

Rewriting Gender in an Age of Transition 1880-1940

An interdisciplinary conference
hosted online by the University of St Andrews



Conference Packet

Conference Schedule

16th September – Training Workshops

9:00 – **Book Club #1** – Xavier Maynes, *Imre: A Memorandum*

Moderated by Katerina García-Walsh

10:00 – **New Developments in Gender Studies**

Dr Jade Fletcher, Lecturer in Philosophy, Deputy Director of St Andrews Institute for Gender Studies (StAIGS)

Sebastian Stuart, PhD Candidate in Philosophy and Art History, Research Coordinator for StAIGS

11:00 – **Inclusivity in the Field**

Umair Tahir & Philippa Scrafton, Stonewall Consultants

12:00 – *Lunch*

13:00 – **Publishing in the Humanities**

Dr Ana Paola Gutierrez Garza, Lecturer in Anthropology, Head of StAIGS

14:00 – **Transforming Research into Public Engagement**

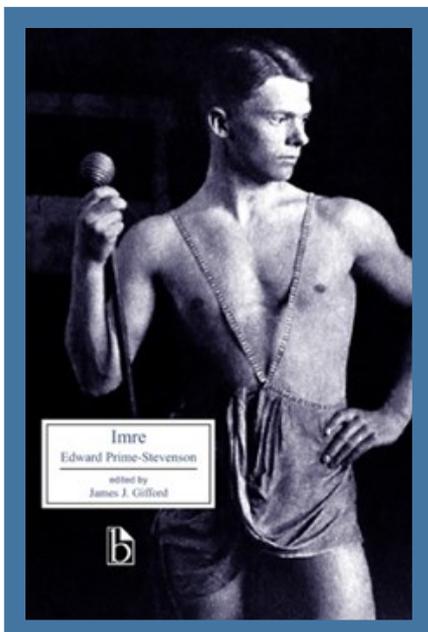
Dr Kirsty Ross, Head of Public Engagement with Research (PER) Team

15:00 – *Tea & Coffee*

16:00 – **Book Club #2** - Djuna Barnes, *Ladies Almanack*

Moderated by Paul Thompson

17:00 – End of Day One



Conference Schedule

17th September

10:00 – Online Access Opens

10:15 – **Welcome** – **Professor Gill Plain**, University of St Andrews

10:30 – **Keynote** – **Dr Jane Goldman**, University of Glasgow

11:30 – *Lunch*

12:00 – **Panel 1 – Women and Girls in Interwar Popular Culture**

13:30 – *Break*

13:45 – **Panel 2 – Women Authors and Transgressive Texts**

15:15 – *Tea & Coffee*

15:45 – **Panel 3 – Queer Modernist Masculinities**

17:15 – Announcements

17:30 – End of Day Two



18th September

12:00 – Online Access Opens

12:30 – **Panel 4 – Queer Utopias of the *fin-de-siècle***

13:30 – **Panel 5 – Gothic Genders of the *fin-de-siècle***

14:30 – *Tea & Coffee*

15:00 – **Panel 6 – Non-human and Non-cis Bodies**

16:30 – *Break*

16:45 – **Panel 7 – Women Poets on the Margins of Century and Society**

17:45 – *Dinner*

18:15 – **Keynote** – **Dr Lisa Hager**, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Waukesha

19:15 – **Closing Remarks** – **Professor Emma Sutton**, University of St Andrews

19:30 – End of Conference

Keynote Speaker



Jane Goldman, University of Glasgow

“Knickers into nackers”: Gender in transition in the art and life of Nina Hamnett

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Very funny things go on here. I am continuing my illustrated hospital diary. A deputation of idiots turned up to know if I could do anything about getting Ezra Pound out of his loony bin! they are not sure if he is quite all right mentally? Anyway if he is he won't remain so for long if he does get out. I wonder if this is very old, it amuses me. Changing sexes. Women turning into men. Knickers into nackers or why be a cunt all your life! (NH, Letter, 9 July 1956)

