

VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM | 24-25 JUNE 2021



WOMEN AND AGENCY

Transnational Perspectives c.1450-1790

With generous support from The Oxford
Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH)



THE OXFORD RESEARCH CENTRE IN THE HUMANITIES



WOMEN AND AGENCY

Transnational Perspectives
c.1450-1790

24-25 June 2021

Virtual symposium
University of Oxford

This two-day interdisciplinary symposium invites scholars to examine early modern women's agency from a transnational perspective. Conversations about women's agency continue to ripple across the world, from new, passionate campaigns in Mexico and Poland that have fought to address femicide and sexual violence, to the Women's Marches, which have annually inspired global response. Now, we turn with fresh urgency to early modern women's participation in intellectual and literary cultures that bridged regional, national, and transnational divides.

Early modern women's studies have brought to light women who were profoundly engaged with international literary, philosophical, and political movements. These extraordinary women are as various as the 'Mother of the Renaissance', princess, political figure and writer during the *Querelle des femmes*, Marguerite de Navarre; renowned warrior and ruler of Gondwana, Rani Durgavati; resident of the Mughal Empire and the alleged inspiration behind

Women and Agency: Transnational Perspectives c.1450-1790

John Dryden's *Amboyna*, Mariam Khan; polymath and international patron, Queen Christina of Sweden; passionate advocate of women's educational and social equality, Mary Wollstonecraft. Collaboration across disciplinary, linguistic and national boundaries will offer fresh ways of understanding the multifaceted ways women's agency was experienced and imagined in the period c.1450-1790.

The transnational and interdisciplinary focus of this symposium will foster new discussions about questions such as, what did a woman's agency at this time look like and how was it expressed in different spaces and mediums? How does situating women in an international network alter our reading of female-authored texts and/or representations of women? What practical mechanisms enabled and thwarted women to correspond with other men and women across the globe? In what ways did both men and women conceive of women's place on the global stage and does this conception allow us to complicate our own understandings of agency today?

We would like to welcome you to *Women and Agency: Transnational Perspectives, c. 1450-1790*, which we hope will provide a platform for enjoyable and stimulating discussion. Please keep an eye on the website for all updates; following the symposium we hope to carry on the conversation at womenandagency.wordpress.com.

Kate Allan and Nupur Patel
Symposium Organisers

Women and Agency: Transnational Perspectives, c. 1450-1790 is generously funded by the AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund, as part of The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH).



PROGRAMME

Please note this two-day symposium will take place online on 24-25th June 2021 in British Summer Time (BST) (UCT+1) via Zoom.

24th JUNE

10:00 – 10:15

Registration and welcome

10:15 – 11:45

Panel 1: Creating Agency

Chair **Jake Arthur**
(University of Oxford)

Katherine Mennis
(University of Oxford):
'Translators Learn of Her': Latin
Translation and Women's Agency

Jessica Sternbach
(Temple University): Virginal
Spaces: Feminine Music and Space
in Dutch Seventeenth-Century
Painting

Caitlin Dahl
(University of Pittsburgh): Playful
Articulation: Voicing Female
Desire in Les Mémoires de
Henriette-Sylvie de Molière

11:45 – 12:00

Break

12:00 – 13:30

Panel 2: Crafting Agency

Chair **Ellice Wu**
(Nanyang Technological
University)

Emily Fu
(University of Toronto): Making
and Thinking Small: Encounters
with Pronk Poppenhuisen

Mallory Haselberger
(University of Maryland): Learning
to Draw: Giovanna Garzoni's Libro
de'caratteri and Transnational
Calligraphy

Lorenz A. Hindrichsen
(Independent Scholar): Glocal
Intersectionality in Lady Drury's
Closet

13:30 – 14:30

Lunch break

14:30 – 16:00

Panel 3: Embodying Agency

Chair **Valentina Finger**
(Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität
Munich)

Hayley O'Kell
(University of Leeds): 'They say
the ladies eat these clays, to

tone down their colour': Perilous
Beauty Regimes in Early Modern
Spain

Selin Ozulkulu
(Williams College): Beautiful
Protection: Henna in Anatolian
Henna Nights

Blanca Llanes Parra
(University of Valencia): Gender-
Based Violence and Women's
Agency in Early Modern Madrid

16:00 – 16:15

Break

16:15 – 17:45

Panel 4: Challenging Representations

Chair **Tristan Marshall**
(Shakespeare's Globe)

Seth Wilson
(University of Georgia):
Restoration Actresses and the
Invention of the English Woman

Claire Becker
(University of Rochester): Mother
Juana de la Cruz Through the
Eyes of Father Antonio Daza

Rathika Muthukumaran
(University of Oxford): The
'Penthesilean of China' and the
'Arrias and Portias of Rome' in
India: Mediating Women's Agency

and Asian ethnography on the
Late-Stuart Stage

17:45 – 18:00

Break

18:00 – 19:00

Keynote: Agency and Activism: Then and Now

Professor **Merry Wiesner-Hanks**
(University of Wisconsin,
Milwaukee)

KEYNOTE

24th JUNE

18:00 – 19:00

‘Agency and Activism: Then and Now’

Professor Merry Wiesner-Hanks, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

My talk briefly surveys recent thinking about agency as a concept in several disciplines, provides a few early modern examples of women’s agency, and then connects these with some of the issues that have emerged in recent women’s activism or that appear as if they will be particularly serious as we move forward (we all hope) into a post-COVID world. I discuss why agency has been such a powerful concept in women’s and gender studies, particularly for periods and

places in which scholars seek to overcome an emphasis on victimization or passivity, and outline Allyson Poska’s notion of ‘agentic gender norms’ that operated alongside patriarchal norms in the early modern world. I note that most of the huge amount of scholarship on early modern women that has emerged over the last decade argues for some level of women’s agency. Yes, patriarchal expectations and/or institutions were a powerful force, but in whatever case the author is examining, this woman or these women successfully resisted, and wrote, composed, painted, ruled, migrated, lived alone, had sex and often children out of wedlock, worked, ran businesses, and so on. In somewhat greater detail, I discuss the role of women and girls in changing patterns of consumption and work, and how this plays out in debates about the growing economic dominance of Europe. At the end, I link these to

contemporary issues, as COVID has laid bare the fragility of many gains for women.

Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks is a Distinguished Professor of History and Women’s and Gender Studies Emerita at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. She is the senior editor of the *Sixteenth Century Journal*, the editor-in-chief of the seven-volume *The Cambridge World History* (2015), and the author or editor of thirty books and more than 100 articles or book chapters that have appeared in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek, Chinese, Turkish, and Korean. These include most recently: *Challenging Women’s Agency and Activism in Early Modernity* (2021); *What Is Early Modern History?* (2021); (with Teresa A. Meade) *Blackwell Companion to Global Gender History* (2nd ed. 2021); *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (3rd



ed. 2020); *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (4th ed. 2019); (with Urmi Engineer Willoughby) *A Primer for Teaching Women, Gender, and Sexuality in World History* (Duke, 2018). She is currently editing, with Mathew Kuefler, the four-volume *Cambridge World History of Sexualities*.

