PROJECT ILLUMINE: THE HISTORY AND WRITING OF WOMEN IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND AND IRELAND

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English and Comparative Literature in the College of Arts and Sciences.

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ABSTRACT

Susan Maire O'Rourke: Project Illumine: The History and Writing of Women in Early Modern England and Ireland
(Under the direction of Megan Matchinske and David J. Baker)

Project Illumine is a digital site that provides open-access, deeply researched teaching materials to middle school, high school, and college educators. It addresses a critical need to bridge the gap in teaching early women's history by providing high-quality, standards-based materials that introduce students to the history and genres of writing produced by women in early modern England and Ireland. The dissertation enriches and expands students' understanding of the diversity of women's identities, literacies, and cultural impacts in early modern England and Ireland.

Project Illumine was designed based on data collected during an IRB-approved qualitative study with North Carolina educators. Upon publication, it was presented to middle school, high school, and community college educators as part of a program hosted by UNC World View, an organization dedicated to global education and to connecting educators (particularly those in North Carolina) with UNC researchers. Educators attending this program affirmed their strong desire to bring early modern women's histories into their classrooms, particularly those of underrepresented voices and cultures. Educators stressed the value and usefulness of Project Illumine's resources, noting the diversity of lessons and projects applicable to different grade levels. Project Illumine also includes a space for educators to collaborate and to share how they have incorporated early modern women's history into their own classrooms.

Project Illumine sheds light on the accomplishments of early modern women left behind by history books and encourages other educators to light the way for students to engage with this history.

To my family, especially my parents Hugh O'Rourke and Gloria Lichtenberger O'Rourke, my sister Allison O'Rourke Windels, and in memory of my grandparents Albert Lichtenberger, Lydia Stolarz Lichtenberger, Hugh O'Rourke, and Anne Wilford O'Rourke, and of my beloved grand aunties, Emilia and Alexandra Stolarz.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEU	Continuing Educational Units
ELA	English Language Arts
National CORE	National Congress of Racial Equality
National SNCC	National Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
NC DPI	North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
PDCH	Professional Development Credit Hours
SOHP	Southern Oral History Project
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
UNC	University of North Carolina
UNC-Chapel Hill	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
WWO	Women Writers Online
WWP	Women Writers Project

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation addresses a critical point of contradiction across our educational system: despite an almost chronic erasure from traditional forms of history, women have always been actors worthy of note, touted for their scientific, literary, and political achievements. Rarely, however, have they made their way into 6-12 classrooms. This dissertation seeks to remedy that absence in two ways. First, it illustrates the importance of educating younger audiences to the significance of early women's history and writing, and second, it provides educators with the pedagogical tools and curricular materials needed to make that goal achievable in their classrooms. Its research questions are as follows:

- Since early women's history is rarely addressed in schools, are teachers willing to make the effort to bring it into their classrooms? If so, what would they need?
- What materials on early women's history exist and what materials could be created and made available to teachers?
- How can these new materials be designed in a digital space to promote their use in classrooms?

This dissertation has two research components: (1) an interview study with teachers to determine pedagogical needs and interests in women's history and writing and (2) the construction of a website (Project Illumine) that includes a wide range of digital materials on early modern women that teachers can easily access and use in their classrooms.

To determine what materials and delivery formats might be appropriate, I designed and received IRB approval for an interview study. I identified and contacted over 150 educators

across North Carolina and interviewed ten NC middle and high school educators in person, via Zoom, and via phone. I gathered qualitative data on the structure of their English language arts and social studies curricula, course designs, and experiences teaching women's history and writing.

The interviews indicate that, despite the work of feminist scholars to recover early modern women's voices, there has not been sufficient work to circulate this information among a broader audience outside of academia and in a format that could be easily integrated into middle and high school classrooms. In the 1990s and 2000s, online databases and textbases, like the Orlando Project, Women Writers Online (which is part of the Women Writers Project), Perdita Manuscripts, and Victorian Women Writers Project, seemed like useful tools for promoting awareness of women writers, providing access to some of their works, and encouraging further scholarship. Kathryn Sutherland, for example, "expressed hope for bringing women's work to light via digital media, based on her perception that print had failed to do so."[1] Digital databases could deliver texts by women writers to more researchers and could impact the way women writers are studied and taught. They offer the opportunity to provide wider access and to help instructors supplement their anthologies, which often neglected women writers in the past.[2]

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[1] Sutherland qtd. in Laura C. Mandell, "Gendering Digital Literary History: What Counts for Digital Humanities," in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. John Unsworth, Ray Siemens, and Schreibman, Susan (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2016), 513.

