# GENDER WORLDS, 500–1800: NEW PERSPECTIVES

**DATE:** 8 October 2016  
**VENUE:** The University Club, The University of Western Australia  
**ENQUIRIES:** Joanne McEwan  
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## FRIDAY 7 OCTOBER 2016

**TIME**

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<th>Keynote Lecture</th>
<th>Venue: Austin Lecture Theatre (1.59, First Floor, Arts Building)</th>
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<td>6.00–7.00 pm</td>
<td>Speaker: Merry Wiesner-Hanks [University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee]</td>
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<td><strong>Title:</strong> ‘Adjusting Our Lenses to Make Gender Visible’</td>
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## SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER 2016

### Gender and Religion (Case Study Room)

- **1. Michael Barbezat**, ‘Maidens who cannot be saved: Heretical Women and Community in the Twelfth Century’
- **3. Rachel Allerton**, ‘Intellectual History of Affective Piety: Gender, Feminism and Emotions’

### Enacting Masculinity & Femininity (Seminar Room 3)

- **1. Eliza Kent**, ‘God’s Lieutenants: Theurgist Masculinity and Witch Hunting, Salem 1692’
- **3. Joanne McEwan**, ‘Gendering Katherine Nairn and Patrick Ogilve, in Court and in Print’

### Receptions of Premodern Masculinity (Seminar Room 3)

- **1. Tara Auty**, ‘The Classical Roots of Gender-Fluid Achilles: Perversions of Virility from Statius to Shakespeare’
- **2. Andrew Lynch**, ‘Medievalist Masculinity and the Historical Evolution of Hereward the Wake’
- **3. Marina Gerzic**, ‘From Cabaret to Gladiator: Refiguring Masculinity in Julie Taymor’s Titus’

### Clothing and Gender (Seminar Room 3)

- **1. Jo Merrey**, ‘“Arayed me wyth this whyght garnement”: Radiance and Agency of Late Medieval Female Characters in Stories of Salvation’
- **2. Stephanie Tarbin**, ‘Crossings and Connections: Bodies, Clothing and Sexual Misconduct in Late Medieval London’

### Directions


### Discussion Panel (Carolyne Larrington, Merry Wiesner-Hanks, Katie Barclay), Wrap Up and Close
AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF AFFECTIVE PIETY: GENDER, FEMINISM AND EMOTIONS
Rachel Allerton
Macquarie University

As is well known, the past 40 years or so of scholarship has seen the study of affective piety develop into a flourishing sub-field in medieval studies. In particular, scholars have mapped the ways in which the performance of affective piety often play out along gendered lines. This paper will offer an intellectual history of the study of affective piety in the Middle Ages, starting with Richard Southern’s pioneering work on the topic in The Making of the Middle Ages. I will then map how the field was further transformed by innovations in feminist studies, the history of emotions and the history of the body. Finally, I will consider the impact of new cognitivist studies upon the field. The history of affective piety, I will suggest, offers a promising vantage point for telling a larger story about how gender matters in the field of medieval studies.

THE CLASSICAL ROOTS OF GENDER-FLUID ACHILLES: PERVERSIONS OF VIRILITY FROM STATIUS TO SHAKESPEARE
Tara Auty
The University of Western Australia

Statius’ Achilleid has quite famously given to posterity a version of Achilles that bucked the trend of the Classical epic masculine hero. Over the course of the medieval and early modern periods, iterations of the Troy story after Statius’ unfinished epic continued to explore the gender-fluidity of this iconic literary war hero. This paper aims to explore Statius’ construction of Achilles as a character who occupies a space of ‘liminality’, to quote Heslin’s 2005 study of the Transvetite Achilles, between godliness and mortality, between bestiality and humanity, and between femininity and masculinity. His ‘virility’ – derived from the Latin word ‘vir’, for man – is not a stable and irrevocable quality; Statius’ construction leads the reader to question whether his ‘manliness’ is indeed innate, or is ‘military masculinity’ rather a practical behaviour that can be performed and suppressed as circumstances necessitate? While Statius’ treatment of this subject matter is nuanced and complex, reactions to Achilles’ perverted masculinity in later centuries betrayed an anxiety at the notion that sexuality and gender could be fluid, as in Alain de Lille’s interpretation of Achilles in his Anticiaudianus. Following an overview of Statius’ complex depiction of Achilles as both a manly hero, and a man able to successfully ‘pass’ as a woman, this paper will outline key moments in the tradition of the gender-fluid Achilles, ranging from de Sainte-Maure’s Le Roman de Troie, to Boccaccio’s Il Filostrato, Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde and finally Shakespeare’s Troilus and Cressida.

