Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme

Hammons, Pamela S., and Brandie R. Siegfried, eds. World-Making Renaissance Women: Rethinking Early Modern Women's Place in Literature and Culture

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Volume 45, numéro 3, été 2022

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1099755ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i3.40458

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Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)
2293-7374 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer ce compte rendu

Campbell, H. (2022). Compte rendu de [Hammons, Pamela S., and Brandie R. Siegfried, eds. World-Making Renaissance Women: Rethinking Early Modern Women's Place in Literature and Culture]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, *45*(3), 322–324. https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i3.40458

Hammons, Pamela S., and Brandie R. Siegfried, eds.
World-Making Renaissance Women: Rethinking Early Modern Women's Place in Literature and Culture.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xvi, 304 + 6 fig. ISBN 978-1-108-83115-4 (hardcover) £75.

Editors Pamela S. Hammons and Brandie R. Siegfried continue the efforts of literary scholars to alter the perception that women's writings were not intricately involved in the formation of early modern literature. The volume was published after Siegfried's death and is dedicated to her memory. It brings together a distinguished group of scholars and builds on the theoretical framework of Nelson Goodman's *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1978) and on more recent publications such as Ayesha Ramachandran's *The Worldmakers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). The contributors argue that world-making was not solely an enterprise undertaken by men. The essays centre on answering what scholars miss about Renaissance literature when women's writings are not included, how to distinguish women's impact on literature, and whether at least some early modern women writers were world-makers. Sixteen women are covered in the seventeen chapters. Of these, Aphra Behn, Margaret Cavendish, and Aemilia Lanyer receive the most extensive attention. Collectively, the authors argue that these women were indeed world-makers who contributed significantly to literature and culture during their own time and had far-reaching influence that extended beyond their lifetimes.

The first part tackles how English Renaissance women shaped literature, culture, and gendered assumptions that bore fruit after their deaths. Erin Murphy's chapter analyzes Aemilia Lanyer's use of typology and queer temporality. Paul Salzman examines the complicated transmission history of Aphra Behn's writings, the uncertainty for many years that her writing would reach canonical status, and her impact on the development of prose fiction. Siegfried's chapter steps outside England and discusses Gráinne Ní Mháille's revitalized image in Ireland as inspiration for developments in eighteenth-century aisling poetry and as a symbol of Irish resistance against English injustice. The process of eliding Renaissance women's voices continues today, argue Naomi J. Miller and Lisa Walters. Their chapter explicates how recent films, television series, and documentaries continue to portray Renaissance women as the victims of

powerful men and to fixate on women's sexual relationships rather than on the women's agency, political acumen, and power.

The second section focuses on women's reshaping and innovation of literary forms. Marion Wynne-Davies's persuasive chapter challenges the assumption that women's drama was limited to the domestic space of the closet. Her study of Jane Lumley's *Iphigeneia* (1550–54) demonstrates that women playwrights negotiated limited boundaries to enter male-dominated spaces of outdoor geography and contemporary politics. Laura De Furio's chapter disputes with scholars who accept Lucy Hutchinson's claim in *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (1806) to be defending her husband's legacy. Instead, De Furio contends that Hutchinson prioritized her own legacy over her husband and presented herself as an authority in her marriage and as a successful political negotiator. Lara Dodds enters the debate over Margaret Cavendish's lack of and experimentation with form.

Except for Siegfried's chapter, the book primarily focuses only on English women who wrote in the seventeenth century and does not tackle the world-shaping impact of women outside of England. It, therefore, loses some of the literary and cultural conversation with women writers beyond England. Victoria E. Burke reveals the value of such wider research and comparative analysis. Burke argues that two women—Madeline de Souvré and Behn—were key innovators in the development of the less traditional literary genre of the maxim.

The third part turns to how women's writings interacted with religion, politics, science, and philosophy. Reimagining and shaping the world had real world implications for society. Suzanne Trill focuses on the political and religious agency exerted by an English Jacobite in Scotland, Lady Anne Halkett. Halkett's writings reveal the permeability and shifting boundaries between private and public. Her story, moreover, provides the perspective of a woman on the losing side of history. Marshelle Woodward's chapter turns to Hester Pulter, who like Halkett suffered loss as a royalist. Pulter's writing revealed deep-seated tensions over world-building in a world that was believed to be destined for destruction. In contrast, David Cunning contends that Margaret Cavendish viewed the world as redeemable and sought to create a new world with greater gender equality. Similarly, Elaine Hobby's chapter maintains that Behn envisioned a world with different gender expectations. In *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687), Behn created characters that showcased the absurdity of earthly gender conventions.

The final section challenges continuing assumptions of stereotypes about early modern women. Catherine Loomis's erudite chapter discusses men writing in the guise of women. It permitted women's voices, albeit mediated, to be heard and it provided an opening for women writers. Hammons's chapter contends that Lady Mary Carey and Katherine Austen actively fought negative stereotypes about women rather than tacitly accepting prevailing views. They sought to create a local world with more positive views of widows and mothers. Jamie Goodrich makes the case that nuns' lack of reproduction in a society that attempted to define women by their reproduction caused Protestants to cast nuns as a threat to society and to the heteronormative order. Elizabeth Hodgson, like Hammons, finds that early modern women, Aemilia Lanyer and Rachel Speght, refashioned popular literary genres to create rhetorical guidance for women to defend themselves against negative stereotypes and Jacobean politics. Finally, Tina Skouen and Henriette Kolle argue that Margaret Cavendish deployed a melancholy persona to portray herself as a scholarly genius—previously assumed only possible for a man. Cavendish pushed against the edges of a woman's life options.

Although scholars for decades have evinced that early modern women's writing was significant in its own time, *World-Making Renaissance Women* demonstrates a continued need to explore women's world-making activities. Women may not have had the same Renaissance as their male counterparts; nonetheless, this volume indicates that despite lack of opportunity and education, women proved to be innovators that shaped both men's and women's writing and perceptions of the world. This volume further indicates the need for more research into the world-making efforts of women outside England and whether their visions and contributions differed significantly from English women. This fine compilation of essays should prove of interest to scholars in numerous fields, especially literary scholars.

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https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i3.40458