[2] Women Writers Online describes its history as follows:

> The Women Writers Project has its intellectual roots in two communities whose synergy began to be evident at the end of the 1980s. The first of these was the growing field of early modern women's studies, whose project was to reclaim the cultural importance of early women's writing and bring it back into our modern field of vision. The other was the newly developing area of electronic text encoding, with its emphasis on improved access and long-term preservation of textual data. As a method of bringing inaccessible texts back into use, the electronic archive seemed like the ideal successor to the physical archive, since it promised to overcome the problems of inaccessibility and scarcity which had rendered women's writing invisible for so long. Women Writers Project (Northeastern University), "Women Writers Project History," Women Writers Project, accessed April 9, 2022, https://www.wwp.northeastern.edu/about/history

These sites have the potential to go beyond delivering texts or biographies and to serve as tools of scholarly conversation. Their structures indirectly teach users about ways to engage with early modern texts and their authors.

Yet, the provision of educational resources for instructors at the university, secondary, and middle school levels remains greatly underdeveloped by scholars and creators of data/textbases. From my research I have found that most sites—from major, generalized data/textbases like *Orlando* or *Perdita Manuscripts* to smaller sites like Emory Women Writers Project and A Celebration of Women Writers (housed at the University of Pennsylvania)[3]—do not include educational materials to explicitly facilitate integrating these texts and histories into a wide range of classrooms. Project Vox, recently created by a collection of scholars at Duke University, *WWP*, and *WWO* are the only databases I have seen that explicitly present teaching materials, and those are designed for university instructors. Project Vox provides lengthy biographies of ten European philosophers and their intellectual networks and couples those with syllabi. The website's audience is clearly university instructors, particularly philosophy instructors. The *WWP* site includes a menu of pages dedicated to "Education & Outreach" where users can information about "conferences," "discussion lists," "seminars in text encoding and digital humanities."[4] These tools are more about generating discussion among college instructors

[3] *A Celebration of Women Writers*, as Laura Mandell notes, is quite outdated in its appearance, as well, Mandell, "Gendering Digital Literary History: What Counts for Digital Humanities." See also Christine L. Masters, "Women's Ways of Structuring Data," Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology, no. 8 (November 1, 2015), https://adanewmedia.org/2015/11/issue8-masters/ and Jacqueline Wernimont, "Whence Feminism? Assessing Feminist Interventions in Digital Literary Archives," Digital Humanities Quarterly 7, no. 1 (2013), http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000156/000156.html.

[4] Northeastern University Women Writers Project, "WWP Outreach and Education" (Northeastern University Women Writers Project), accessed April 9, 2022, https://www.wwp.northeastern.edu/outreach/.

than providing materials available for download. The "Teaching and Learning" page from *WWO* provides some crowd-sourced teaching materials through their "online syllabus collection" and "Women Writers in Context" essays, but these activities once again fail to consider a broader audience.[5]

The educational capabilities of the above databases are further limited by issues of accessibility and the lack of educational materials for middle, secondary, and university educators. They prioritize the needs of selective audiences (and serve those with the means to purchase these subscriptions). *WWO*, *Perdita Manuscripts*, and *Orlando* all require institutional subscriptions. Even R1 institutions like UNC-Chapel Hill do not subscribe to all three databases,[6] and scholars and students rely on March's month of open access to support their research and teaching. This limited access creates a system in which scholars with subscriptions or those "in-the-know" about open-access months become information guardians to the site's materials and interpretation. This issue of accessibility reflects some of the larger concerns of feminist scholars today. Scholars like Pavan Amara have commented on the extent to which feminist discussions still primarily occur in somewhat elite circles. Amara explains that working class women still remain excluded from feminist conversations often lamenting that, since "the

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[5] Sarah Connell, "Women Writers in Context," Women Writers Online, accessed April 10, 2022, https://www.wwp.northeastern.edu/context/index.html.