By the time she wrote this letter from her bed in Paddington Hospital the artist, writer, model, and bohemian, Nina Hamnett (1890-1956) was fast on her way to being remembered, and passed over by a toxic patriarchal 'modernist' criticism, more often as a derelict alcoholic bohemian and former artist's model haunting the bars of Soho, than as the hugely talented artist and writer she undoubtedly was, her career spanning periods of working in Bloomsbury, London and Montparnasse, Paris. Her interest in 'Changing sexes' and 'Women turning into men' has likewise been neglected. In this paper I will build on my previous work on Hamnett's artistic, writerly and performative (queer) experimental transitions of gender, which focused (in the recent book *Cross-Channel Modernisms*) on the first volume of her autobiography *Laughing Torso* (1932) and her creative and personal relations with the sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (1891-1915), to explore her second volume, *Is She a Lady? A Problem in Autobiography* (1955), which as its title suggests bears witness to a life and art dedicated to troubling gender binaries. Here I will also turn to Hamnett's creative and personal relations with the Russian artist, Marie Vassilieff (1884-1957), another great and highly influential talent of Montparnasse relatively neglected by 'modernist' studies.

Bio: Jane Goldman is Reader in English Literature at the University of Glasgow and her research focuses on avant-garde poetics, post-humanism and animality, and creative writing. Poet and literary critic, she is a General Editor of the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf, co-editor of *Cross-Channel Modernisms* (2020) and author of *Modernism, 1910-1945: Image to Apocalypse* (2004), *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf* (1998), and the poetry collection, *SEKXPHRASTIKS* (2021.) She is currently writing a critical monograph, *Virginia Woolf and the Signifying Dog*. Prior to her appointment at Glasgow, she taught at the University of Dundee and at the University of Edinburgh. She is a member of 12, A Collective of Women Poets and the Writers' Shift, the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh.

Keynote Speaker



Lisa Hager, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Waukesha

“neither man nor woman”: Sexology, George Moore’s “Albert Nobbs,” and the Always Partial Turn-of-the-Century Genealogy of Trans Identities.

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In their keynote lecture, Lisa Hager will take up the conference’s theme by tracing the ways in which writing about gender and sexuality in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, as well as our own writing about these texts, has erased the complexities of trans and gender nonconforming Anglo literary cultures. Beginning with confluences between sex, gender identity, and sexuality in sexological studies of gender nonconformity, Hager will explore how these categories slip in, out, and among one another via definitions of “bisexuality” and “asexuality,” which are themselves founded in racialized discourses of pathology.

Mobilizing these fraught sexological concepts, the talk will offer a reading of George Moore’s “Albert Nobbs” (1918), arguing that gender and sexuality are neither automatic nor binary for the titular character of this short story. Instead, “Albert Nobbs” enacts a complex and shifting relationship to gender identity, sexuality, and race that respond to both Nobbs’ interior sense of self, as well as the emotional and economic possibilities and limits of making life between late-Victorian and early twentieth-century white manhood and womanhood.

By putting sexology’s anxieties over gender nonconformity in conversation with Moore’s “Albert Nobbs,” the short story’s narrative gaps and refusals reveal a critical transitional literary moment between Victorian and Modernist aesthetics and, moreover, illustrate foundational textual and archival incompleteness of Victorian and early twentieth-century literary genealogies of trans identities in English literatures.

Bio: Lisa Hager is an Associate Professor of English and Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Waukesha in the United States, where they coordinate the College of General Studies Honors Program. They also edit, along with their colleague Dr. Anna Maria Jones, the academic journal *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism*. Lisa’s current book project looks at the intersections of trans studies and Victorian studies, and they have published articles on Victorian sexology, the New Woman, aestheticism and decadence, steampunk, digital humanities, and trans and queer studies. Their article on “female husbands,” which will be part of this monography, was awarded the Surridge Prize for Best Article Published in *Victorian Review* and the North American Victorian Studies Association Donald Gray Prize for the Best Essay Published in the *Field of Victorian Studies* in 2021.

