

Women and Agency (online, 24–25 Jun 21)

online / University of Oxford, Jun 24–25, 2021

Deadline: Feb 28, 2021

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Call for Papers

Women and Agency: Transnational Perspectives, c.1450-1790

Virtual Symposium

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 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?

The keynote speaker will be Professor Merry Wiesner-Hanks, University of Wisconsin– Milwaukee.

Proposals are invited for 20-minute papers (in English) that discuss early modern women and agency from a transnational perspective. We especially welcome papers from graduate students and ECRs.

Suggested broad areas for papers to address include but are certainly not limited to:

Spaces of agency (interpretative, literary and epistolary, visual, cultural)

Women in social and political spheres (activism, representation, writing)

Women and religion (religious identity, community, and communication networks)

Women and agency in theory and thought

Intersectionality (disabilities, ethnicity, race, etc)

Women, bodies and embodiment (sex and sexuality, violence and reproduction)

Literary afterlives and the editing of women's texts

Lesser known women writers (though papers do not need to be exclusively about women writers and might focus, for example, on literary constructions of women)

Rethinking periodization: the impact of transnational perspectives

Please submit an abstract (no longer than 250 words for an individual paper or 500 words for a three-person panel) and a short CV to womenandagency@gmail.com by the 28th February 2021.

This symposium will take place on Zoom and will be free to attend. It is generously funded by the AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund, as part of The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH).

Reference:

CFP: Women and Agency (online, 24-25 Jun 21). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 10, 2021 (accessed Jun 15, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/24224>>.