[6] Currently, UNC-CH does not subscribe to *WWO* or *The Orlando Project*. In 2014, I emailed the UNC librarian Tommy Nixon to see if the university could purchase access to *The Orlando Project*, but, unfortunately, there was not sufficient money to purchase a subscription. Even as an R1 institution, we only have access to *Perdita Manuscripts*.

place [many] people first encountered feminism was at university…. [If] people don't attend university they're less likely to encounter these discussions."[7]

My interviews with teachers reflect the need for dissemination of early women's history to broader audiences. Teachers indicated strong interest in incorporating women's voices into their classrooms but noted the struggles they had finding information on early women's experiences. One teacher, reflecting on her curriculum, observed:

> At the end of last year, the other eighth grade social studies teacher and I were reflecting on things that we did well and that we wanted to improve upon…. [It]was clear to both of us...that we feel like we didn't do a great job of providing women's history. [Now], whenever a new topic is introduced…we'll try to highlight the experiences… of underrepresented voices, whether…. Latinx, African American, or women's history. We tried to have a special highlight that shows how these various groups were contributing at that given time period. But then we still felt like then [it's] kind of on the sideline….We'd really like to...make that more of a focus.[8]

Yet their ability to incorporate these histories is limited by accessibility and ease of integration. One teacher movingly recalled how important it was for her students to have female historical figures to study. In a project on the Age of Exploration, the teacher noted she expanded the historical timeline of the assignment so that she could fit in female explorers and found that most girls in the class chose to research those figures. She stressed how important it was for those girls to see themselves represented in their studies, and she wished she could bring in earlier historical examples.[9] Other teachers echoed the importance of having diverse representation in early historical studies. One teacher spoke to the importance of Spanish cultural history to Latinx

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[7] Pavan Amara, "Feminism: Still Excluding Working Class Women?," ed. Jess McCabe, *The F-Word: Contemporary UK Feminism*, March 7, 2012, https://thefword.org.uk/2012/03/feminism_still_/.

[8] Teacher #2. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, October 2, 2019.

[9] Teacher #3. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 7, 2019.

students and lamented that her curriculum for the Age of Enlightenment was dominated by white male philosophers.[10]

In order to bring early women's writing and histories in, teachers explained, they need more fulsome materials that a) reflect diverse experiences and identities, b) are rich with primary documents, c) reflect Zinn's emphasis on people's history,[11] d) could be connected readily with their curricula, e) include compelling visual narratives to reach diverse learners and f) would align with state and Common Core standards. The need for a *university-sponsored* site to distribute materials on early women's writing and history is also evident from my interviews. Teachers place high value on the research and discussion provided by university sites and organizations that provide materials for 6-12 teachers. These sites and organizations, like the Stanford History Education Group, Carolina K-12, and UNC World View, are seen as providing middle and high school teachers with high-quality, highly-credible lesson plans that broaden the scope of their curricula and challenge students to think more critically about history and literature.[12]

Finally, the interviews affirmed the need to provide a space for collaboration and exchange. During the interviews, teachers addressed the importance of working together with co-teachers, discussing and designing course content as part of professional learning circles, and

[10] Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019.

[11] Teacher #2. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, October 2, 2019.

[12] Teacher #6. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019., Teacher #2. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, October 2, 2019., and Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019.

exchanging lesson plans, activities, and assignments (and even purchasing teacher-created content through the site Teachers Pay Teachers).[13]

Consequently, this dissertation advances feminist recovery work through the creation of an open-access website (Project Illumine) that supplies original teaching materials appropriate for middle, high school, and university educators and facilitates collaboration. The website provides a series of units centered around diverse topics and genres frequently discussed in English and social science classrooms in order to maximize opportunities for inclusion. These units address topics including humanism, education, women and scientific debates, women and scientific life writing, as well as the experiences of women of color in early modern England and those of Irish women. For each unit, there is a contextual essay exploring a theme or historical movement and classroom resources. Some units include brief videos that introduce students to the life and significance of a featured historical figure. Each lesson aligns with North Carolina standards, includes primary sources, and provides sample discussion questions to help students unpack those primary sources.