This keynote will be recorded and made available via the Women and Agency website (womenandagency.wordpress.com) at a later date. Please see the website for a bibliography kindly provided by Professor Wiesner-Hanks.

25th JUNE

10:00 – 10:15

Registration and Welcome

10:15 – 11:45

Panel 5: Practising Agency

Chair **Nancy Haijing Jiang**
(Northwestern University)

Chloe Fairbanks

(University of Oxford): 'For no man's pleasure, I': Exercising Female Agency in the Early Modern English Tavern

Laura Roberts

(University of Oxford): 'She was not only your Mother but your Captain': English Nuns, Religious Violence, and Self-Identification in the Dutch Revolt, 1566-1630

Urvi Shah

(Jadavpur University) and **Debraj Ghatak**
(Independent Scholar): Religious Agency, Cult Worship and Traditions of Womanhood in Mangalkabya

11:45 – 12:00

Break

12:00 – 13:30

Panel 6: Mobile Agents

Chair **Serena Laiena**
(University of Cambridge)

Chris Higgins

(Independent Scholar): 'Wide Wandering Weemen': the nature and variety of female mobility in the early modern era

Theresa A. Kutasz Christensen

(Independent Scholar): Agents, Acquisitions, and Agency: Queen Christina of Sweden's Development of Antiquarian Collections in Stockholm and Rome

Kathryn Marshalek

(Vanderbilt University): The Politics of Sanctity: Luisa de Carvajal in Anglo-Spanish contexts

13:30 – 14:30

Lunch break

14:30 – 16:00

Panel 7: Networks of Agency

Chair **Chimène Bateman**
(University of Oxford)

Anne R. Larsen

(Hope College): Salons, Agency, and the Self-Representation of Three French Seventeenth-Century Women of Science

Olin Moctezuma-Burns

(University of Cambridge): Mary Somerset's seed lists and the paperwork of transnational cooperation

Ben James

(King's College London): Letters of a Portuguese Abbess: Madre Soror Maria da Cruz

16:00 – 16:15

Break

16:15 – 17:45

Panel 8: Confronting Power

Chair **Sam Dobbie**
(University of Glasgow)

Ruchika Sharma

(University of Delhi): Bequeathing Unto Thee: Intimacy and Materiality in Mixed-Race Households in early Colonial Bengal

Erica Levenson

(Crane School of Music, State University of New York, Potsdam): From the French Courtroom to the English Opera: The Trial of Marie-Catherine Cadière on the Early Eighteenth-Century London Stage

Jagyoseni Mandal

(University of Oxford): *Why*

are women kept in the protest?':

Revisiting the Bishnoi Movement (1730), The First Environmentalist Movement in India in light of today's Protests

17:45 – 18:00

Break

18:00 – 19:15

Women and Agency: Transnational Perspectives Roundtable Discussion

Chair **Dr Nadia Cattoni**
(University of Lausanne)

Professor Bernadette Andrea
(University of California, Santa Barbara)

Professor Suraiya Faroqhi
(Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul)

Professor Ros Smith
(Australian National University, Canberra)

19:15 – 19:20

Closing Remarks

Symposium Organisers

Kate Allan

(University of Oxford)

and **Nupur Patel**

(University of Oxford)

ROUNDTABLE

25th JUNE
18:00 – 19:15

Women and Agency: Transnational Perspectives

Roundtable Discussion

Chair **Dr Nadia Cattoni**
(University of Lausanne)

Professor Bernadette Andrea
(University of California, Santa Barbara)

Professor Suraiya Faroqhi
(Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul)

Professor Ros Smith
(Australian National University, Canberra)

The roundtable discussion will be recorded and made available via the Women and Agency website (womenandagency.wordpress.com) at a later date.

Chair: **Dr Nadia Cattoni**,
University of Lausanne

Nadia Cattoni is a researcher at University of Lausanne. Previously she was a SNF Postdoctoral Fellow at University Ca'Foscari of Venice and an EFEO Postdoctoral Research Fellow at EHESS of Paris. She received her PhD from University of Lausanne in 2016 for a thesis on the female figure (*nāyikā*) in the works of Dev, an 18th century Indian poet. Her research is focused on early modern Indian literature in Braj, especially courtly poetry, erotics, aesthetics and women's writing. She is the author of "The Figure of Radha in Miniature Paintings: From the Pastoral to the Courtly, from Text to Visuality, from Polyphony to Normativity" (*Journal of Religion and Gender*, 2015) and of *Dev, l'artisan-poète du 18^{ème} siècle et la nāyikā dans le Rasavilāsa. Circulation et échanges, intertextualité et*



transformations (DeGruyter, 2020). She is also the co-editor of *Early Modern India. Literatures and Images, Texts and Languages* (CrossAsia-eBooks, 2019).

Professor Bernadette Andrea,
University of California,
Santa Barbara

Bernadette Andrea is professor of literary and cultural studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is the author of *The Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World in Early Modern British Literature and Culture* (University of Toronto Press, 2017) and *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). She edited and introduced English *Women Staging Islam, 1696–1707* (University of Toronto, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012) for the series “The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe.” Her co-edited collections include *Travel and Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World*, with Patricia Akhimié (University of Nebraska Press, 2019), and *Early Modern England and Islamic*



Worlds, with Linda McJannet (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Her articles and book chapters on contemporary women writers from Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco appear in journals such as *HAWWA: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* and collections such as *Arab Women's Lives Retold: Exploring Identity Through Writing*. She currently serves as a co-editor, with Julie Campbell and Allyson Poska, of *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, and is the director of The Early Modern Center at UCSB.

