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## Smith, Suzuki, & Wiseman's "Women's Political Writings, 1610-1725" - Book Review

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concludes that the excitement of the first few years achieved no measurable gain in Quaker membership or spiritual vitality, despite spending a lot of money. However, it should be noted that successor bodies (now Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire) have continued the original parochial commitment for another 79 years so far.

Freeman clearly identifies the tensions which hindered the work of the 1905 Committee. In many respects it duplicated already existing work in Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, with the creation of a select group, and indeed paid field workers. Social hierarchies among Friends were replicated in the outside world, working men were either inadequately educated to serve a Meeting, or attended the Adult School but rarely became Quakers. Gender equality was lacking. The 60 young men who tramped across Yorkshire in 1905 soon made it clear that women would not be welcome on such occasions. Freeman also points to the lack of attention to the 1914–18 war in the work of the Committee. Was this the same in the business of the Quarterly Meeting? A puzzling reference about the suitability for Meeting intervisitation of ‘young men returning from the continent’ in 1916 could helpfully be explained. What had they been doing, and what were they going to do? All these frustratingly brief allusions to wider contextual issues lead the reader to further exploration in other volumes.

The Paper itself is lucid but I found the use of a footnote system without a separate bibliography made it difficult to track full information about particular books.

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SMITH, H.L., SUZUKI, M., and WISEMAN, S. (eds.), *Women's Political Writings, 1610–1725* (4 vols.; London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), pp. xxxiii + 409, xvii + 380, xiv + 327, xiii + 378. ISBN: 978-1-85196-792-6, Hardback, £350/\$625.

This collection brings together a range of political texts by women in the period before and leading up to the English Civil War, during the Civil War and Interregnum, during and following the Restoration, and concluding with works from the reign of Queen Anne and the early Georgian period. Produced with the care and high-quality scholarship that we have come to expect from Pickering and Chatto, this four-volume, reset and transcribed edition would be a valuable tool for anyone working on seventeenth-century Quaker history.

The authors included write from a wide variety of political and religious positions. Many are, as one would expect, Quakers and the collection includes, among others, Elizabeth Hooton, Margaret Fell, Dorothy White, Anne Dowcra, Judith Boulbie and Mary Howgill. There are ten Quaker authors and one who may have been connected to Friends. Most of the women are represented by more than one text—there are six by Elizabeth Hooton, for example—and each text is provided in its entirety. So often we find ‘snippets’ of Quaker texts in anthologies of early modern women’s writings; these are texts suitable for scholars to work with.

One of the values of a collection like this is the chance it gives to see Quaker writings in their wider contemporary context; to read, for example, Mary Howgill’s

*A Remarkable Letter to Oliver Cromwell* (1657) alongside other women's letters to Cromwell allows for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of her writing. Forty-three individual authors are represented; there are, in addition, ten collective petitions written by groups of women, although no examples of collective writing by Quaker women have been included, which seems a missed opportunity, given the wealth of manuscript material at Friends' House. Topics discussed include 'the power and legitimacy of the state, the most effective forms of government, the relationship between religion and state, the role of gender in determining political standing, the connection between one's social rank or class and one's place within society, and the place of the family in the early modern state and broader political networks' (I, p. xiii). The editors worked on the basis of prioritising the inclusion of those texts which were not already easily available in modern editions.

The set is prefaced with a General Introduction and then each of the volumes, which are arranged in date order, has its own Introduction, setting the works into their particular political and social context. Beyond that, each author is provided with 1–3 pages of introduction including a short biography, information about other works and contextual information for the writings. There are extensive explanatory endnotes to each text and a consolidated topical index, all of which add to the usefulness of the set and to the possibility of making new and interesting connections between disparate texts.

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NEELON, D., *James Nayler: Revolutionary to Prophet* (Becket, MA: Leadings Press, 2009), pp. xxxviii + 218. ISBN: 0-981-7363-2-7, Hardback, \$39.95.

James Nayler (1618?–60) remains little known among Friends other than his 'fall' in the wake of his Bristol enactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (1656). For this 'horrid blasphemy' he was tried by Parliament, tortured and incarcerated. Forsaken by Fox at this tragic moment, he was released by the Rump three years later only to die after being set upon by persons unknown while returning to his Yorkshire home.

Neelon's *James Nayler* comprises an Introduction and sixteen chapters, the first five of which provide the background to his subject's public ministry. We learn how Nayler grew up in the confused and volatile political and religious environment of Caroline England in the parish of Woodkirk in West Ardsley near Wakefield. Neelon, scotching Bittle's (1986) supposition that the substantial East Ardsley House was Nayler's home (pp. 3–6), makes much of the local history of Woodkirk since he is keen to paint a comprehensive picture of Nayler's social and working environment, 'a sense of place'. His success in this respect is impressive given the paucity of materials at his command.

In addressing 'Anthony Nutter and the Puritans', Chapter 2 describes the growth of Puritanism through the career of the most famous of Woodkirk clerics. Then, in Chapter 3, we are eased into an examination of 'religious dissent' and the struggle for 'freedom of conscience'. Charles I, the 'abuse' of his personal rule (1629–40) and the