The website also pushes forward feminist recovery work by including histories that, until more recently, have been overlooked in early modern feminist work. Early feminist recovery work needs further expansion in order to more fully represent the lives of women of color in early modern England. Kimberly Anne Coles and Aryanna Thompson observe that, “With a few notable exceptions, early modern scholars have not consistently wed gender and race studies as

[13] Teacher #1. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 19, 2019.; Teacher #6. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.;Teacher #8. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.; and Teacher #10. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. In-person, November 16, 2019.

effectively as those working on later periods."[14] Ania Loomba and Melissa E. Sanchez likewise recognize that, in the face of "current anxieties that feminist criticism is in a state of decline," feminist scholars must "[attend] to debates and differences that have emerged in light of ongoing scholarly discussions of race, affect, sexuality, and transnationalism-work that compels us continually to reassess our definitions of 'women' and gender."[15] Scholars working in postcolonial early modern literary studies, like Kathryn Schwarz[16] and Dympna Callaghan[17] have thoughtfully analyzed representations of race in early modern manuscripts and on early modern stages. Yet, the research on early modern women of color living in England remains to be developed into a richer body of work. Scholars Imtiaz Habib,[18] Onyeka,[19] and Miranda Kaufmann[20] have provided foundations for such expansion through their archival research on the experiences of people of color living in early modern England. It is imperative to complicate

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[14] See the introduction to their colloquium in Kimberly Anne Coles and Ayanna Thompson, "Gender, Race, and Early Modern Studies (Colloquium)," Folgerpedia, 2019, https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Gender,_Race,_and_Early_Modern_Studies_(colloquium).

[15]Ania Loomba and Melissa E. Sanchez, "Introduction: Why 'Feminism'? Why Now," in *Rethinking Feminism in Early Modern Studies Gender, Race, and Sexuality*, ed. Ania Loomba and Melissa E. Sanchez (New York: Routledge, 2016), 1.

[16] Katherine Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

[17]Dympna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

[18] Imtiaz Habib, *Shakespeare and Race: Postcolonial Praxis in the Early Modern Period* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000). and Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500–1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

[19]Onyeka, *Blackamoores: Africans in Tudor England, Their Presence, Status, and Origins* (London: Narrative Eye, 2013).

[20] Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2017).

students' understanding of the experiences of women of color in the early modern period and to provide direct access to these women's stories, rather than leaving it up to the slow trickle down of research to classrooms. The accessibility of these materials through my website is especially important in an age where federally-sponsored reports like *The 1776 Report*[21] aim to put historical blinders on students and teachers and whitewash the hard histories brought to light by the 1619 Project.[22]

The Irish experience is one also understudied in early English literature scholarship and classrooms. Project Illumine seeks to remedy this gap by facilitating a discussion of Irish literary traditions[23] and identity in a colonial landscape and by calling for greater attention to Irish-language literary and oral traditions. The featured texts will allow students to study the impact of early modern English colonization on the experiences and writing of women in Ireland. These materials could also be a springboard for discussing the impacts of colonization and imperialism.

This dissertation is significant because it recovers women's history, including women of color and women from colonial contexts. The point of this recovery work is to create accessible history for these middle and high school teachers who want to incorporate more women's history into their classrooms. Only because of this research will students be able to learn more of this history. This dissertation is significant because it provides a new hybrid collaborative model of

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[21] The President's Advisory 1776 Commission, "The 1776 Report" (Federal Register: U.S. Department of Education, 2021), https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmVzW5NfySnfTk7ucdEoWXshkNUXn3dseBA7ZVrQMBfZey.

[22] Nikole Hannah-Jones et al., "The 1619 Project," *The New York Times Magazine*, 2019, https://pulitzercenter.org/sites/default/files/full_issue_of_the_1619_project.pdf.

[23] Andrew Carpenter et al., eds., "Irish Women's Writing and Traditions," in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vol. 4 (New York: New York University Press, 2002).
Sarah E. McKibben, "Bardic Poetry, Masculinity, and the Politics of Male Homosociality," in *A Companion to Irish Literature*, ed. Julia M. Wright (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

designing and delivering resources for middle and high school educators in the digital field. This platform model can be replicated by scholars in any field.