Professor Suraiya Faroqhi,
Ibn Haldun University,
Istanbul

Suraiya Faroqhi is a professor of history at Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul. After studying at the universities of Hamburg/Germany (Dr. Phil.) and Istanbul, as well as at Indiana University/Bloomington (MA for Teachers), she had a lengthy career at Middle East Technical University (Ankara): from instructor to full professor, 1971-1987. She then became a professor at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich/Germany. After retirement in 2007, she moved to a professorship in history at Istanbul Bilgi University, where she is now an emerita. Her focus is on Ottoman social history, especially artisan production, the use of objects as historical sources, as well as urban life and cross-cultural linkages, her most recent books being: *A Cultural History*



of the Ottomans: The Imperial Elite and its Artefacts (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), and *The Ottoman and Mughal Empires: Social History in the Early Modern World* (I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2019), which should appear in paperback next month: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/the-ottoman-and-mughal-empires-9781788313667/>

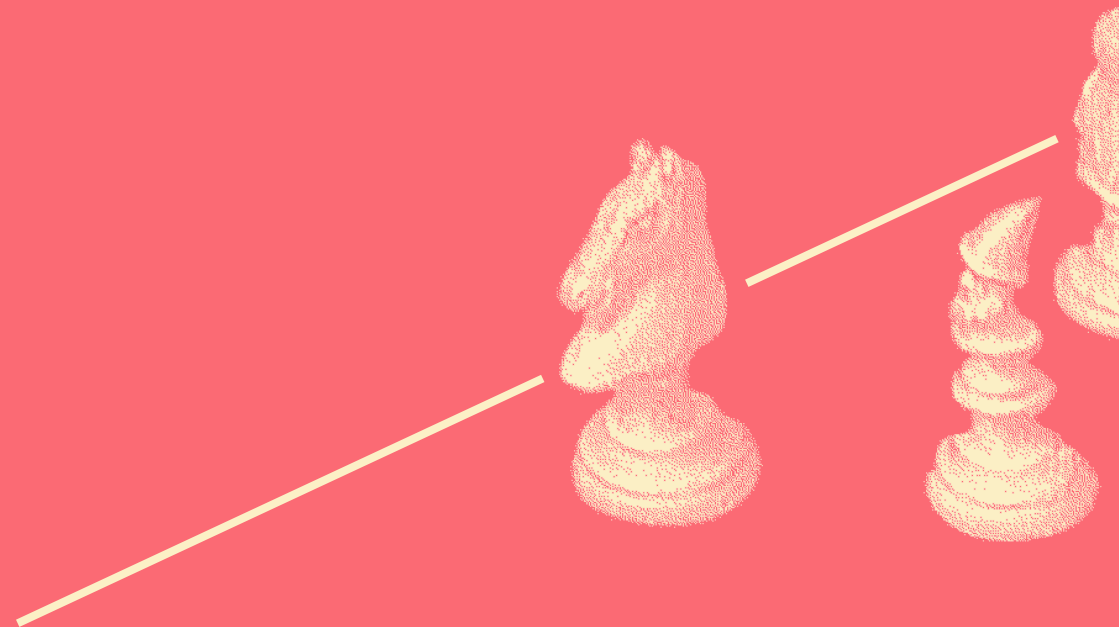
**Professor Rosalind Smith,
Australian National
University, Canberra**

Rosalind Smith is Professor of English at the Australian National University and Director of the ANU Centre for Early Modern Studies. She is the author of *Sonnets and the English Woman Writer, 1560–1621: The Politics of Absence* (Palgrave, 2005) and co-editor of *Material Cultures of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Palgrave, 2014) and *Early Modern Women's Complaint: Gender, Form and Politics* (Palgrave, 2020) as well as the author of numerous chapter and articles on early modern women's writing, which have appeared most recently in the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, *Textual Studies and Women's Writing*. She is the co-founder of the Early Modern Women's Research Network (EMWRN) with A/Prof Patricia Pender and together



they are the general editors of the *Palgrave Online Encyclopaedia of Early Modern Women's Writing*. She has served on the HCA panel of the Australian Research Council College of Experts (2015-17) and was a Senior Common Room Fellow at Merton College Oxford in 2019/20. Her external research funding of over \$3 million includes a current Australian Research Council Future Fellowship (2019-23) on early modern women's marginalia and a Linkage grant with State Library Victoria on the Emerson Collection, a recent early modern bequest of over

5000 books and manuscripts (2019-2022), leading a large cross-disciplinary team in order to investigate the collection and make it available to others.



PANELS AND ABSTRACTS

Women and Agency: Transnational Perspectives c.1450-1790

24th JUNE

Panel 1: Creating Agency

‘Translators Learn of Her’: Latin Translation and Women’s Agency

Katherine Mennis,
University of Oxford

The translation of English texts into Latin played an important part in canonising and exporting vernacular literary achievement in early modernity. This paper will ask whether the practice of Latin translation offered women any agency, as original authors, translators, readers, patrons, or figures represented in the translated texts. The case of Margaret Cavendish suggests not: Cavendish engaged in a long struggle to have her words Latinised, and one commissioned translator found



‘great difficulties therein, due to the confusedness of the matter’; only her life of William Cavendish was ultimately Latinised in print. However, several Latin translations have female figures at their hearts, from Queen Henrietta Maria, whose idealised female pastoralism is represented in a Latin translation of Fletcher’s *The Faithful Shepherdess*, to Mary Fairfax, the girl whom Andrew Marvell was tutoring when he self-translated ‘On a Drop of Dew’. There is also evidence that Latin translations had a limited female readership: Bathsua

Makin, for example, annotates her copy of a Latin translation of *Troilus and Criseyde* with a Greek poem. After mapping the involvement of women in the production and circulation of Latin translations, this paper will examine the refiguration of female figures like Criseyde, Cleopatra, Mary Fairfax and Eve in translation. I will ask whether changes made to the representation of women in Latin translation can be ascribed to 'linguistic determinism' or translatorly choices, including a tendency among these translators to metaphorically figure the translated text as female.

Virginal Spaces: Feminine Music and Space in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Painting

Jessica Sternbach,
Temple University

Elizabeth Honig suggested in her essay on “The Space of Gender in Seventeenth-Century Dutch painting” that artists recognized a market of female buyers and composed their images of domestic scenes to appeal to their taste. It stands to reason that sight was not the only sense an artist could call upon to tempt an audience. In the second half of the seventeenth century images of music-making began to proliferate and Dutch artists staged these musical scenes either in the unpredictable exterior world of city spaces outside the home or in the controlled domestic interior. This paper will explore the multi-sensory



and gendered associations evoked through paintings of women in their virginal spaces.

Art historians have tended to analyze these musical scenes for their iconographic meanings, however these paintings are defining spaces through multiple senses. The virginal's music has tended to be inextricably linked to the feminine realm of the domestic interior. The paper decorations found pasted onto such instruments, as seen in Johannes Vermeer's *Music Lesson* (1662-65) (National Gallery of Art, London), often tout virtues found

in moralizing writings of Jacob Cats. I will show that the, like the “feminine gaze” discussed by Honig, these artists are engaging what I call the “feminine ear” to specifically appeal to the aural sensibilities of Dutch women.

Playful Articulation: Voicing Female Desire in *Les Mémoires de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*

Caitlin Dahl,
University of
Pittsburgh

With the publication in 1659 of her scandalous poem “Jouissance” [Enjoyment] not-so-implicitly referencing female ecstasy, Madame de Villedieu (Marie-Catherine Desjardins) entered the literary scene with a touch of notoriety that would reemerge in her writings throughout her career as one of the first women to live by their pen in 17th-century France. Her genre-bending pseudo-autobiographical novel *Les Mémoires d’Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* (1671-1674), published in English as *The Memoires of the Life and Rare Adventures of Henrietta Sylvia Moliere* (1672-1677), engages with the *badin*, a



lighthearted and playful mode of speech that gained literary currency in mid-century France, to stage serious issues (such as rape, murder, and self-defense) nonchalantly.