MAIDENS WHO CANNOT BE SAVED: HERETICAL WOMEN AND COMMUNITY IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY
Michael D. Barbezat
The University of Western Australia

This paper explores two unsuccessful attempts to save young and beautiful heretical women from execution. These attempts are based on gender and sex in the context of religious community. In the first, a young woman at Cologne in 1163 chooses to burn alive with her fellow heretics rather than accept marriage or the veil as a way to return to the community. The second account occurs in Rheims between 1176 and 1180. This young woman is revealed as a heretic after she refuses the sexual advances of a churchman, since only a heretic would reject sex using the terms that she chooses. The investigation that follows her refusal reveals a heretical group led by an old woman, often called the ‘Witch of Rheims’. The witch escapes execution by flying through the air with the aid of demons. Left behind, the abandoned maiden remains steadfast to her beliefs, choosing to burn rather than return to orthodoxy.

These examples utilise gender and sex to evoke a response in both the internally depicted audiences and also in readers. The desire to save these maidens, based upon their physical beauty and desirability, draws sexual desire together with the love and mercy that constitutes Christian community. The efforts made to save these young women, likewise, marshal their gender in an attempt to re-integrate them into the orthodox community. In these cases, the pathos evoked by gendered beauty shapes the experience of heresy and constitutes a source of desire upon which both medieval and modern audiences can converge.

THE CARING TOUCH OF SCOTTISH LOWER ORDER MASCULINITY: A CASE STUDY OF LATE EIGHTEENTH- AND EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY SCOTLAND
Katie Barclay
The University of Adelaide

For many years, at least in popular imagination, Scottish masculinity was associated with the ‘hard man’: hard-working, hard-drinking, hard-bodied, hard-fighting men. A working-class image, perhaps, but one that represented a people for whom lower-class identity was, at least in the twentieth century, core to its sense of national identity. In more recent years, gender historians have sought to challenge and disrupt such representations, not only by seeking to uncover the vulnerabilities – even the soft bodies – of working-class Scottish men, but also to bring history to bear on the gender identities of men of all ranks in different times and places. Yet, such work remains embryonic, in scattered articles or the occasional book on very different times and social groups.

This paper explores the important role of touch, affection and friendship amongst lower order men in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Scotland. Drawing on criminal court records – often those centred on violent crime between men – this paper seeks to
complicate narratives of ‘the hard man’. It does this by both recognising some of the classic ‘hard-man’ typologies – quick to anger, physically violent, a strong sense of honour – and placing them within wider group relationships between men, which demonstrate close ties of affection and acts of care that extended to physical care of the body and intimate touch, emotional support and friendship. This story seeks to highlight that the ‘hard-man’ not only had a softer side, but that caring activity actively fed into the meanings, boundaries and behaviours of what it was to be ‘hard’. This paper applies gender theories and methodologies to demonstrate how a history of intimate touch and affectionate friendship can bring new perspectives on Scottish masculinity, working-class gender relations (between men and women), and homosexuality and sexual deviance.

**SHAPING SILHOUETTES, SHAPING FEMININITY: CONSTITUTING FEMININITY THROUGH STRUCTURAL UNDERGARMENTS IN ENGLAND, 1560–1680**

Sarah Anne Bendall
The University of Sydney

‘Clothes make the man’, the famous fifteenth-century proverb proclaimed. But, by the late sixteenth century new female structural undergarments were increasingly seen as ‘making the woman’ – both visually and linguistically. The specific structural undergarments of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which my research explores – bodies and busks (corsetry) and skirt-shaping devices such as farthingales and bum rolls – not only revolutionised fashionable ideals during the early modern period in England, but also reshaped the female silhouette, creating a new female form out of materials other than flesh that became synonymous with the female body.