CHAPTER 2: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW STUDY

Research Questions

Given the limited accessibility of early English women's writing and historical materials to instructors (particularly those outside of well-funded research institutions with access to requisite databases and archives), my research sought to answer the following questions:

- To what extent is women's history being taught in schools?
- Would teachers be interested in teaching early women's history?
- If so, what kinds of materials would they need?

Research Methods

To answer these research questions, I designed and conducted an interview-based study of middle and high school teachers in North Carolina in the fall of 2019. I chose the basic qualitative research study as my theoretical framework since it would allow me to understand the how they "interpret their experiences...construct their worlds," and "attribute [...] [meaning] to their experiences" teaching."[24] Teachers would not only share information about their curricula and resources used but also their pedagogical frameworks, goals for their students' intellectual and social development, and interpretations of the representation of women in their curricula. My constructivist "content analysis"[25] of interviews would provide insight into teachers' experiences

[24] Referencing Michael Crotty's text, *The Foundations of Social Research* in Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 24.

[25] Renata Tesch, *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 60.

working in real-life middle and high school classrooms and the ways they assign value and "meaning" to different subjects, texts, and assignments. For students, "meanings" need to be rich in context and deep in time to allow them to understand consequence and recognize connection.

Procedures and Participant Recruitment

I consulted with the Odum Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill in order to refine my interview questions and applied for IRB approval in the summer of 2019. After obtaining IRB approval in the Fall 2019 semester," I developed a list of over 150 middle and high school English language arts and social studies instructors from North Carolina. I offered the options to meet in-person, to meet over Zoom, or to speak over the phone in order to increase flexibility and encourage participation. Interviews were scheduled for an hour, and participants were compensated with $25 Amazon gift cards.

I focused on North Carolina educators for three reasons. First, the North Carolina focus allowed me to observe how different instructors navigate North Carolina educational standards. Second, doing so allowed me to focus on curriculum design and instructional practices in a common state. Third, the regional focus enabled me to offer all participants the third form of interviews (in-person). I also anticipated that teachers in North Carolina might have some familiarity with UNC-Chapel Hill and be more likely to respond to a request to participate in a study coming from the university. I contacted public school teachers (including teachers at public magnet schools) whose email addresses were listed publicly on school websites to invite them to participate in the research study. From the 163 teachers contacted, 11 agreed to and completed the interview process. That response rate reflects research on increasing nonresponse rates on surveys as factors such as "membership in a social category or group (e.g., age, gender, political party); the survey setting (e.g., interviewer-mediated or self-administered); the social climate

(e.g., time pressures, general concerns about privacy); the proliferation of surveys" impact participation.[26] Four instructors indicated that they were interested in participating in the study but did not respond to follow-up email communications. Of the 11 instructors who participated in interviews, two chose to do so over Zoom; two chose to interview in-person; and seven chose to interview over the phone.[27]

I coded the interview information using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis tool. I developed the codes based on the data collected during the interviews and labeled the interviews according to their discussion of state and local requirements, technology used in classroom, course materials used and wanted, topics covered, skills taught, and types of activities and assignments.

I interviewed instructors specializing in social studies and in English language arts because the state standards for those subjects seemed to present the greatest opportunities to teach women's history and writing. Social studies courses invite instructors to evaluate "social studies strands—" including behavioral sciences, civics and government, and history—that are bound up with questions of gender and power.[28] The possibility for discussions of early women's lived experiences is evident from both content guidelines and the requirement to teach "skills

[26] Roger National Research Council, "Nonresponse in Social Science Surveys: A Research Agenda" (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.17226/18293. While response rates necessarily vary between surveys that can be completed quickly and those that ask for a substantial time commitment from participants, acceptable rates can fall as low as 10% Adrienne Keller, "What Is an Acceptable Survey Response Rate?," National Social Norms Center at Michigan State University, 2016, http://socialnorms.org/what-is-an-acceptable-survey-response-rate/.). The rate of response in this study was approximately 15%.

