Moderata Fonte was the pseudonym of Modesta Pozzo (1555-92), a Venetian woman who was something of an anomaly. Neither cloistered in a convent nor as liberated from prevailing codes of decorum as a courtesan might be, Pozzo was a respectable, married mother who produced literature in genres that were commonly considered "masculine"the chivalric romance and the literary dialogue. This work takes the form of the latter, with Fonte creating a conversation among seven Venetian noblewomen. The dialogue explores nearly every aspect of women's experience in both theoretical and practical terms. These women, who differ in age and experience, take as their broad theme men's curious hostility toward women and possible cures for it.Through this witty and ambitious work, Fonte seeks to elevate women's status to that of men, arguing that women have the same innate abilities as men and, when similarly educated, prove their equals. Through this dialogue, Fonte provides a picture of the private and public lives of Renaissance women, ruminating on their roles in the home, in society, and in the arts.A fine example of Renaissance vernacular literature, this book is also a testament to the enduring issues that women face, including the attempt to reconcile femininity with ambition.

From Kirkus sLiterary proof that when it comes to male-female relationships, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Newly translated by Cox (Italian/Cambridge), *The Worth of Women* was written in late-16th-century Venice by Fonte, a poet who died in childbirth in 1592, at the age of 37. This edition includes a long introduction about various literary conventions and historical facts that, while interesting to scholars and vital to giving a reader the context for the prose that is to come, will scare off the less dedicated reader. That's a shame, for Fonte's is witty writing. She is exceptionally adept at the classic Renaissance convention of the literary dialogue. Using the conceit of seven Venetian noblewomen of varying ages and marital status, gathering in a garden to debate, among other points, men's inferiority to women, Fonte paints a vivid picture of yesteryear, an era whose themes ring true today ("Men are just like unlit lamps," claims one of the seven, "in themselves, they are no good for anything, but, when lit, they can be handy to have around the house"). Infidelity, gambling, and other vices and flaws are just a few of the topics Fonte's women discuss. Beyond the clever bantering and debate, there is also a lovely reminder of the power of language. At one point, one of the women describes the fickleness of young men's love by noting, "Their love is no more than a flash in the pan; their loyalty a laugh in a tavern; their devotion, a day out hunting the hare; their fine appearance, a peacock's tail." Certainly not a book destined for the mainstream. But for scholars, history buffs, and readers who like to mix their contemporary selections with the unusual, *The Worth of Women* is a satisfying sidetrip. -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.Language NotesText: English (translation) Original Language:

ItalianAbout the AuthorVirginia Cox is a lecturer in Italian at the University of Cambridge and a fellow of Christ's College. She is the author of *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in Its Social and Political Contexts*.