

Early Modern Women and the Poem. Susan Wiseman, ed.
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The essays in *Early Modern Women and the Poem*, edited by Susan Wiseman, provide analysis that expands notions of women's writing, representations of women's voices, and women's involvement in English poetics of the seventeenth century. The compilation grows out of conversations begun at a conference organized by Patricia

Parker, Paul Salzman, Rosalind Smith, and Susan Wiseman, held by the London Research Seminar in 2009. The twelve essays are organized into three sections, "Inheritance," "Circulation," and "Narrative," framed effectively by the introduction, "Researching Early Modern Women and the Poem," by Susan Wiseman, and an afterword, "Reading Early Modern Women and the Poem," by Patricia Parker and Rosalind Smith. In many respects, the collection operates as a corrective both to Virginia Woolf's imagined Shakespeare's sister (invoked as the exigence for a number of the essays) and to the anthologizing practices of recoveries of women's writing from the 1980s and 1990s, most expressly *Kissing the Rod* (1988). Taken together, the essays argue for these poems' inclusion in current narratives of literary history, and they return these texts, forgotten for centuries and then extracted for twenty or more years from their settings, to their the social, political, literary, and generic contexts. At the same time, the collection explores current editorial practices and suggests expanding definitions of *women*, *authors*, and *the poem*.

The first section, "Inheritance," engages with authors' appropriations of conventions available to them and those conversations, especially political and religious, with which these poems engage. All four essays examine the rhetorical, technical, and literary prowess demonstrated by individual authors, especially in terms of classical, biblical, and Continental traditions. Lucy Hutchison, Elizabeth Melville, and Katherine Philips invoke such models as Virgil, Anne Lok, and James VI and I, and manipulate generic conventions available from sonnet sequences, epic, and a range of emergent forms of English poesy; this work is picked up elsewhere in the volume as well. A standout here is Line Cottegnies's "The Sapphic Context of Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthis*." Among her projects is a persuasive reading of *Pamphilia* within the frame of Ovid's *Heroides*.

Most emphatically in the second section, "Circulation," but really throughout the volume, essays question and expand notions of authorship and of authors operating as singular agents. Suzanne Trill, in "'We the Sydnean Psalmes shall celebrate': Collaborative Authorship, Sidney's Sister and the English Devotional Lyric," underlines the centrality of collaborative composition. Margaret J. M. Ezell, in "Late Seventeenth-Century Women Poets and the Anxiety of Attribution," describes "literary communities" associated with Anne Finch and Anne Killigrew and suggests that earlier investments in discovering positive networks of female empowerment obscured some of the complexities of these exchanges; here she nuances these exchanges to describe "ways in which social authorship practices were used to manage untidy and often impolite impulses of rivalry, competition, and ambition" (159). Paul Salzman and Helen Hackett describe with precision and care political, social, and literary networks.

The third section, "Narrative," considers how gender is recounted and read, and to what ends. In "Rethinking Authorial Reluctance in the Paratexts to Anne Bradstreet's Poetry," Patricia Parker suggests that many of the tropes gendered female by recent criticism engage instead with authorizing literary antecedents. In "'The nine-liv'd Sex': Women and Justice in Seventeenth-Century Popular Poetry," Judith Hudson inquires

into the “gendered place of the poem” (203). She turns to pamphlets concerned with the infanticide case of Anne Greene and compares these poems with the treatment Greene garners from “more traditional poetic texts on infanticide” (203).

Taken collectively, these twelve essays benefit from a shared awareness of issues surrounding print culture and literary production. Essays consider the contrast between poems circulating in manuscript or appearing in print collections. The collection as a whole takes into account miscellanies, revisions, editions, and commonplace books, as well as broadsides and pamphlets, true-crime writing, and ballads. Despite the disparate examples offered under the rubric of “the poem,” the collection is coherent, in large part thanks to the interweaving of topical threads across sections and the connections the essayists themselves make to one another’s work. Scholars of seventeenth-century English poetics will benefit from this expanded exploration.

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