This paper illustrates the *Mémoires’* rescripting of the *badin* to accommodate female desire and enunciative agency, as well as gender and sexual play. Villedieu uses the *badin* to articulate desirous relations between women, problematizing the supposed inconsequentiality of playful badinage to voice a critique of the idealized heterosocial

and heterosexual relations championed by dominant social practices. The *Mémoires* employs *badinage* as a response to the sexual politics of the period as the eponymous protagonist plays with and escapes from the affections of both men and women through the transnational staging of her activities. In this way, I contend, the *badin* emerges as a site of agency through which Sylvie critiques hegemonic heterosexual relationality, while attenuating her nonnormative desires through the supposedly non-serious discourse of the *badin* such that they might be voiced across Europe.

Panel 2: Crafting Agency

Making and Thinking Small: Encounters with *Pronk Poppenhuisen*

Emily Fu,
University of Toronto

“Just like as in a nest of boxes round/
Degrees of sizes in each box are found,/So in this world, may many worlds more be,/Thinner and less, and less still by degree.”¹ Margaret Cavendish asks us to imagine this miniature world in her 1653 poem. Cavendish’s interests in materiality and microscopy were shared by female creators and collectors across Europe, most notably by her Dutch contemporaries – elite women who expended massive resources to produce fine cabinets which replicate fully-furnished rooms in wealthy homes. While the exotic inventories of the *poppenhuisen* have been



likened to the *kunstkamer* of elite men, female patrons were not considered to have a presence in the world of collecting, and, despite their aesthetic quality and high level of craft, contemporary sources do not distinguish between collections like the dollhouse and other modes of luxury consumption. In recent scholarship, too, dollhouses are often reductively understood as didactic tools capable only of affirming ideologies rather than constructing them, and as separate from “male” spheres of economic, social and

technological development. My paper aims to challenge current understandings of poppenhuisen by proposing that they should be recognised as sites in which women exercised epistemological and aesthetic agency through collection, play, and inheritance; as objects belonging to a wider transnational network of cultural and knowledge production fascinated with observing and understanding the world in miniature.

¹ Margaret Cavendish, "Of Many Worlds in this World," in Margaret Cavendish's Poems and Fancies: A Digital Critical Edition, ed. Liza Blake. Website published May 2019. <http://library2.utm.utoronto.ca/poemsandfancies/>.

Learning to Draw: Giovanna Garzoni's *Libro de'caratteri* and Transnational Calligraphy

Mallory Haselberger,
University of Maryland

Giovanna Garzoni, one of Baroque Italy's most well-known artists of botanical subjects and miniatures, produced a volume of calligraphic and pseudo-miniature illustrations in c. 1617-22, the *Libro de'caratteri cancellereschi corsivi*. This paper considers the seemingly central role of instructional books written by authors across Europe as part of women's artistic training during the seventeenth century which supplemented traditional education in the studio. Through an analysis of Garzoni's *Libro* in terms of its artistic program and attention to line and language, an acknowledgment of the direct adaptation of non-Italian books



in Garzoni's learning process signals the importance of transnational print culture in women artists' education. While Garzoni, like many of her Italian counterparts, copied the work of an original artist from a manual, she remarkably provides new artistic additions of her own means for an individualized narrative through the book and within her broader body of work, including her miniature paintings. Rather than an adherence only to paintings, sculptures, and prints available in the workshops of fathers and uncles, the use of

the book as instruction, from authors located in the Dutch Republic and England, provides a thoroughly individualized manner of education for women artists of the period. Garzoni's *Libro*, beyond exemplifying the artist's early educational practice, helps uncover a place for the woman artist's agency in early modernity through engagement with transnational resources completed under the tutelage of the artist herself, unhindered by the gendered structure of the academy or workshop.

Glocal Intersectionality in Lady Drury's Closet

Lorenz A. Hindrichsen,
Independent Scholar

Lady Drury's Closet (also known as the Hawstead Panels) represents a unique artefact whose installation at Hawstead Place enabled its deviser, Anne Bacon Drury (1572-1624), to critique dominant intersectional codes within a highly personalized space. The wooden panels, which decorated a seven square space adjacent to her bedroom, turned her closet into a private space for meditation and reflection, a practice strongly promoted by the family friend Bishop Joseph Hall. Whereas most of the Latin mottos and emblems echo designs and tropes commonly found in emblem books at the time, some distinctly altered mottos and unique designs explicitly assert Anne Drury's female



'devisership' while skilfully critiquing colour bias, colonial economies and contemporary biopolitics through text and image.¹

Drury's glocal awareness emerges most clearly in two panels depicting black males in a colonial context, the first of whom shows a coloured native in loincloth walking behind a white swan, accompanied by the caption *iam sumus iter pares* ('now we are the same'), while the second shows a well-dressed, Westernized, pipe-smoking figure, possibly a blackfaced Westerner 'gone



intus idem, ill. 49
'inside the same'



iam sumus iter pares, ill. 29
'now we are the same'

native', with the motto *intus idem* ('inside the same').² Collectively these mottos challenge a range of popular narratives at the time, such as myths of male strength and alleged medicinal properties of tobacco, white male privilege and colonial economies, the demonizing of colour, and colonial biopolitics. Lady Drury's Closet thus emerges as a powerful intersectional space that allows the deviser

to find a voice through her clever 'architext'.³

¹ H.L. Meakin, *The Painted Closet of Lady Anne Bacon Drury* (London: Routledge, 2017), 4.

² *Ibid.*, Illustrations 29, 49.

³ *Ibid.*, 6.

Panel 3: Embodying Agency

'They say the ladies eat these clays, to tone down their colour':
Perilous Beauty
Regimes in Early
Modern Spain

Hayley O'Kell,
University of Leeds

Women's beauty regimes in early modern Europe largely differed, depending upon the adherent beauty ideal promulgated by their milieu. Madame D'Aulnoy, an illustrious French traveller, textually narrates her astonishment of Spanish women constricting their breasts with lead plates.² In contrast to the rest of early modern Europe, where a robust female figure was appreciated, Spain celebrated an excessive slender female body coupled with the pan-European appreciation of a deathly white



skin tone.³ To obtain such a harrowing ideal, Spanish women took it upon themselves to let their blood (*sangrías*), consume clay (to achieve pale skin) and strap their breasts with lead plates to reduce their growth. How were Spanish women's diurnal lives affected by these excessive beauty ideals?

