

**Women and the Early Novel in English: The European Context, 1621-1699**

**(PROYEXCEL\_00186)**



## **International Seminar**

**IMAGINARY COMMUNITIES:**

**READING, WRITING AND TRANSLATING EARLY MODERN WOMEN'S FICTION**

**UNIVERSITY OF HUELVA, SPAIN**

**17-18 October, 2024**

Traditional approaches to the 'origins of the novel' question in the English context have often overlooked the role played by women's contribution to the development of the genre. Minor works, anonymous texts, fiction signed by women, as well as those works bearing a female pseudonym, were usually considered second-rate and were rarely included—with only a few exceptions—in canonical histories of the novel. A female history of the novel genre cannot be written in isolation from other women novelists across Europe, who no doubt exerted an enormous influence on the English novel market, and on women novelists in particular. This seminar proposes a discussion of women's printed fiction during the seventeenth century from a pan-European perspective to help us situate the early days of the novel in their true transnational context. The fictional works translated into English from different European tongues, the growing popularity of women's fiction among readers, as well as the cross-influences between English and non-English novels allegedly authored by women, or their different markets—accounting for the influence that women printers and booksellers played in the publication and dissemination of fiction—will also be of our concern. It is our contention that it is possible to read the complex network of readers, writers and other agents of the novel market as belonging to an active, though imaginary, community contributing to the development of the novel form. We would like to assess the relevance that this growing female contribution had in the evolution of the genre.

We invite 20-minute papers which discuss crosscurrents or influences among texts authored by European women, as well as about biographical and/or cultural relationships at work between women writers and intellectuals in the period of study. We aim to discuss whether we can trace a continuum in European women's fiction which explains transitions of genre/gender and literary culture, from the perspective of transculturality, drawing on all literary sources as fields of cross-media influences. We will consider

papers about English women's native fiction, like Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, Mary Pix, as well as about translations and adaptations of continental women's works printed in England, as the examples of Marie de Lafayette, Mlle de la Roche Guilhem, Madeleine de Scudéry, or María de Zayas, among others, make clear.

Some of the suggested topics are the following:

- Women's contribution to the rise and development of fiction in English
- French *nouvelles* and English novels: mutual allegiances and *liaisons*
- Spanish *novelas*, the picaresque and the world of roguery
- Letter exchanges: the early novel and epistolarity
- Assessing gallantry across borders: from French to English
- Towards a transnational theory of the novel
- Political diatribes and religious debates in early prose fiction by women
- Intersections of gender and genre across national borders
- Translation, revision and adaptation in the seventeenth-century novel: translations of women's texts, female translators of works by men.
- Female histories of the book: printing, publishing and bookselling across national borders
- Popularity, canonicity, and the new female readership for the novel: reality or wishful thinking?
- Romancing the novel and novelizing the romance
- Framed-*nouvelles* and female narrators
- Women's worlds in historical fictions
- The worlds of domesticity: wives, daughters, she-workers, servants

### **Keynote speakers:**

Dr Erin Keating, University of Manitoba

Dr Mary Helen McMurran, Western University

Dr Leah Orr, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Please, send your titles and 150-word abstracts to [women16211699@gmail.com](mailto:women16211699@gmail.com) (cc/[villegas@uhu.es](mailto:villegas@uhu.es)) by **1 March, 2024**.



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