This paper will discuss the ways in which these structural undergarments and the body were conflated, both linguistically and visually, in a variety of media – particularly popular literature – throughout the early modern period, revealing many things about the ways in which the early moderns conceptualised dress and the female body. Particularly, this paper argues that gendered discourses and bodily performances using these garments not only helped to shape ideas about gender during this period, but also allowed representations of femininity to be mediated on bodies (both female and, in certain circumstances, male) by these garments. Consequently, these structural undergarments of female dress were constitutive of not only of beauty and fashion, but also an idealised femininity, and helped to shape and regulate gender norms during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England.

**GENDERING GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS: WOMEN AND LUXURY TECHNOLOGIES IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE**

Susan Broomhall
The University of Western Australia

This paper explores the involvement of women in the introduction of exotic and luxury technologies, such as tapestry, silk and ceramic manufacture, during the sixteenth century in France. The French queen, Catherine de Medici, was a key protagonist in these developments, both as a collector and patron of foreign exotica and as an investor in luxury innovation, and her particular activities in this domain constituted strategic economic and political interventions. However, her actions can also be contextualised as a part of a wider pattern of female involvement in establishing global technologies in France. Drawing upon letters, accounts and contemporary commentaries, this paper analyses how a range of elite women encouraged the development of agricultural expertise, provided economic investment into these fledgling industries, and managed plantations and resources associated with these innovative practices. In addition, women were identified by contemporaries as a critical labour force for the new technologies, and the role of others in practice can be revealed through the accounts of practitioners and creators of exotic goods. In such ways, this paper argues, France’s technological encounters with the wider world in this period were founded upon fundamental gendered assumptions, hierarchies and realities.

**FROM CABARET TO GLADIATOR: REFIGURING MASCULINITY IN JULIE TAYMOR’S TITUS**

Marina Gerzic
The University of Western Australia

Gender identity in Julie Taymor’s film Titus (1999), an adaptation of William Shakespeare’s Titus Andronicus, is largely based on intertextual connections to historical events, periods and figures, as well as popular cultural references from film and television. This paper will focus on the often-sidelined characters of Saturninus and Lucius, to demonstrate how Taymor uses figures and images from popular culture and Italy’s Imperial and Fascist historical past to establish masculinity in her film.

Both Lucius’ and Saturninus’ masculinity is tied to Taymor’s exploration of, and critical engagement with, Rome’s violent past, particularly its ‘sword and sandal’ idealised Imperialism and the sinister Fascism of the 1930s and 40s. What troubles me about Taymor’s film is that she goes out of her way to tie the moral identity of Lucius and Saturninus to their gender identity. Through Taymor’s selective use of imagery and editing of Shakespeare’s text, Lucius’ rugged gladiator-like hero is presented as a redeeming force, arriving to cleanse and takeover the corrupt Rome, led by the gender-queer and villainous Saturninus. Thus, Taymor seems to suggest not only that violence and masculinity are linked – in order to be masculine you must be violent and represent violence – but also that only the ‘right’ kind of masculinity, one that replicates violent Roman traditions, is an acceptable form of gender identity.
FORBIDDEN APPLES: ORIGINAL SIN AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN THE EARLY MODERN MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

Umberto Grassi
The University of Sydney

While historiography has long pointed out the northern European Enlightenment and liberal genesis of the ideals of ‘tolerance’, recent research on the early modern period has uncovered daily life interactions and intellectual attitudes which fostered practices of concrete toleration. On the other hand, recent studies on sex, gender and marriage have revealed that, despite the religious interdictions, sexual morality was much more open at that time than we could think today. My research aims to find the connections between these two apparently disjointed aspects – political and religious tolerance and tolerant attitudes towards non-normative sexualities – starting with the analysis of concrete cases.