17th September

Panel 1: Women and Girls in Interwar Popular Culture

Caroline McWilliams, “Margot is human, isn’t she, after all?": The Modern Girl in Interwar Élite Women’s Magazines

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Feminist scholars such as Friedan and Greer argued that the reading of women’s magazines exacerbated the oppression of women. This view contributed to the significant lack of material written in the second half of the twentieth century concerning women's magazines. When women’s magazines were considered, they were often the recipients of misogyny and gendered language, perpetuating the assumption that the magazines themselves were such. However, historians, like Bingham, have recently challenged these assumptions and asserted that the press conveyed more than this one singular opinion and that the wide range of voices in newspapers and magazines offered a variety of ideas and avenues for women. Wolf asserted that while women’s magazines could be oppressive, they were also one of the only options for forming a female mass culture. Therefore, this paper will interrogate examples from three prominent elite magazines (Vogue, Tatler and Vanity Fair) and analyse the perceived influence of the elite women who featured and those who wrote articles. Were elite magazines complicit in the oppression of women, or did they offer women avenues to find their own independent voice?

Mi Zhou, Kodak Girl in China: Photography and the Modern Woman in 1920s and 1930s China

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The New Woman as she emerged as a global phenomenon spread into China in the early twentieth century. Within her diverse manifestation in modern China, images of women as photographers, however, remain under-researched. This paper thus presents the case of the ‘Kodak Girl’ in 1920s and 1930s China to examine these overlooked visual representations, which reveals the ways in which modern femininity was constructed in relation with photography as a new medium to Chinese viewers. In the male-dominated field of photography in modern China, how did the ‘woman photographer icon’ challenge the act of looking and the discourses on female agency and subjectivity?

The sources of this paper include line drawing advertising for Kodak’s camera and photographic images published in Kodak’s amateur photo magazines in China, both of which feature women as photographers. The Kodak Girl was born in Eastman’s campaign in American culture. While speaking of the Kodak Girl in China, this image was not simply the same as the American cultural icon recycled by Kodak. It was a global icon being translated into a local visual language and code. Rather than simply being a product of global commodity flows, the Chinese Kodak Girl embodied new roles and values of Chinese women. This paper explores (cont.)

how visualising women as photographers reconstructed ways of being a modern woman in 1920s and 1930s China. The story of the Chinese woman photographer icon brings to light the linkages shaping modern femininity across geographic boundaries.

Annalisa Federici, Sensuous Modernity: the Linguistic Construction of Femininity in the Fashion Content of Interwar Vogue

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This paper investigates the linguistic construction of femininity in the fashion content of Vogue, taking as a sample some of the issues of the magazine published in 1922, a year widely acknowledged as the *annus mirabilis* of modernism. In a period which prized modernity, novelty, sophistication and exclusivity in many different domains, and which was characterised by the emergence of new identities and roles for women, Vogue employed evocative depictions of the latest trends in clothing to convey transformative notions of womanhood and defy gender categories. In contrast with assumed portrayals of femininity confining women to traditional positions within the domestic sphere, a lexical analysis of Vogue's fashion features demonstrates that this periodical favoured alluring conceptions of female assertiveness and autonomy through the use of a sensuous language of desire and feeling, describing pleasurable encounters with fashion and modernity. Although the connection between femininity and appearance may seem, on a surface level, to cast women into passive roles as objects of male gaze and desire, Vogue's linguistic strategy actually shows that the magazine employed form as well as visual and verbal content to encourage women to embrace both a confident longing for personal pleasure and self-fulfilment and the progressive gender ideology subtly woven into a periodical where female agency, physicality and modernity were favoured rather than criticised. This study, therefore, builds on recent research on language and gender which insists on the discursive constructedness of gender ideologies, in order to extend the amount of scholarly interest – generally focused on content rather than linguistic form – in women's magazines, seen as composite cultural products which played a fundamental role in mediating new notions of femininity in the interwar period.