There is a degree of agency that can be traced in women's execution of these beauty trends. These practices, furthermore, are detailed in academically neglected female authored works, such as those by Leonor de Meneses,

Mariana de Carvajal and Ângela de Azevedo. Through their clothing and adornments too, women displayed deviancy and disputed the sumptuary laws of early modern Spain that attempted to separate classes through clothing. This paper will consider how Spanish women managed unrealistic beauty expectations, found agency within the beauty industry and it will interrogate how women deemed adherently beautiful were given more textual space. To have more agency in their milieu, did early modern women *need* to adhere to beauty standards?

¹ 'Destos barrozes dizen que comen las damas, por amortiguar la color'. Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o Española*, ed. by Felipe C. R Maldonado and Manuel Camarero (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1994), p. 164.

² Evidence for breast strapping can be found in: Marie Catherine D'Aulnoy, *Relación del viaje de España* (Madrid: Akal, 1986), p. 234

³ Margarita Ortega López, 'El período barroco (1565-1700)' in Pilar Folguera; Margarita Ortega López; Cristina Segura; Elisa Margarita Orte Garrido González, eds, *Historia de las mujeres en España* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 1997), pp. 253-344, (p.254).

Beautiful Protection: Henna in Anatolian Henna Nights

Selin Ozulkulu,
Williams College

The henna night is a key ritual and gender-specific celebration surrounding marriage. While the main reason for the henna night gathering is to celebrate the rite of passage of the bride-to-be, the henna is not a marker of the celebration. It is the material that has the agency, as a marker of the holy, to transform the bride-to-be from a girl to a woman. Previous scholarship on Anatolian henna nights during Ottoman rule claims that this ritual and material, both during its creation and reception, are keepers of patriarchy. This paper aims to dismantle these readings, by using a postcolonial feminist intervention and incorporating Amelia Jones's work, to show that henna was a major agent



of mediation, protection and identification that enabled female intersubjective corporeal experiences. Henna, as an ephemeral material, also has the capacity to offer new ways of thinking and theorizing about the ways materiality can expand our understanding of female agency. The process of deconstructing the use of henna with a feminist methodology, inspired by Saba Mahmood, generates a more compassionate, if not accurate, re-interpretation of the ritual, which frees the ritual from the binary of resistance against submission.

By reconstructing the role of henna through *kına türküleri* (henna night folk song), this paper re-voices the concerns, misery, and rage of generations of silenced women. The paper chronicles how materials can expand female agency out of gender-specific ritual spaces into the public space by linking sacredness to secrecy.

Gender-Based Violence and Women's Agency in Early Modern Madrid

Blanca Llanes Parra,
University of Valencia

Violence against women remains a key issue today. Over the last decades, the growing concern on this matter has led government agencies from countries around the world to implement special programs to put an end to this social problem. The increased sensitivity towards this type of violence -fostered as well by diverse social movements and non-governmental initiatives- is likewise reflected in the mass media, where cases of violence against women are more frequently portrayed nowadays, rendering larger visibility to this phenomenon. Worldwide statistical data on the number of women murdered by current or ex-intimate male partners reveal the magnitude of the



problem. If we look back in time, however, we can observe that the prevalence of violence against women was much higher than it is today.

This was certainly the case of the city of Madrid. Criminal records from Madrid's main trial court in the seventeenth century, the *Sala de Alcaldes de Casa y Corte* (the "Hall of Judges of the Royal House and Court") suggest femicide rates at least fifteen times greater than current rates. Drawing on judicial records, this paper will examine the impact of violence and sexual

aggression against women in seventeenth-century Madrid, paying special attention to the social and cultural factors that shaped it. In doing so, this paper seeks to explore the possibilities and constraints for women's agency in relation to gender-based violence during this period, shedding light on the various responses and strategies developed by women to confront this form of violence.

Panel 4: Challenging Representations

Restoration Actresses
and the Invention of
the English Woman

Seth Wilson,
University of Georgia

One of the most transformative changes in Anglophone drama came with the introduction of women to English public stages after the Restoration. Simultaneously, as women were participating in English culture in novel ways, the nation's imperial project was ramping up around the globe. These two developments intertwined, along with changing ideas about race and gender, to allow the Restoration theatre to be a site for the construction of a specifically English idea of womanhood.

In this paper, I explore three



Restoration-era plays with foreign settings that juxtapose English characters with non-English counterparts: *Amboyna* by John Dryden, *The Widow Ranter* by Aphra Behn, and the stage adaptation of *Oroonoko* by Thomas Southerne. First, I will address why the Restoration theatre eschewed blackface for its nascent actresses. I then analyze how, in the absence of visual markers of difference, these plays used plot conventions to contrast Englishwomen with their foreign counterparts. In each of these plays, English society is comic

and regenerative while non-English cultures are depicted as dangerous, violent, and corrupt. The contrast between the characters mapped onto and was enhanced by the well-known public images of the actresses embodying them. I read these threads in tandem to show that the overriding argument of these plays is that English women enjoyed an unusual amount of agency relative to their peers around the world. Thus, the nascent English actress directly shaped broader attitudes about gender.

Mother Juana de la Cruz Through the Eyes of Father Antonio Daza

Claire Becker,
University of Rochester

According to her semi-autobiography, Juana de la Cruz was conceived as a man and transformed into a woman in the womb by God in order to serve a divine purpose. As a testament to this miraculous transgendering, God left Juana with an Adam's apple. This miracle and the mark it left on her body had a profound impact on Juana, whose works reveal countless episodes of gender play. While gender play featured prominently in Juana's semi-autobiography and book of sermons, later works about her life, most notably a biography written by Father Antonio Daza, privileged narratives that associated Juana exclusively with femininity. This paper offers a microhistorical



account of the life of Juana de la Cruz as seen through the eyes of Father Antonio Daza. Through a close reading of the two versions of Daza's work (the 1610 original and a 1613 revision) and an examination of the changing world he inhabited, I argue that the discrepancies between Daza's biography and Juana's works are a product of Inquisitorial pressure coupled with shifting cultural attitudes towards intersex people as well as female mystics during the Spanish Golden Age. As the sixteenth century shifted into the seventeenth, Spanish

theatre increasingly depicted female cross-dressers, Spanish physicians became increasingly concerned with sexual difference, and female mystics gained popularity in Spain. This paper explores how each of these factors may have shaped the narrative Daza constructed in his biography of Juana de la Cruz.