I will analyse Spanish Inquisitorial sources from Sicily and trials of the Roman Inquisition in Naples, Pisa, Florence and Venice. Some defendants were accused of stating that Original Sin was sodomy, and the ‘forbidden fruit’ – the apple – was an allusion to Eve’s buttocks. This re-reading of the myth of The Fall was often paired with the opinion that ‘all can be saved in their own religion’ – that is, that Muslims, Jews and Christians all deserved eternal salvation. This ‘heresy’ was apparently worked out by people belonging to low and middle class environments. Sex seems to be the foundation of a ‘natural’ morality that questioned abstract moral codes based on the idea of a reward in the afterlife. Scholars have already traced the long-term history of the relation between radical philosophy and eroticism. My work questions the top-down paradigm of this research by pointing out the mutual interactions between popular and ‘high’ culture.

GOING BEYOND MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN INDIA

Shaleen Jain
Hidayatullah National Law University

Transgender – i.e., third gender – is an umbrella term for persons whose identity, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that associated with the sex which they were assigned at birth. The presence of transgender can be traced back to time immemorial. Indian mythology contains numerous references to modified sexual states. Transgender individuals have played an imperative part in antiquated Indian culture over centuries. They are depicted in renowned Hindu religious sacred texts, for example Ramayana and Mahabharata. Their downfall came at the onset of British culture in the eighteenth century when they were boycotted, blacklisted and regarded as criminal components in the eyes of public. Transgender individuals, however, are a part of society and have equal rights to everything in the world available to all other people. This paper focuses on the transformation of transgender people through a journey of pain to beauty with the judgement of the Supreme Court in the case of National Legal Service Authority (NALSA) V. Union of India. This assured that the fundamental rights under the Constitution of India are equally provided to transgender people, giving them the right to self-identify their gender as male, female or third-gender. After this judgement India became the first country in the world to recognise transgender as third gender.

GOD’S LIEUTENANTS: THEURGIST MASCULINITY AND WITCH HUNTING, SALEM 1692

E. J. Kent
Independent Scholar

This paper examines the masculine cultural work implicated in early modern witch hunting. The historiography of witch hunters is ambiguous: on one hand their activities are morally repellant, but on the other some of the leading intellectual, political and religious leaders of the early modern period actively supported, or undertook, witch hunting in their jurisdictions. In relation to elite men, witch hunting is treated as a dark, somewhat inexplicable episode in an otherwise glittering career. In relation to men of lower status, witch hunting is regarded as the result of individual pathology of a personal or religious nature. As the foregoing descriptions indicate, analyses of witch hunters tend to be two-dimensional, and very few historians have considered witch hunting as a masculine practice. I want to use the Salem witch trials to examine how masculinity was ‘invested, enacted, and produced in the social process of identifying witches’ (Kent, 2013, p.161). In particular, I am interested in the gendered cultural capital men gained from witch hunting and the opportunities, and risks, witch hunting afforded masculine gender identity formation. It is my contention that witch hunting men provide historians with an example of the type of magical thinking that was implicit in early modern masculinity, and which was fundamental to the way early modern Englishmen thought about themselves as men. Masculine witch hunting demonstrates how early modern patriarchal social organisation was based on theurgic understandings of masculinity, and how male social and cultural dominance was based on gendered beliefs about supernatural agency.

‘MY HEART AND I SURRENDER OURSELVES INTO YOUR HANDS’: GENDER INTERPLAY IN THE LOVE LETTERS OF HENRY VIII TO ANNE BOLEYN

Hilary Jane Locke
The University of Adelaide

There is no doubt that when Henry VIII sat down to pen his love letters to Anne Boleyn (roughly 1526–1530), he did so to deliberately evoke the courtly love tradition. Yet, these letters reveal the role that
courty love played in their courtship, particularly in the early relationship between Anne Boleyn and the king. In doing so, the letters provide roles, which both Anne and Henry inhabit, dictated to them by both courtly love and chivalric discourse. The representation of Henry’s masculinity alongside the courtly lover persona provides an avenue for him to communicate with his potential lover, and Anne becomes the demanding mistress inflicting suffering and pain, but also represents the feminine, fertile future queen. Written in the period where the king was solidifying his power as the head of state, but also experiencing serious doubt in his personal life, the letters show a king whose own sense of masculinity was wavering, having failed to produce a male heir. Anne, the woman who would promise a son to soothe Henry’s anxieties, received these letters from a man who immediately granted her some power over him as he assumed the role courtly lover. This paper will argue that these letters reveal certain details about how Tudor courtiers, and how this example in particular, engaged with the rhetoric, tropes and ideals that the courtly love discourse allowed, and how they enabled an interplay between gender roles and gender representation.