Panel 2: Women Authors and Transgressive Texts

Suparna Roy, Urgency of Female Writing and Authorship: Re-reading Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* in the Age of Transition

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Since the beginning of Feminist Movement in 1848 during the Seneca Falls, gender-sexuality-sex-identity has been the 'subjects' of experiment which produced discourses and theories that challenged and criticized the existing normative structure- Helene Cixous's *Laugh of Medusa* exhilaratingly advocated the difference in 'subject-position' of men and women when they enter a phallogocentric symbolic order. Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* regarded – "Women are the sex which is not "one". Within...a phallogocentric language, women constitute the unrepresentable...women represent the sex that cannot be thought, a linguistic absence and opacity" (Butler, 13). To showcase the autonomy of a particular anatomy over the 'othered' anatomy and to sustain the politicized teleology of the sex/gender/sexuality system, certain regressive and constructed measures were historically performed by the dominant discourse. Literature in The Age of Transition (1880-1940) was a remarkable platform that perceived Gender amidst numerous ideologies which resulted in the production of a space that was eventually functioning as the 'voice' against the mutating drug-resistant virus- Patriarchy. Branched from here, *Women and Writing* gradually emerged as a subversive domain that urged women to write about women and reclaim the authority of pen and start representing as women 'subjects'! Therefore, by applying post-structuralist-queer-feminist theory my paper would re-read Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* to portray how the patriarchally fabled definition of a woman was challenged by Woolf's concept of 'androgynous mind' with her plea to 'reclaim a space' for female authorship; thereby queering the then literary representation of a woman and their ability to write.

Aiswarya Jayamohan, Queer coolness in Willa Cather's "Tommy the Unsentimental" (1896)

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This paper explores the 'coolness' of the eponymous Tommy of Willa Cather's "Tommy the Unsentimental" (1896). To do so, I begin with two interlocking propositions. The first, that this sense of coolness necessarily emerges from the short story's depictions of Tommy's restraint, indifference, and 'unsentimentality'. The second, that this coolness registers more than just Cather's liberal feminist response to late nineteenth-century discourses on feminine sentimentality, as extant criticism on the story suggests. Instead, I argue that Tommy's coolness, as an aesthetic category – what Sianne Ngai might call "conceptual as well as affective, and tied to historically specific forms of communication and collective life" – offers a valuable analytic that accesses the trans masculine modalities of Cather's writing. (cont.)

To that end, this paper draws on K. Allison Hammer's ground-breaking location of Cather's trans masculinity not in a sartorial archive (or, at least, not just) but in the 'stone butch armature' of her queer style: that which "protects against emotional penetration [and which] conceals an abundance of emotion... an alienating identity." Yet, to attend to Tommy's coolness is also to complicate that final formulation. Far from just a source of alienation, coolness reveals a dynamic relational capacity under constant re-fashioning, significantly colouring Tommy's interactions with her friends, family, near-lovers; the Nebraskan landscape; even us, her readers. Thus, this paper will also consider how Tommy's coolness serves as an unexpected nexus of sociality and desirability in the story. For Cather, we will find, to be cool was to be rather hot.

Victoria Bik, *New Women Disguised as Domestic Angels: Sarah Grand and Her Heroines in The Heavenly Twins*

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Sarah Grand united the contradictory, incompatible interaction between the Angel in the House and the New Woman not only into her own persona, but also in the two heroines of her blockbuster novel *The Heavenly Twins*. Critics generally agree that Evadne Frayling and Angelica Hamilton-Wells represent the bifurcated nature of the New Woman, but many lament that the feminist potential these characters initially exhibit is left to rot once they are married. Instead, I argue that the New Woman and the Angel in the House are two roles that both Evadne and Angelica struggle to negotiate simultaneously throughout the novel. Evadne represses her New Woman ideals under the guise of the Angel, sending her into a hysteric state that paradoxically allows her to embody the incongruity within herself in a publicly acceptable manner. If Evadne's case study reveals how ideal womanhood can curdle a woman's sense of self, then Angelica's case study exemplifies how notions of domestic, submissive femininities can perniciously permeate into every aspect of a woman's life regardless of her attempts at resistance. In an effort to postpone the ensuing conflict between her desires and her expectations, Angelica's renegade activities merely intensify the incompatibility between her duty to herself and her duty as a wife. Ultimately, Grand suggests in her own self performance and in that of her characters that the Angel in the House and the New Woman are not necessarily opposed to each other but are just two elements of a woman's multifaceted nature.