[27] On two occasions, the recording software failed, but I retained physical notes from those meetings.

[28]North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, "Standard Course of Study" (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2022), https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/standard-course-study.

necessary for students to improve their critical thinking" through the "Inquiry."[29] The standards for the *World History* high school course, which " is intended to examine the historical development of the world and global issues and patterns since 1200," ask teachers to discuss themes, including "power and authority; change and continuity; human-environment interaction; globalization; cultural diffusion; and individual and group identity," that open the door for discussions of gender, as well.[30] The behavioral sciences standard WH.B.1 presents an opportunity for teachers to discuss women's writing in order to "[d]econstruct societies and institutions [and examine how] they were shaped by art, literature, philosophical thought, and religion, now and in the past."[31] The 7th-grade World History II course, which covers 1400 CE to the present, likewise calls on teachers to investigate with students "how values and beliefs affect human rights, justice, and equality for different groups of people."[32] Standard 7.H.1 even specifically demands that students learn to "evaluate historical and current events from a variety of perspectives," including gender-based perspectives. Two objectives explaining how to fulfill that standard (7.H.1.2 and 7.H.1.5) ask teachers to "Summarize the influence women, indigenous, racial, ethnic, political, and religious groups have had on historical events and

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

current global issues" and to consider how discriminatory attitudes and policies have impacted people.[33]

Language arts standards likewise provide opportunities to teach literary texts by women as well as to consider gendered experiences in a historical context. The standards encourage the study of different genres–including poems, drama, short stories and long narratives[34]–and emphasize the importance of "[analyzing] a particular perspective or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature."[35] The standards point to ways in which these works would be read in a more historicist fashion, as they call on teachers to guide students through "[comparing] and [contrasting] a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history."[36] The standards for grades 9-12 likewise require cultural analysis as teachers must cover "[works] of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature."[37] This requirement further opens up the opportunity to place early British women's writing in dialogue with a global literary tradition and to teach British literature through the lens of global cultural exchange and, on the other hand, the cultural impact of colonial conquest.[38]

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[33]This standard notably separates out the experiences of women (as well as other groups) in a way that suggests these narratives are not inherently a part of the larger historical narratives presented in the course. See NC DPI, "Standard Course of Study."

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

Interview Structure

I organized my interview questions around five topics:[39]

- Interviewees' teaching experience and current subjects taught
- Curriculum design and text choice
- Technology available and used as part of the class
- The degree to which teachers design their own course materials and sources drawn upon to do so
- Thoughts on designing effective and useful materials to teach early women's history and writing

Findings

From the interviews, I concluded that, reflecting on their course design, teachers indicated they are

- satisfied with the freedom of choice provided by NC state standards
- invested in engaging students in interdisciplinary studies of history and literature
- invested in addressing gender, diversity, and people's history
- influenced by beliefs about canonicity
- committed to meeting the needs of diverse learners

When it comes to the educational materials used in their classrooms, teachers:

- rely heavily on digital sites that provide educational materials
- are in critical need of primary and secondary source materials
- require video and visual content to meet the diverse needs of their students

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[39] See Appendix A.

- need materials to be situated within detailed lesson plans that can be integrated directly into their curricula
- value university-sponsored sites

My discussions with interviewees informed my understanding of the feasibility of teaching early women's history, the analytical and reflective skills taught in social studies and ELA classrooms, the need for a variety of instructional modes present in the materials I create to allow teachers greater flexibility when trying to incorporate early women's history into their lessons, and the significance of disseminating these materials through a UNC-sponsored site.

Interdisciplinary Classrooms

The interdisciplinary nature of teachers' classes affirms that early women's history and writing could be incorporated into ELA and social studies classrooms. ELA teachers took historicist approaches to the study of literature as they incorporated both secondary and primary sources into their discussion of the texts. One teacher covering *A Raisin in the Sun*, for example, not only guided her students through close readings of the play but also lectured and guided her students through an activity analyzing "photos online of Southside Chicago in the 1950s…" She explained that she "showed [these black and white photos] to the kids and [...] got them to write a response based on the pictures, what they thought it must have been like to live in that neighborhood in the 1950s."[40] This mode of teaching suggested that teachers are eager to discuss primary sources from the period to better help their students understand issues of class, race, and gender— topics which Project Illumine addresses.