The 'Penthesilean of China' and the 'Arrias and Portias of Rome' in India: Mediating Women's Agency and Asian ethnography on the Late-Stuart Stage

Rathika Muthukumaran,
University of Oxford

This paper focuses on the ways in which Indian and Chinese women's agency were expressed, and perceived, in the late-Stuart theatre. It will consider specific examples from heroic plays on China and Mughal India namely, Settle's *The Conquest of China, by the Tartars* (performed 1675) and Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe* (performed 1675). Instead of construing the dramatist's appropriation of Asian history and historical personalities from contemporary travel reports as an immediate loss of agency on the part of the cultural other, as postcolonial



criticisms of these plays emphasise, this paper proposes that specific choices, materialised on stage in the original productions, could activate the agency of Eastern characters. Amavanga, the cross-dressing Chinese female warrior in Settle's play, is filtered through the lens of the classical figure of the Amazon. She has her historical counterpart in Qin Liangyu, a female general from the Sichuan province who fought against the Manchus for the Ming imperial army in the early seventeenth century. The Jesuit historian Martino

Martini extolled her as ‘the Amazon or Penthesilean of China’. Dryden, too, uses classical referents to translate his Indian women for his readers and audiences. In the preface to *Aureng-Zebe*, Dryden describes his Indian women, Indamora and Melesinda, as ‘the Arrias and Portias of Rome’. Current criticisms of these plays emphasise the role of these classical referents in facilitating easy comprehension of foreign cultures as well as bringing the foreign closer to the English Self through the intermediary of the classical world. However, I argue that classical referents in these plays have a more complex function in setting up a spectrum of female behavioural tendencies across cultures. In this spectrum, the classical world is much closer to Eastern cultures than it is to the English Self due to European epistemic constructions of Eastern antiquity and exceptionalism

in contemporary writings. This paper makes a case for cultural appropriation of Asian women in seventeenth-century theatre to be understood with greater flexibility wherein multiple subject positions can exist, especially through the medium of the theatre and its specific technologies of staging.

25th JUNE

Panel 5: Practising Agency

‘For no man’s pleasure,
I’: Exercising Female
Agency in the Early
Modern English Tavern

Chloe Fairbanks,
University of Oxford

Housewives played an important role in the early modern English economy, particularly in their perceived ability to domesticate – and thereby render safe for consumption – foreign goods by subsuming them into English meals and medicines.¹ Given the vast body of ancient and early modern literature which held that characteristics were directly related to dietary regime, the housewife occupied a position of potentially considerable



power. Situated at a nodal point between the domestic household and a broader transcultural food network, she acted as a gatekeeper for national identity. Yet if the housewife’s role in the national economy was to domesticate foreign substances, that of professional female domestic laborers occupied a more uncertain position between the domestic and the mercantile spheres. This paper argues that it is precisely the precarity of their position which offers valuable insight into anxieties about women’s subversive potential

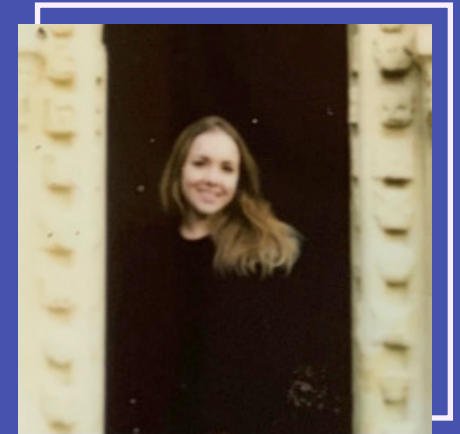
to threaten the patriarchal order – and, by extension, national identity. It examines Shakespeare’s tavern hostess Mistress Quickly, arguing that her domestic and economic autonomy troubles attempts to circumscribe women’s authority over both national identity and the patriarchal order upon which it rested. Occupying a hybrid position within both the domestic and economic spheres, Mistress Quickly’s control over food and drink and her autonomy within the domestic sphere allows us to consider the intersection of these parallel anxieties.

¹Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) and *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Kim F. Hall, ‘Culinary Spaces, Colonial Spaces: the gendering of sugar in the seventeenth century’ in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 168-190.

‘She was not only your Mother but your Captain’: English Nuns, Religious Violence, and Self-Identification in the Dutch Revolt, 1566-1630

Laura Roberts,
University of Oxford

The religious violence associated with the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conflicts of the Dutch Revolt impacted scores of civilians throughout the Low Countries. Few, however, were more vulnerable than the communities of English Catholic nuns who had sought refuge there after the establishment of Protestant rule in their home country. As women without the protection of their families and as foreigners without substantial local ties, theirs was a particularly precarious place in the social fabric of the urban environments of the Low Countries. At the same



time, however, by recollecting these instances of violence, whether feared or actualised, and commemorating their community’s resilience in the face of such attacks, the English convents could leverage these experiences as a means of articulating, solidifying, and projecting a cohesive communal identity, even in so tenuous a situation as exile. Using the records of convent chronicles and drawing on recent trends in historiography of memory and identity, this paper examines the intersections between dislocation, violence,

and community during the upheavals of the European reformations. These intersections also reveal a heightened sense of the nuns' English national identity, despite religious differences with their compatriots and in tension with their commitment to the universal Catholic church, indicating the overlaps as well as discontinuities in early modern patterns of identity. Furthermore, this paper sheds light on early modern women's ability and inclination to define and assert their own conceptions of community and identity, as the nuns did in order to make sense of their place as strangers in a strange land.

Religious Agency, Cult Worship and Traditions of Womanhood in *Mangalkabya*

Urvi Shah,
Jadavpur University,
Debraj Ghatak,
Independent Scholar

Middle Bengali Literature from the fourteenth to eighteenth century initiated the traditions of *Mangalkabya*, which were religious and didactic poetry eulogising certain goddesses. The word itself means poetry or verse meant for the welfare of humankind. While Bengal had imbibed the northern Sanskrit and Brahminical fold of the Vedas and Puranas, parts of Bengal, especially the delta region and places adjoining the river Ganga/ Hoogly possessed certain cults of goddesses that dominated contemporary rituals of worship and have left behind a strong legacy even today.



These cults, as delineated by the sections of the *Mangalkabya* are that of 'Manasa' or the snake goddess, 'Chandi' who resides in forests and is associated with good fortune, often paralleled with goddess Durga in Shaktism, 'Dharma', a folk deity representing justice and 'Annada' or Annapurna, the goddess who provides food. Besides, there were lesser known deities such as 'Sitala', the goddess that cures pox, 'Ola Bibi' who cures cholera and 'BonBibi' who protects inhabitants from tigers and is a secular mix of Hindu-Muslim traditions.



discuss the gender roles of mortal women as described in these verses and the interesting deviations towards rude and grotesque abuse in the sections titled 'pati-ninda' and 'jamai-ninda'- vilifying of the husbands and sons in-law.