Panel 3: Queer Modernist Masculinities

Michela Esposito, “Might he not try to be a man now?”: Confusing Masculinity in British Literature 1938-1940

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The period from 1938 to 1940 was a confusing one for Britain. The ‘peace for our time’ promised after the Munich Conference proved to be a brief respite on the road to war, as the re-escalation of tensions a year later demonstrated. In September 1939, with the announcement of war, the mass-panic of the population was expected; yet this, too, proved to be a miscalculation. The period known as the Phoney War set in, a non-war, as Virginia Woolf called it, in which ‘nothing happens.’ The result was another period of anticipation, a war of nerves that tested morale before the conflict began. Various critics have examined the temporary expansion of gender ‘norms’ in the name of national duty, which were configured as being only ‘for the duration’ of the war. This paper seeks to trouble the heterocentrist focus of earlier studies to consider how the anticipatory period of 1938-1940 pressurised the concept of a stable national heterosexuality and revealed queer possibilities in early literature of the decade. As numerous studies have analysed the role of women in literature of the decade, this paper will specifically focus on representations of men in the writing of Patrick Hamilton and Henry Green. During this period, as Sonya Rose has demonstrated, normative manhood was defined through a ‘temperate masculinity’ that was characterised by emotional restraint, good humour, and being visibly a member of the armed forces. Despite this, there are numerous literary representations of men who do not fit within, indeed actively resist, the wartime model of masculinity. This paper will ask: how is this concept of ‘temperate masculinity’ pressurised with the absence of conflict during the anticipatory period of 1938-1940? And what about the ‘other’ men of the Second World War, those who do not fit the ‘norm’? In this paper I will consider how the representations of non-normative men in early 1940s British literature challenges the model of a single, unified (or uniformed) definition of masculinity during the Second World War.

Jesse Gauthier, The Politics of Masculinity in D.H. Lawrence’s Women in Love

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This paper will address the rise of fascism and communism in the early 20th century and the how it shaped perceptions of masculinity that persist to this day. The Soviet Union’s decriminalization of homosexuality in 1917 helped affirm burgeoning associations of sexual inversion with communism and anti-capitalism. By the 1930s, authors readily associate the political left with nonnormative desire and gender identity (think Sylvia Townsend Warner or the Auden group), but these ideas are still developing in the 1920s.

This paper will focus specifically on D. H. Lawrence’s novel *Women in Love* (1920) and its conception of “sexual inversion” in relation to capitalism, communism, and fascism. As with Lawrence, it is difficult to (cont.)

map coherent political and sexual identities onto the two male protagonists, Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich. Birkin expresses views often associated with Marxist thought, including being pro-worker and critical of the bourgeoisie, and is described multiple times as “not a man.” Conversely, Crich is a curious combination of a capitalist and fascist and is described in traditionally masculine terms. Both men allude to their same-sex desires, but Birkin does so much more freely than Crich. The novel consistently moves from discussions of politics to expressions of queer desire or identity thereby subtly affirming their interrelatedness. This paper will explore how Lawrence’s novel prefigures and depicts a politics of masculinity that becomes ubiquitous during the rise of fascism and communism and persists to the present day.



18th September

Panel 4: Queer Utopias of the *fin-de-siècle*

Douglas Pretsell, *Police-liaison in fin de siècle Berlin*

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Visitors to Berlin in the early 20th century were astonished to see state toleration of a flourishing queer scene. Queer restaurants, cafes and bars, cross-dressing balls and even transvestite passports that allowed cross-dressing men and women to avoid arrest. It was strikingly different from any other European city at the time. The catalyst for change, the factor that allowed it all to emerge into the open was arguably a remarkable transformation of the Berlin police force in the last two decades of the 19th century. By the turn of the century police had fostered good relations with the homosexual community and were a visible presence at homosexual venues.

