

# Centre for Early Modern Studies, ANU – Work in Progress Morning

Friday November 19, 2021. 9:30–11:30.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://anu.zoom.us/j/84068362535?pwd=b01zbFJUOU11UjITK3V1b1FGMlVhUT09>

Meeting ID: 840 6836 2535

Password: 240656

**9:30–9:35** Acknowledgment of Country and Welcome to CEMS W-I-P #2 – Kate Flaherty

**9:35–10:30**

## **Panel 1: Double-take: Revisionary Readings of Early Modern Texts (Chair: Kate Flaherty)**

**Emma Rayner**, ‘Forsake not the law of thy mother’: Abiding Influence in Seventeenth-Century Mothers’ Legacies.’

**karo moret-miranda**, ‘In-gr<sup>2</sup>ace: intersecting gender, race, religion, (dis)ability, colorism and emotions in Scivias (c.1152)’

**Alex Cook**, ‘The Politics of Nature in the Age of Revolution: The Case of Constantin-François Volney.’

**10:05–10:30** Questions for the panel

**10:30–10:45** Tea break

**10.45–11.30**

## **Panel 2: Unusual Agency: Faith, Reform, and Mobility (Chair: Ros Smith)**

**Barbara Taylor**, ‘With What’s Unreal Thou Coactive Art’: Confederacy and Stage Magic in The Winter’s Tale’

**Julie Hotchin**, ‘Reflections on editing a volume of essays titles Women and Monastic Reform.’

**Kate Flaherty**, ‘Early Modern Plays and Modern Mobile Women’

**11:30–11:35** Update on CEMS Gender stream – Tania Colwell

**11:35–11:45** What’s next for CEMS? And closing remarks, Ros Smith

## CEMS #2 W-I-P Morning Abstracts:

**Emma Rayner** – Doctoral Candidate in English

***Forsake not the law of thy mother': Abiding Influence in Seventeenth-Century Mothers' Legacies.*<sup>1</sup>**

Abstract: Mothers' legacies — advice books written by pious mothers to their children — were among the most popular texts authored by women in seventeenth-century England. Rhetorically-speaking, works like Dorothy Leigh's *The Mother's Blessing* (1616) read at first like personal wills, their emotional and prescriptive force predicated on the death of the woman who writes. At the same time, the overtly gendered brand of "maternal zeal" advertised in their prefatory material figures forth a kind of Everymother whose performative femaleness is in some ways at odds with the highly didactic, derivative prose which constitutes the "instructional" portion of the work. In this paper, I will explore what productive possibilities might come from approaching the "logical incoherence" of mothers' legacies through a revised version of the Barthian notion of the death of the author.<sup>2</sup>

**karo moret-miranda**, Associate Lecturer in the School of History

***In-gr<sup>2</sup>ace: intersecting gender, race, religion, (dis)ability, colorism and emotions in Scivias (c.1152)***

Abstract: In her manuscript *Scivias*, the German abbess Hildegard Von Bingen presented a visionary catechism using peripheral elements to catholic tradition that have not yet been fully interpreted. Here, we implement the intersectionality framework of critical race and gender theory to map and analyze the meanings associated with the racialized-feminine in the *Scivias* manuscript. By using the Warburg methodological relational model, we establish a direct conversation between the visual and textual images put forward in *Scivias*. The exercise of mapping the intersectional axes of gender, race, and religion, reveals new dimensions of (dis)ability, colorism and emotions, and enables the reconstruction of agency narratives on otherness within the context of German Mysticism. It is precisely the displacement through these bridging elements where the centripetal mobility of the heterodox in *Scivias* is drawn. A new paradigm of *Scivias* emerges in which Von Bingen constructs her only true declaration by exercising the incorporation of the averse.

**Alex Cook**, Lecturer in the School of History

***The Politics of Nature in the Age of Revolution: The Case of Constantin-François Volney***

Abstract: This presentation will offer a brief introduction to my current book project. In the narrow sense, this book is an intellectual biography of an individual and a study of the reception of his texts

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs I. 8, printed on the title page of Dorothy Leigh's *The Mother's Blessing* (1616).

<sup>2</sup> Mary Beth Rose, "Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991): 291-314, 295-96.

across Europe and its colonial worlds. It focuses on the life and after-times of the once infamous, but now largely forgotten, French Revolutionary politician, philosopher, historian, linguist and travel writer, Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820). In a broader sense, the book explores the intersection of science, religion and political philosophy with practical and popular politics during the Age of Revolution. It focuses on Volney's wildly controversial campaign to build and promote a naturalistic philosophy that would replace established religion, and guide humanity towards a cosmopolitan future of global harmony and happiness. While that project led Volney to become one of the most demonised figures in Revolutionary France, it left ripples in everything from freemasonry to phrenology, from romantic poetry to plebeian radicalism, and from French colonial geopolitics to 21st century Afrocentric activism.

**Barbara Taylor**, Doctoral candidate in English

***With What's Unreal Thou Coactive Art": Confederacy and Stage Magic in The Winter's Tale***

Abstract: In his treatise *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), Reginald Scot exposed the techniques used by jugglers (stage magicians) and conjurers to 'cousen' the public. A core feature of many tricks was 'confederacy', in which the magician had determined the outcome of an illusion 'privately' (in confederacy alone with their skill) or 'publicly' (with an assistant or accomplice). This paper asks how early modern conventions of stage magic, like confederacy, might inform the supernatural magic in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1611), a play that walks the tightrope between miracle and magic trick. While Scot's work advocated for rationality and skepticism, it was addressed to a superstitious and devout public for whom the supernatural was a material reality. Using the lenses of jugglery and confederacy, this paper considers the ways in which material performance conventions and popular belief coactively engage in systems of magic-making on the early modern stage.

**Julie Hotchin**, Honorary Lecturer in the School of History

***Reflections on editing a volume of essays titled Women and Monastic Reform***

Abstract: I'm in the final stages of co-editing a collection of essays titled *Women and Monastic Reform in the Medieval West, c. 1000 – 1500* with a colleague in Belgium. As the manuscript is nearing finalisation, it seems an opportune moment to take stock and reflect on the process of editing, how the final manuscript compares with our initial aims and what we've accomplished collectively. I'll share some thoughts about what I've learnt through this process and reflect on the challenges and rewards of editing, and why it remains an important element of academic publishing.

**Kate Flaherty**, Senior Lecturer, English and Drama

***Early Modern Plays and Modern Mobile Women***

Abstract: This paper provides an overview of my monograph in progress: *Moving Women: The Touring Actress and the Politics of Modernity*. It demonstrates how Shakespeare's repertoire combined with steam transport to bring new international mobility, autonomy, and influence to one class of professional women: actresses. Possessed of these prerogatives, Ellen Terry, Fanny Kemble, and Charlotte Cushman disrupted the legal and social norms of their era, and became unexpected, sometimes unwilling, political players in evolving debates on suffrage, abolition, gender, and sexuality. Existing scholarship casts their experiences of travel and their creative repertoires as incidental to their political engagement. My book reveals how being able to move between geopolitical zones and being able to move audiences were integral to their agency for change.