MEDIEVALIST MASCULINITY AND THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF ENGLAND IN HEREWARD THE WAKE

Andrew Lynch
The University of Western Australia

Charles Kingsley’s Hereward the Wake (1866), set around the period of the Norman Conquest, is subtitled ‘the Last of the English’. Yet its outlook is prospective, tracing a line from a failed East Anglian resistance – seen as ‘the germs of our British liberty’ – to the later growth of ‘a great nation’ and empire under ‘the spirit of Freedom’. Kingsley, a polemical Low Church priest, novelist, professor of history and supporter of Darwin, relates his account of English historical evolution to fundamental factors of race, ‘blood’ and environment. In a natural state, such as he sees eleventh-century East Anglia to be, the ‘strongest, healthiest, cunningest’ – such as Hereward – thrive. But, the novel’s further reference to ‘the true laws of God’s universe, peace and order, usefulness and life’ complicates this view. Hereward the Wake seeks to reconcile these two demands – the evolutionary need for raw strength and vitality and the civilisational need for order and social utility – by mapping large-scale medieval English historical change onto the youth, maturity and old age of Hereward, as he progresses from ‘Viking’ brat into a more cultured and sensitive married man, and finally into superannuated decline, unfit for the changing requirements of the times. In the process, Kingsley challenges the gentler gender models that other Victorian writers associated with medieval reference, and, with qualifications, reclaims aggression, proud self-reliance and intense passions as desirable masculine traits.

‘I WROTE TO YOU FROM THE SEA’: FRENCH NUNS AND THE POLITICS OF SPACE ABOARD SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY TRANSATLANTIC SAILING VESSELS

Robin Macdonald
The University of Western Australia

The roles of women in the European colonisation of eastern North America have not gone unnoticed by historians. Figures such as Ursuline nun, Marie de l’Incarnation, and her lay benefactor Marie-Madeleine Chauvigny de la Peltrie (the founders of the first teaching convent in Quebec in 1639), are often portrayed as the ‘foremothers’ of francophone Canada. Yet, whilst heroic depictions of their arrival are commonplace in historiographical literature, little close attention has been paid to their experiences during the transatlantic crossing, from France to New France (and sometimes back again).

This paper will argue that an analysis of these women’s correspondence – and in particular, their self-conscious rhetorical shaping of the ocean crossing – can shed light on the gendered negotiation of space in the context of European transatlantic migrations. The women who crossed the Atlantic in 1639 were (with the exception of Madame de la Peltrie) cloistered nuns who were particularly attuned to the politics of gender and space. Their letters and accounts of the voyage provide detailed descriptions of their living quarters and the rites and rules that – as in the convent – structured their daily lives. Through an examination of these letters and accounts (in particular, the correspondence of Marie de l’Incarnation), this paper will analyse the ways in which women religious presented their lives – and the spaces they inhabited – aboard two sailing vessels, the Saint-Joseph and the Saint-Jacques. Drawing on recent anthropology, notably the work of Tim Ingold, it will argue that whilst devotional practices shaped the nuns’ experiences, these were also shaped by environmental factors such as their living quarters and the stormy ocean sea.

GENDERING KATHERINE NAIRN AND PATRICK OGILVIE, IN COURT AND IN PRINT

Joanne McEwan
The University of Western Australia

In August 1765, Katherine Nairn and Patrick Ogilvie were jointly tried for murder and incest. They had, it was alleged, poisoned Thomas Ogilvie – Katherine’s husband and Patrick’s brother. A lengthy trial ensued, during which a series of servants testified to the intimate relationship between Nairn and Ogilvie that had spurred the crime, and to the actions they took to kill Thomas. The case was also extensively reported in print, particularly in the wake of the trial when Ogilvie was executed but Nairn’s sentence was respited on account of pregnancy. The report of the case printed in The Newgate Calendar draws a direct comparison between the two defendants: ‘Such were the different fates of two people, who, as far as we can judge of the affair, appear to have been involved in the same crime. The one dies, avowing his perfect innocence; the other escapes the immediate stroke of justice, which was
suspended over her by the most slender thread.’ The different outcome, it implies, was due to the gendered leniency that pleading the belly allowed for women. Despite this more lenient treatment, the printed reports apportioned most of the blame to Nairn, by both portraying her as a base woman and by situating the motive in the wider context of unhappy marriages. This paper will analyse the representation of Nairn and Ogilvie during the trial and in subsequent printed accounts of the case, with a view to examining how gender was used to frame particular narratives about crime and how gendered expectations and stereotypes influenced perceptions of criminality more broadly.

