

When was feminism born - in the 1960s or in the 1660s? For England, one might answer: the early decades of the 17th century. James I was King of England, and women were expected to be chaste, obedient, subordinate, and silent. Some, however, were not, and these are the women who interest Barbara Lewalski - those who, as queens and petitioners, patrons and historians and poets, took up the pen to challenge and subvert the repressive patriarchal ideology of Jacobean England. Setting out to show how these women wrote themselves into their culture, Lewalski rewrites Renaissance history to include some of its most compelling - and neglected - voices. As a culture dominated by a powerful Queen gave way to the rule of a patriarchal ideologue, a woman's subjection to father and husband came to symbolize the subjection of all English people to their monarch, and of all Christians to God. Remarkably enough, it is in this repressive Jacobean milieu that we first hear Englishwomen's own voices in some number, Elizabeth Cary, Aemilia Lanyer, Rachel Speght, and Mary Wroth published original poems, dramas, and prose of considerable scope and merit; others inscribed their thoughts and experiences in letters and memoirs. Queen Anne used the court masque to assert her place in palace politics, while Princess Elizabeth herself stood as a symbol of resistance to Jacobean patriarchy. By looking at these women through their works, Lewalski documents the flourishing of a sense of feminine identity and expression in spite of - or perhaps because of - the constraints of the time. The result is a fascinating sampling of Jacobean women's lives and works, restored to their rightful place in literary history and cultural politics. In these women's voices and perspectives, Lewalski identifies an early challenge to the dominant culture - and an ongoing challenge to our understanding of the Renaissance world.

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When was feminism born - in the 1960s, or in the 1660s? For England, one might answer: the early decades of the seventeenth century. James I was King of. Writing women in Jacobean England. User Review - Not Available - Book Verdict . In early 17th-century England, an era known for patriarchy and repression. Jennifer Trusted. Writing Women in Jacobean England, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, ), xii + pp., \$ cloth.

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