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Patricia Demers. *Women's Writing in English: Early Modern England*.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. \$32.95.

Patricia Demers's *Women's Writing in English: Early Modern England* sets out to provide a substantial introduction to the rapidly expanding field adduced in its title. It succeeds admirably; the book should prove useful to students gaining their first exposure to early modern women writers and, thanks to its incredible breadth, will provide helpful leads for more experienced scholars as well.

The book is divided into three large sections. In the first, Demers seeks to capture the life experience of early modern Englishwomen as well as their textual lives, so to speak. Addressing subjects including women's education, pamphlet controversies about women, childbearing, and marital practices, the section ranges widely but is succinct enough to be of value in the classroom.

In the second section, the largest of the book, Demers addresses what she calls the genres of early modern women's writing. As she conceives them, these genres are quite loose, and occasionally Demers tries to force connections between writers where there are few useful ones. More often, however, Demers rightly allows for the extreme flexibility of the very concept of genres in the English Renaissance, and that flexibility in turn works to women writers' advantage, as when she addresses not simply plays or what might be thought of as conventional drama "categories by which women writers are decidedly disadvantaged" but chooses instead to discuss women writers' use of "drama and the dramatic" construed more widely. Demers's subsection on translation is particularly adept, highlighting a demanding skill too often rendered a subsidiary or lesser literary form in traditional literary taxonomies. Although readers may quarrel with some of her interpretive claims (Anne Lock, for instance, gets rather short shrift), the section as a whole provides a very useful framework for further work on women's translations. There are some minor errors in the book's genres section over which one might quibble. For instance,

a portion of John Mush's biography of Margaret Clitherowe was in fact printed before the nineteenth century, in 1619, and most historians agree that it is anachronistic to refer to the church headed by Thomas Cranmer as "Anglican" (99). Still, Demers gets so many details right and is on top of current scholarship in the field to such an extent that minor missteps may be easily forgiven. Demers's range in this section is nearly exhaustive; she combines discussion of better-known figures (such as Elizabeth Cary and Isabella Whitney) with references to little-known writers and texts (such as Margaret Tyler, who translated Diego Ortunez de Calahorra as *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood*). This feature helps the book accomplish the difficult task of speaking both to students new to the field and to those more familiar with the terrain Demers surveys.

In the third section, Demers gives extended attention to six major authors, figures who together form an emerging canon of early modern women writers: Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke; Aemilia Lanyer; Elizabeth Tanfield, Viscountess Falkland; Lady Mary Wroth; Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle; and Katherine Philips. These discussions are not meant to break new ground on these writers but to provide an overview of their work as well as of major critical issues and controversies pertaining to it. The discussions in this section should prove a useful starting point for students beginning research projects on one of these writers and/or as a useful supplementary reading assignment to accompany the study of these women's work. The final section of the book comprises two appendices. The first is a brief essay entitled "Women and the Rise of Print Culture." The second contains four separate chronologies of early modern Englishwomen's writings and publications, continental women writers, major events in English and continental history, and male-authored English and continental publications. These chronologies should help students locate early modern women writers in historical and literary-historical frameworks. Because of its range, its clear style, and its student-friendly features, like the final chronologies and its short, manageable sections, the book should prove very helpful to teachers endeavouring to bring the rapidly-evolving field of early modern women writers into their classrooms.

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