'ARAYID ME WYTH DIS WHYHT GARNEMENT': THE RADIANCE AND AGENCY OF LATE MEDIEVAL FEMALE CHARACTERS IN STORIES OF SALVATION

Jo Merrey
The University of Western Australia

Beginning with the Life of St Agnes in Osbern Bokenham's Legendys of Holly Wummen, I will explore instances of the radiant woman as agent in late medieval English texts. The figure of the radiant woman in texts such as the romance Emare, saints’ lives and the poem Pearl is used to represent redemption and status. It also introduces tensions between the spiritual, social and physical. In these texts, clothing connects to the action taken by female characters. This means that clothing may define, direct or reflect the agency a character. The implications of these possibilities, in terms of the function of clothing, lie in establishing the representation of the female character as empowered or protected. The nature of that empowerment and protection is, however, highly gendered in the texts and generally accepted to be at odds with the 'reality' of late medieval English women’s experiences. In the context of salvation stories, whether female characters are saved through divine intervention, the actions of a human – often, but not always, male – rescuer or their own ingenuity is a critical factor to consider. This invites the question at the heart of this paper, namely whether the figure of the radiant woman as agent could potentially have been represented as a disruptive construct to the initial audiences of the texts.

THE FEMALE VOICE AS A SITE OF GENDER COLLABORATION IN MID-SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ITALY: IMAGINED POSSIBILITIES FOR FEMALE AGENCY

Julie Robarts
The University of Melbourne

The published lyric poetry and Lettere amorose of Roman author and virtuosa singer Margherita Costa (1600–c.1657) present a new vision of women, love and female authorship in mid-seventeenth-century Italy. I will argue in this paper that the multiplication of possibilities for female voices and representations of women was a literary and cultural project also shared by, and central to, many male authors of the time in Florence and Venice.

Contemporary representations of women in male-authored imaginative literature, including poetry, opera and letters and speeches, point out an extraordinary distance between what could be imagined for women’s agency and the practices of gender relations in their time. Where these imagined and lived worlds collide is in the performance of women’s voices and roles by female singers and actresses. Through the engagement of female trained singers and actresses as performers, opera and theatre production can be viewed as an important site of gender collaboration between these women, the poet/librettists in the courts and academies, and the noble and wealthy impresarios of commercial theatre and opera.

Margherita Costa’s musical performance practice spanned the full range of possibilities for a singer of her time, and she sang at the highest level for over 25 years. A similar set of forces pointing to or reflecting this culture of gender collaboration can be seen her poetry and practices of authorship.

FAMILY MATTERS: TOWARDS A GENDERED HISTORY OF THE GENESIS OF THE EARLY MODERN STATE

Zita Eva Rohr
The University of Sydney

This paper proposes that, to reflect historical reality, we should aim to develop a new gendered history of the genesis and evolution of the early modern state. For pre-modern and royal dynasties, where very little if anything was private, family matters were at the forefront of all political and diplomatic undertaking. The late medieval and early modern domestic households of elite and royal men and women were intimately interconnected in monarchical politics; there was really no such thing as a public/private divide in government, politics and diplomacy. Recent gender-based research has incrementally revealed that elite and royal women were perfectly positioned for, competent in, and fundamental to the development of the territorial monarchies that won the geopolitical conflicts of early modern Europe, which were the progenitors of the modern state. Female households were critical to the geopolitical success of territorial monarchies, and were cornerstones in the development of the early modern state.