The aim of this paper is to show how these cults of goddesses (except 'Dharma', who is a male god) break free from the Vedic- Puranic, and highly masculine traditions, representing an encroachment of non-Brahminical, non-Aryan deities that people from lower walks of life adhered to. This was also the time of Turkish invasion in India, which strengthened these cults creating proto-feminist figures that are human in appearance, demeanor and behaviour, yet possessing divine powers, worshipping whom brings prosperity, and denial- endless suffering. The paper shall also

Panel 6: Mobile Agents

'Wide Wandering Weemen': the nature and variety of female mobility in the early modern era

Chris Higgins,
Independent Scholar

In his book, *The Traveiler* (1575) Jerome Turler characterised 'the wide wandering of Weemen' as something which incurred 'suspicion, & bringeth some token of dishonesty.' His views and those of other authors of so-called *ars apodemica* were thought to reflect the reality of female travel in the early modern era; that it was morally questionable and limited in scope. However, an interdisciplinary approach to the surviving evidence, drawing on lesser-known public records such as the King's Remembrancer Rolls as well as references to female travel in



contemporary correspondence and popular literature, suggests that travel by English women especially to Northern Europe was far more extensive and widely recognised than previously acknowledged.

This paper surveys the findings of a database of female travellers constructed as part of ongoing postgraduate research into female mobility in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. To date over 2,100 instances of travel to Europe by English women have been identified,

from a starting point of only a handful of well-known names such as the Countesses of Pembroke and Arundel, to now include women from a wide range of backgrounds and occupations such as nuns, merchants, religious exiles and ambassadors' wives. From this database, it is possible to construct a more complex understanding both of the extent and nature of female mobility than was previously supposed both by modern historians of travel and earlier commentators like Jerome Turler.

Agents, Acquisitions, and Agency: Queen Christina of Sweden's Development of Antiquarian Collections in Stockholm and Rome

Theresa Kutasz Christensen,
Independent Scholar

Queen Christina of Sweden was well-known as a patron of the arts as and a prolific collector both as ruler of Sweden and as abdicated queen in Rome. Early modern guidebooks describe her galleries as a must-see attraction for travelers to the Eternal City. Her antiquities display at the Palazzo Riario (now Corsini) included lavish ground floor suite of rooms which housed her summer throne room along with over 200 ancient marbles, one of the largest antiquities collections amassed by an early modern woman. My



archive-based research takes an intersectional approach to investigating women's mobility in the early modern antiquities market, outlining the resources available to Christina and the transnational agent networks she used to build her collections.

Many have considered Christina an opportunist collector as she had limited means for commissions in Rome and many of her Italian paintings were acquired through the sack of Prague by Swedish troops. Unlike

her paintings, most of which traveled with her post-abdication, Christina built nearly autonomous antiquities collections in Stockholm and Rome through a robust network of agents, papally approved excavations, commissions, and gifts. A fantastic cache of correspondences and travel notes between artists, agents, their associates, and Christina, provides insight into the queen's reach, ambition, and limitations. My paper assesses the queen's personal role in the development of her famed antiquarian collections and illuminates the impact of religion, location, gender, and status on the trade in ancient marbles across early modern Europe.

The Politics of Sanctity: Luisa de Carvajal in Anglo-Spanish contexts

Kathryn Marshalek,
Vanderbilt University

This paper reexamines the career of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, a Spanish noblewoman who traveled to England in 1605, hoping, as she claimed, to be martyred in the service of the Catholic faith. Carvajal died at the very end of 1613 from illness after a brief imprisonment in the Gatehouse. In 1625, an investigation into her sanctity was begun and while the effort ultimately failed, it led to the collection of nearly 180 letters penned by Carvajal between 1598 and 1613. Here, Carvajal offers a record entirely in her own voice, presenting an exceptional account of the established tradition of female Catholic agency and opposition in post-Reformation England.



Carvajal's very public acts of defiance in the face of the repressive activities of the Jacobean regime and her capacity for epistolary self-promotion speak to a recent scholarly interest in the role of English Catholics in an emergent politics of the post-Reformation public sphere, and in particular, the performative politics of martyrdom. By placing Carvajal at the intersection of a series of international, intra- and inter-confessional tensions created by the sustained religious division of post-Reformation England, Carvajal emerges as a

sophisticated political actor—offering not only a unique account of female Catholic activism in England, but also a lens through which to view the impact and future of the Anglo-Spanish peace.

Panel 7: Networks of Agency

Salons, Agency, and the Self-Representation of Three French Seventeenth-Century Women of Science

Anne R. Larsen,
Hope College



The salons of seventeenth-century France were havens of collaborative discussion and production on a wide range of topics, including philosophical and scientific disciplines. Salons offered women the ability to inform themselves of new scientific concepts, contribute to natural knowledge, and patronize women scientists. The French Classical Age thus saw, alongside its “celebrated Great Men,” its first published women of science. This paper contextualizes the relation of scientific women to print publication and examines

the role of the salons in the authorial construction and figuration of mathematician Marie Crous (1630s), Paracelsian pharmacist Marie Meurdrac (1660s), and astronomer Jeanne Dumée (1680s). How did these women of science legitimize their entry into print and/or manuscript publication in the liminary spaces of their writings? How did individual *salonnières* enable them to express their agency through the support and financing of their authorial venture? How did social class influence their publication strategy?

Mary Somerset's seed lists and the paperwork of transnational cooperation

Olin Moctezuma-Burns,
University of
Cambridge

A series of lists written and curated by the English gentlewoman, Mary Somerset, Duchess of Beaufort (bap. 1630-1715), document the participation of women in global exchanges of plant materials and information during the seventeenth century. The remains of Somerset's methodical paperwork provide a window into the process of sending and receiving specimens, translating, corroborating, and correcting plant names, as well as establishing the identity of nameless seeds sent to her from across the world. These papers, and the routines that can be teased out from them, demonstrate the important



information maintenance work she carried out in order to bridge information economies to make botanic exchange meaningful and effective, to enable cooperation and nurture coherence among the different groups she tied together. Further, across thirteen volumes, the manuscripts evidence the importance of the list as a format that could move across nations, languages, values, and habits, and as an entry-point for women to construct credibility and negotiate authority in emerging scientific discourses.

This paper will explore the relationship between writing formats and transnational cooperation through a rich archival source that shows the everyday operations involved in specimen exchanges, and will begin to draw pathways to recuperate women's agency in facilitating, coordinating, and regulating information and specimen flows across large distances.

Letters of a Portuguese Abbess: Madre Soror Maria da Cruz

Ben James,
King's College London

Early modern diplomacy was not conducted simply in throne rooms. Ambassadors and diplomats relied on broad networks to influence policy and affect change; in Lisbon, this included cloistered nuns many of whom came from the kingdom's most powerful families.

This paper argues that one such nun – Madre Maria da Cruz – was a crucial agent in a transnational diplomatic network that was responsible for the ratification of the Treaty of Madrid (1667) and the Treaty of Lisbon (1668). These treaties stabilised the Iberian Peninsula following the War of Restoration (1640-1668) until the War of the



Spanish Succession (1701-1714). Madre Maria's ties to the royal families of Portugal, Britain and to the Spanish nobility allowed her to participate in this transnational diplomacy. She was the natural daughter of the ninth Duke of Medina Sidonia, the niece of the Queen of Portugal, and cousin of two Kings of Portugal, and their sister the Queen of England.