Scarcely two decades before, things had been very different. In the early 1880s, the police ‘homosexual department’ was targeting homosexual venues and working with blackmailer-informers to secure homosexual prosecutions under Paragraph 175. Previous scholarship has credited the senior police officer Leopold von Meerscheidt-Hüllessem with transforming the homosexual department when he was appointed to run it in 1885. That is certainly the impression given by the first-hand accounts of his leadership written after his death. However, concealed within the earliest of these documents there is another account of the discrete queer activism of one man who tirelessly worked with the police to change their culture from within. This paper will tell the story for the first time of this remarkable intervention to deliver the world’s first instance of queer police liaison being used as a campaigning tactic.

Joe McLaughlin, *Revolutionary Receptivity: Walter Pater’s Ethicopolitical Effeminacy*

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Walter Pater’s ideal revolutionary figure, the diaphanous type, has long irked conservatives and radicals alike in its subversion of masculinist subjectivity and ethics. This paper suggests that the well-worn critique of aestheticism as individualist, apolitical, and bourgeois ought to be understood as a distorted echo of the conservative, moralistic invectives hurled at Walter Pater and his decadent children during the late nineteenth century.

This paper argues that, although originating in the 1870s, Pater’s aestheticism remains essential to understanding gender, ethical, and political experimentation as it unfolds in the 1880s and onward. In Pater’s rejection of Arnoldian, Ruskinian, and Carlylean tropes of critical authority, Pater theorizes an effeminate power that, while it refuses and retreats from the heroic and violent idea of rebellion, adopts a procedural strategy for conceiving of ethical life and cultural transformation. (cont.)

Situating Pater alongside Leo Bersani, Amanda Anderson, and Roland Barthes, this paper reads Pater's homoerotic receptivity, what he calls "the power of being deeply moved," in a far too literal, irreverent light. Doing so, I suggest, allows us to derive the true queerness of Pater's effeminate masculine performances on the page and recuperate aestheticism's political import. This reading rejects the recent turns to incorporate Pater into an identitarian canon of marginalized discourse while still grappling with the inextricability of Pater's erotics and aesthetics. Ultimately, a revolutionary receptivity emerges which opts out of acceptable forms of patriarchal discourse in order to glean utopian modes of life outside of heteronormative culture.



Panel 5: Gothic Genders of the *fin-de-siècle*

Brontë Schiltz, "Mysterious influences": de-medicalising queerness in the Gothic fin de siècle

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The late nineteenth century marked a radical shift in thinking about sexual transgression when, in 1886, Richard von Krafft-Ebing popularised the term "homosexuality" in *Psychopathia Sexualis*, classifying it as a mental disorder and thereby lending credence to widely held pathological perceptions of homosexual desire and gender non-conformity. Specifically, it was perceived as a contagious illness – Plain Reasons Against Sodomy, an anonymous pamphlet from 1730, bemoaned that the 'Fashion [of men kissing one another in public] was brought over from Italy,' while 'in France ... the Contagion is diversify'd, and the Ladies (in the Nunneries) are criminally amorous of each other, in a Method too gross for expression.' Significantly, homosexuality was not merely "too gross" for articulation; language to describe it simply did not exist – but absence could be filled by Gothic fiction.

This paper examines three stories from the *fin de siècle*: Vernon Lee's "A Wicked Voice" (1890) and "Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady" (1896), and "Manor" (1884), the little-known vampire tale by sexologist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. It considers Lee and Ulrichs' deconstructions of the contemporary conceptions of dissident sexuality and gender identity as pandemic through subversive narratives – in each of these tales, it is the thwarting of transgression that leads to sickness and death. In doing so, it appraises the power of Gothic fiction to both shape and challenge theories of gender and sexuality and considers the lasting relevance of such work at a time in which the fight for a ban on conversion therapy remains ongoing.