This paper introduces the ways in which we might reconsider the history of western political thought and practice by examining it through the lens of gender, recognising that gender is a transformational historical category. It does so to suggest that female political undertaking is not a recent phenomenon, and that there was nothing particularly exceptional about female involvement in pre-modern politics and diplomacy.
CROSSINGS AND CONNECTIONS: BODIES, CLOTHING, AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN LATE MEDIEVAL LONDON

Stephanie Tarbin

The University of Western Australia

During the 'long fifteenth century' (c. 1380–1530), civic authorities in London investigated hundreds of people for sexual misconduct. Nearly two-thirds may have been involved in activities related to prostitution but there was flexibility in the constitution and application of categories of offence. Any woman engaging in sex outside of marriage could be charged as a strumpet (or harlot or meretrix), just as householders or parents who failed to prevent sexual misconduct among subordinates might be investigated as bawds (pronubae, lenones) or accused of fomenting immorality (fovet lenocinium). The remainder of the investigations were framed in terms of adultery or fornication, where most of the male suspects were members of the clergy. Generally, categories of offence were gendered in that men were usually charged in relation to their actions (such as committing adultery) while an identity was more likely to be imputed to women. Men who were prosecuted as bawds or strumpetmongers form the main exception to this pattern.

After 1450, London's civic records show variations in the terminology of sexual misconduct. Accusations began to note that women were strumpets or harlots or misgoverned 'of their bodies', with instances of women dressed in male clothing appearing among the charges made in this period. There were also a small number of men described as harlots (or putours) of their bodies, but the records supply no further detail about their sexual misconduct. References to same-sex activity are rare: the most comprehensively detailed example is the case of John Rykener in the 1390s, who confessed to dressing as a woman and having sex with men for money, as well as dressing as a man and having sex with women (whether the women paid is not stated).

This paper examines the fluidity in the gendered categories of offence and the identities imposed on miscreants in later medieval London. I suggest that the cross-dressing and category-blurring were not simply disruptive of gender norms but also reveal something of the range and variety of ways that gendered identities could be conceptualised and expressed.

THE WOMEN OF HARTLAND, NORTH DEVON, 1597–1706, A CASE STUDY

Gail Thomas

Independent Scholar

The documented life stories of individual women from the seventeenth century are dominated by those of the social and political elites. Very little is known about the lives of individual women at other levels of society. However, these women are not entirely absent from the historical record. By using the records of their communities at a more aggregate level, we can develop an understanding of the lives of women in the general populace. Using as a case study the village of Hartland on the remote north Devon coast, this paper will examine the range of available records which can inform our knowledge about women in small rural communities. Insights will be given into, for example, women's economic activity, involvement in the civil and church legal systems, and their exposure to the world outside their village. These women lived in a strongly patriarchal society and were often the poor, the destitute and, by the values of the time, the immoral. But in building up a picture of the women of Hartland we find that, while constrained by the bounds of gender, there were many women who were strong, survived, and 'bucked' the system. This is a case study of a small community across a specific period of time. By applying a gendered perspective to the unravelling of the evidence of Hartland, we are provided with new perspectives which can be applied to the broader study of women in the seventeenth century.

ENGENDERING COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS: AFRO-MORAVIAN CONVERTS IN GLOBAL MISSION NETWORKS

Jacqueline Van Gent

The University of Western Australia

The Moravian Church was a significant global Protestant mission society in the eighteenth century, spanning all continents and arriving in the mid-nineteenth century in colonial Australia. Their utopian gender practices (communal living, communal fostering of children, notions of a female Holy Spirit) attracted the interest of contemporaries and historians alike. Recent studies suggest that in particular women's prominent roles in religious and practices and decision making can be held responsible for the high conversion rates that made the Moravian Church a true global network within the space of 30 years.

In this paper I chart the lives of Afro-Moravian women and men living in the Caribbean, Europe and West Africa and discuss the social spaces of power they could (or could not) claim in the Moravian Church on grounds of their gender and race. I am interested in the specific local contexts of the encounters between African slaves and the Moravian Church and the way these encounters were shaped by different social and gender ideologies and practices. In the last part of the paper I address the question as to what extent the study of early modern colonial encounters can contribute to feminist readings of the colonial archive and colonial power.