[40] Teacher #8. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.

Social studies teachers likewise valued integrating literature into their discussion of history and culture. Two teachers praised the "American studies" model of teaching for its integration of literary, cultural, and historical analysis.[41] One teacher recounted both his experience as a student in an American studies classroom and as a teacher integrating ELA and history. He recalled "[he wanted to use that previous co-taught course] as a model with my world history curriculum because [he] always felt that ... the best way to understand history was through literature because, oftentimes, textbooks are dry, and they don't provide a lot of information primarily from the perspective of people." This teacher placed a high value on creating a class that complicated students' understanding of history as more than just "events and things like that." The vehicle to do such was primary sources, like works of "literature [that] made the information more personal."[42] Another teacher working in American Studies emphasized the value of "doing an interdisciplinary study" She explained that she creates her "year-long course [using] the cultural studies model" and is "very much in alignment with what American Studies does at UNC."[43] For her students, that means integrating the study of literature, history, and culture by "reading documents [from] collections [...] [including] the *Heath Anthology of American Literature* [...] *Major Problems in American History* (which is a pretty common textbook in college classes) and a couple other primary document collections that [they] use with students, as well." Yet the teacher emphasized that her students were not

[41] Teacher #6. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019., Teacher #1. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 19, 2019.

[42] Teacher #6. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.

[43] Teacher #1. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 19, 2019.

constrained by these sources as she emphasized that she and her co-teachers, "just like every other teacher, draw on a lot of online sources [...] to supplement the textbooks that [they] have."

Freedom Granted by NC Standards

The ability for teachers to incorporate early women's history and writing into their classrooms was evident through teachers' discussions of the skills-based nature of NC standards for social studies and ELA that reflected traditional Deweyan educational theory. In order to better understand how teachers design the content of their courses, I asked teachers to share the impact of the NC standards and any local district standards on the design of their courses. One teacher working at a charter school praised the amount of freedom she was afforded. She noted that:

> Because we're charter, it's actually really nice. We have freedom over— it's whatever you want to teach... It's set that I have to do British literature, and, for a 10th grade, I have to do World Literature. So I get to choose anything within that, and I have a lot of freedom at my school right now. (Or, I've always had it.) Basically, if I wanted to make... a course that wasn't a survey course —if I wanted to, like, make a course about British literature, monsters or something like that, I could probably do that which is something I've considered [doing] in the past.[44]

The teacher felt that she was able to design both more standard courses that surveyed national literature as well as specialized seminars that addressed a particular theme.

Teachers at non-charter middle and high schools likewise explained that the standards largely focus on skills and appreciated the freedom that those standards provided. One social studies teacher explained that:

> We have what's called the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, which are the state standards for English. So, they're divided [according to grade level], but once you get to high school, 9th and 10th grade English have the same standards...and 11th and 12th have the same standards. The standards are all skill-based. So, it's things like: "Students should be able to identify a theme in a work of fiction."...It's with literature, but then there's also

[44] Teacher #5. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Zoom, November 13, 2019.

> [standards] for informational texts [...] [since] we're supposed to also be teaching informational/nonfiction texts, as well. And then there are standards for writing. So, for 9th and 10th, a lot of the writing standards [focus] on: "Can the student build a basic argument and use evidence to support their claim?" So that's something we work on a lot. And then I think there [are] some standards for grammar, [...] so I also work with them on that.[45]

The standards for high school NC ELA classes reflect this teacher's observations. The standards, while lengthy, rarely mention specific authors or periods for teachers to cover; instead, they focus on four foundational sets of skills—reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language (grammar and usage) —and the genres that students should study.[46] For each core skill, the anchor standards explain the means by which students will advance their abilities. For example, anchor standard RL.11-12.9 stipulates that students "[a]nalyze how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics and compare the approaches the authors take."[47] As the teachers noted, the standard allows teachers to choose from a variety of texts as they engage their students in comparative study. This emphasis on skills-based standards necessitates using gender as a category of analysis, given the way gender inflects so much of students' lived experiences as well as historical and literary texts.