Panel 5 (cont.)

Tanya Cheadle, “I was no longer the silly sceptical boy, believing only what he could see and handle”: masculinity, modernity and esotericism in the occult novels of John William Brodie-Innes

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The Victorian *fin-de-siècle* was one of occult revival as well as gender transition, with the resurgence in Europe and North America of a widespread engagement with ritual magic. To date, studies of the sexual politics within esoteric networks have been focused on the female experience, with little critical focus on men and masculinities. This paper begins to address this occlusion through an analysis of the occult novels of Edinburgh-based lawyer and esotericist John William Brodie-Innes (1848-1923). Termed derisively by A. E. Waite the “small Pope of Edinburgh”, in the 1880s and ‘90s Brodie-Innes held key roles within Scottish occultism, as president of the Scottish Lodge of the Theosophical Society and founder and Imperator of the Amen-Ra temple of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Between 1908 and 1919, he published six novels, including the Highland selkie romance, *Morag the Seal* (1908) and a tale of seventeenth-century witchcraft, *The Devil’s Mistress* (1915). Taking these novels as its central focus, this paper asks what features Brodie-Innes ascribed to ideal, occult masculinity and what practices he employed in his own spiritual and intimate life to identify with this normative model. In posing such questions, it constitutes an important intervention in our understanding of the complex interconnections between esotericism and gender during the period 1880-1940, underscoring the considerable cultural purchase of esoteric ideas in wider reimaginings of modern masculinity.



Panel 6: Non-human and Non-cis Bodies

Dean Leetal, *The Jewish Transgender Golem: Rereading Rosenberg's Nifl'os Maharal*

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This work revisits the Jewish story of the Golem and reads it as a transgender text. The story was recorded in writing several times in the 1800s and 1900s. One such telling was written by Rabbi Rosenberg and published in 1909, in a book named *The Wonders of the Maharal*. נפלאות המהר"ל (נפלאות) The book was presented as an ancient record, which was disproved within a year (Dekel and Gruley 242). Some say the story inspired Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (Kieval 2). However, there are important differences between *Frankenstein* and the Golem. Similarly to *Frankenstein*, The Golem is brought to life and is told to have ended up not taking its role as a complete subordinate. The Golem's story is about an animated clay being, brought to life to protect Jewish marginalized communities. The Golem is brought to life by use of language, particularly the Hebrew word אמת, truth.

In a classic Transgender Studies paper, Susan Stryker compares *Frankenstein's* monster with her transgender experience: living on the edge of society, her humanity debated, defined by a morally questionable medical establishment. This reading focuses on the above differences. These days, questions of language and of truth are at the center of many debated regarding the validity and nature of transgender people. Being part of a marginalized group that one tries to protect is also strongly present in transgender lived experiences.

Cecilia Rose, *Gendering Victorian Mermaids: Mermaids and Sirens as Figures of Indeterminate Gender in Victorian Literature and Art*

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I am undertaking a PhD thesis on depictions of mermaids and sirens as figures of indeterminate gender in the art and literature of the late Victorian era, and of how selected depictions have formed and influenced the gender-conscious society of today. What I aim to uncover through this research is to what extent these mythological beings were presented as androgynous, and whether they were in fact – and perhaps remain – a symbol for nineteenth century transgender and non-binary communities. Within a framework of contemporary gender studies and teratology, I will be looking at how three highly influential Victorian artists – Edward Burne-Jones, Evelyn de Morgan and John William Waterhouse – derived inspiration from certain popular texts on mermaid and sirens, to produce a new and enduring image of these creatures.

So far, during my first year of research, I have assessed the reasons behind the resurgence in mermaids and sirens in the art and literature of the period, and have begun a chapter on Evelyn De Morgan's triptych, inspired by Hans Christian Anderson's *The Little Mermaid* (1837). This paper will conduct a detailed (cont.)

study of these three images – namely *The Little Sea Maid* (1886), *The Sea Maidens* (1888) and *Daughters of The Mist* (1914) – arguing that De Morgan’s androgynous depictions of mermaids act both as a vehicle through which to support the ongoing fight for women’s rights, and as a symbol for the concept of theistic evolution.