By receiving nobles and dignitaries and through her correspondences with monarchs, consorts and diplomats, Madre Maria facilitated relationships

and advocated for peace. Her letters traversed international, confessional and monastic borders. In 1944, some of these letters – held at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* – were edited by a Portuguese historian who attributed Madre Maria da Cruz's writings to another historical figure. For many decades, Madre Maria's historical contribution has gone unrecognised and unexamined and so losing a crucial aspect of political history.

Panel 8: Confronting Power

Bequeathing Unto Thee: Intimacy and Materiality in Mixed-Race Households in early Colonial Bengal

Ruchika Sharma,
University of Delhi



A large number of Wills left by the British men, who came in official and economic capacity to India during the early colonial times, give out a snapshot of what their lives, interpersonal relationships, household objects, and everyday affairs would have been like. The rich archive of such Wills from Bengal Presidency, where the European men penned down details of their 'native' mistresses along with details of objects and property they left them, can be studied to trace the commonplace

mixed-race connections. These bequeaths, bring out the intimate, racial, and legal aspects of these domesticities as well as anxieties, against the political backdrop of emergence of a colonial empire in India. The language of the wills, the issues they highlight, and the terms of bequeath, then become very crucial to study the dynamics of the intimate shared space that the British men had come to inhabit with the native women in early colonial Bengal. The suggestion of actual wages, and the objects inherited by these women makes one want

to look into the multi-faceted role as well as kinds of labour provided by these women in these households.

In a very interesting case, William Orby Hunter, of Bihar province, and Baugwan Konwar, his native concubine, were tried for wounding their servants.¹ Her attorney argued that she could not come under the Supreme Court's jurisdiction as she was only his concubine and not under his services for any work etc. During the debate Hunter's advocate held that concubinage in fact was known to the law of England as a species of employment only. Though the hierarchy in Hunter household placed Baugwan Konwar over and above other servants, Hunter was sentenced as the crimes took place in his household unit, over which he lacked authority to put a check on to such crimes.

¹ *Hyde Papers and Reports*, Rare Books Division, National Library, Kolkata, reel 17, 23rd Dec 1796 – 12th Jan, 1797.

From the French Courtroom to the English Opera: The Trial of Marie-Catherine Cadière on the Early Eighteenth-Century London Stage

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York, Potsdam



In 1730, a young woman named Marie-Catherine Cadière accused her confessor, the Jesuit priest Jean-Baptiste Girard, of sexual abuse. Despite this testimony from Cadière herself, Girard was ultimately acquitted. Over the following years, French commentators flooded the presses with pamphlets, poems, songs, and plays, reinterpreting the scandal as grounds for religious skepticism during the Enlightenment. Although scholars have focused on this scandal in its French context, they have yet to explore its

transnational reception. By examining responses to this trial abroad, this paper reveals how the crime of sexual assault was reconstrued to match new political expediencies across national borders.

To show this process, this paper unearths a yet to be studied English ballad opera from 1732 based on the incident, *The Wanton Jesuit, or Innocence Seduced*, and interprets it within the context of eighteenth-century British politics. The genre of ballad opera often provided honest commentary

on societal issues through its use of popular tunes that communicated coded meanings to those in the know. My analysis of Cadière's ballads—recycled from pre-existing operas and songs—shows how her story became not only a symbol for anti-Catholic propaganda, but also a morality tale about how power and wealth could conceal debased deeds. As her story was reworked, the woman behind the scandal faded in popular memory, showing the limits of female agency in the early modern era. The historical record has left little trace of Cadière's private trauma, as it was quickly replaced by the public, international reinterpretations of her story.

'Why are women kept in the protest?':
Revisiting the Bishnoi Movement (1730), The First Environmentalist Movement in India in light of today's Protests

Jagyoseni Mandal,
University of Oxford



In light of the recent farmer's movement across India, the Chief Justice of the country asked, "Why are women kept in the protest?" Arguably but unsurprisingly women have taken the forefront role in what seems to be the greatest peasant movement of this century. Keeping this context as its backdrop, this paper is going to revisit the role of women in the Bishnoi movement of 1730.

Amrita Devi was a female villager in Khejarli (A village which gets its name from the abundance of Kheri or acacia trees that the Bishnoi

villagers of which Amrita Devi was a part, fostered) who singlehandedly protested against the felling of trees by the Maharaja of Jodhpur and inspired hundreds to join the protest. She literally hugged the trees, and raised the slogan "*A chopped head is cheaper than a felled tree.*" 363 villagers died in the protest but the movement led to the Bishnoi state to be legislated as a protected area, forbidding harm to trees and animals, which exists till date. The Bishnoi movement inspired the Chipko movement and the author believes that

this village movement also set the foundation for the international environment movements of today.

Women have been the backbone of people's movement and it is women who have borne the harshest consequences from the institutional authorities against which they have been protesting. From the earliest times women have protested but ironically as society had 'progressed' why women protest have been questioned more than it was ever before. Through the understanding of the Bishnoi movement this paper is going to inform our own understandings of agency today.

Drawing on early modern texts to primary accounts of lived experiences, this paper is going to ask why is it that despite the fact that women with their own agency contribute equally in a movement as their male

counterpart (if not more) but always get their agency brought into question? Why is it that authorities assume that the onus of 'giving' agency to women protestors lies in their hands? When can we see women beyond the home and the world dichotomy?

Symposium Organisers

Kate Allan,
University of Oxford

Kate Allan is a third-year DPhil student of Early Modern English Literature at Exeter College, University of Oxford. She completed an MA in English at the University of St Andrews followed by an MSt in English (1550-1700) at the University of Oxford. Her doctoral research considers the engagement of seventeenth-century women poets with contemporary scientific culture and the alchemical poetics of their male contemporaries. She is a convenor of the Oxford English Graduate Forum and her work is forthcoming in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Early Modern Women's Writing*.



Nupur Patel,
University of Oxford

Nupur Patel is a third-year DPhil student of Early Modern French at Lincoln College, University of Oxford. Following her completion of a BA in History and French, followed by an MSt in Medieval and Modern Languages (French) at the University of Oxford, she began her doctoral research in 2018 as a Kingsgate doctoral scholar. Her research considers responses to modesty in the works of four sixteenth-century French women writers, as well as networks of male and female collaborators who support the entry of women writers in print. She was recently the graduate convenor of the Oxford Early Modern French Seminar and has taken part in a number of access and outreach projects, including the Modern Languages Outreach and Engagement project funded by the British Academy.