Jonah Garde, *Animal Connections: Endocrine Subjectivities, Racial Fantasies and Trans* Horizons*

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In the spring of 1931, a strange story made headlines in the Austrian daily press: In order to change their sex, a well-known Viennese artist had successfully persuaded the Imperial Zoo to sell them a black male goat as an organ donor. Transplanted into the person’s abdomen the goat’s gonads were hoped to take root and transform the person’s sex by secreting male hormones. Performed by a well-respected Viennese doctor the sensational surgery quickly attracted several newspapers who sought interviews with the person in question and opened a debated about the possibilities of so-called “artificial sex changes.”

My paper aims to outline the contours of these trans*species encounters by tracing its origins in modern endocrinology and analyzing the human/animal divide, its racial underpinnings and the global entanglements that animated the discourse on “sex change” in early 20th century Europe. Drawing on a range of newspaper articles, medical case files and endocrinological research I argue that the extraction and valorization of animal bodies as well as the desubjectivation and dehumanization of racialized Others served to rewrite and reimagine sex as malleable and plastic.



Panel 7: Women Poets on the Margins of Century & Society

Domenico Di Rosa, *Reclaiming Women’s Voices in the Poetry of Violet Jacob and Marion Angus*

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Writing within the mostly male-dominated literary context of the Scottish Renaissance, Violet Jacob and Marion Angus’s poetry provides a compelling insight into the lives of women inhabiting in rural communities of North-East Scotland. Through their defying characters in daily life and their modern revision of ballads and other folkloric traditions, these two authors depict their frustration towards gender inequality, lack of freedom of sexual expression, and androcentric social mores. My essay shall argue that whilst both Jacob and Angus give voice to women at the margins of society, their approaches differ in that the former poet traces the consequences of gender imbalance on the entire community whereas the latter analyses them in regard to (cont.)

women's psychology. In the first half of the paper, I will investigate Jacob's use of personae in poems like 'Tam i' the Kirk' (1915), 'The End O't' (1920), and 'The Jaud' (1927) to comment on women's search for independence and unrestrained sexuality as well as the consequent social ostracism. In the second half, I will delve into Angus's 'The Seaward Toon' (1924), 'Waater o' Dye' (1927), and 'The Blue Jacket' (1931) to explore her reliance on ambiguity, boundaries of self and a correlation between physical and psychological spaces. While I shall support my arguments through feminist and queer theoretical thought, my investigation of such poets will allow me to examine recurrent issues of modernist poetry such as fragmentation of the self, significance of time and place, and class distinctions.

Holly Laird, Redefining the Turn of the Century: Through Gender and the Voices of Michael Field

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The lyric writing of the two women who signed themselves Michael Field may be viewed as representative of distinctive features of the aesthetic practices and thematics, political and formal strategies of British writers from the 1880s to the twentieth century's first decades. This paper reassesses how this moment has been defined and how pivotal gender is to that definition before turning to Michael Field's responses to their times. With the rise of "the new modernists" in the 1990s, scholars began retrieving the turn-of-the-century cultural roots of subsequent modernisms, in particular by according belated acknowledgment to the 'modernist' innovations of 'New Woman' writings. Yet this extended moment does differ from interwar and postwar modernisms in the types of turbulence and diversity involved, especially in representations of gender, sexuality, and class. These changes mark the "turn of the century" as importantly discrete, meriting separate attention, not subsuming it to the fin de siècle on one side, the Edwardian and Modernist, on the other. While I will contextualize Field's work in relation to other writers (in various genres), my focus will be on how Field's writings articulated the new through well-established forms in ways that seemed odd or antiquated to twentieth-century critics, but that in fact operated as vessels for the startlingly new to erupt from within. These writers did not follow the rules or reward the aesthetic tastes of later generations, instead producing forms of eloquence and innovation that would require a second century's turn for new readers to appreciate and enjoy.