A teacher confirmed that the same focus on skills extended to social studies standards, as well. She explained that:

> Basically, [the standards] are skills they want students to know by the time they finish a school year. They have that for each grade. We use the eighth-grade standard course of study for North Carolina social studies....To give an example: one of those skills would

[45] Teacher #8. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.

[46] North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, "Understanding the NC English Language Arts Standard Course of Study, Grades 11-12" (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017), https://files.nc.gov/dpi/documents/curriculum/languagearts/parents/standards-11-12.pdf.

[47] Ibid.

> be "Students can analyze a primary source and infer meaning from a primary source" or something like that. So, we have a lot of choice in terms of what content [we] use to teach that skill. So, we basically can choose any primary source as it fits a particular unit that we're studying and then use that to teach the skill.[48]

The teacher recognized that a variety of sources could be used to help develop students' abilities to engage in historical analysis and critical thinking.

When standards do provide some degree of content recommendation, they seem to be sufficiently general to allow teachers greater freedom to choose the figures and perspectives emphasized in their courses. In ELA, students are required to study both literary and informational texts as means of improving their critical thinking and analytical writing skills. Standards for reading literary texts do not offer up examples of fictional works to analyze. Standards for reading nonfiction texts (RI.11-12.8 and RI.11-12.9) in grades 11 and 12 do focus on Western history as they require that students be able to "Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in influential U.S. and/or British texts, including the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy" and "[a]nalyze foundational U.S. and/or British documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features," respectively.[49] However, while the clarification statements offer ideas for model texts, including "*The Federalist*,...addresses from political leaders[,] *The Declaration of Independence*...and the *Magna Carta*," the requirements remain flexible as they only stipulates that students "examine U.S. and/or British primary source documents that reflect important historic times and have literary influence."[50] These standards make it necessary to include key texts presenting

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[48] Teacher #2. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, October 2, 2019.

[49] NC DPI, "ELA Standard Course of Study, 11-12".

[50] Ibid.

arguments for gender equality, such as the works of Mary Astell, Bathsua Makin, and Mary Wollstonecraft, in dialogue with works by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.

The freedom teachers seemed to feel when designing social studies courses likewise seems to stem from the standards' emphasis on studying broader historical concepts, diverse genres of primary sources, and understanding a variety of historical perspectives.[51] Teacher 7 related that "the standards [are] really, really short, which is nice. My standards are really skill-based....There's a bunch for history, geography, culture, economics... politics, [and] civics." She related that for each of those fields, the standards will focus on analytical skills, political concepts and movements, and periods like "[understanding] graphs, structures of government, ...Renaissance, absolutism, World War One, and imperialism." She indicated that the "vague" nature of the standards could be "difficult for a first-year teacher," but useful for a more experienced teacher who would be able to develop an individualized and engaging course to meet the needs of his or her students.[52] A review of the standards confirmed this assessment. Essential Standard **7**.H.1 "Use historical thinking to analyze various modern societies," for example, defines what "students will know" by the end of the course fairly broadly by requires students understand "[h]ow events prior to the Age of Exploration impacted later historical events and issues"[53] The standard then offers a variety of primary source genres that students might evaluate including "diaries, ship manifests, tax records, maps, magazine and newspaper

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[51] North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, "Social Studies 7th Grade Standards, Fall 2021 Implementation" (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2021), https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/11818/open.

[52] Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019.

[53] NC DPI, "Social Studies 7th Grade Standards."

articles, sermons, songs or literature."[54] The diversity of these sources allows teachers to bring in perspectives from different social groups, including groups separated by class and gender.

This focus on skills reflects the foundational educational philosophy developed by John Dewey that emphasizes skill-building over content memorization.[55] For Dewey, schools are a democratizing space because they allow students "to balance the various elements in the social environment, and to see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living contact with a broader environment."[56] Yet the learning that goes on in schools is not to be prescriptive and content-focused. Instead, Dewey emphasized action-based learning and the acquisition of skills that could be broadly applied.

Constrained by Custom

While the NC standards offer greater freedom for individualized content selection, I found that "tradition" could constrict this sense of curricular freedom. The meaning of "tradition" here is twofold. First, I mean to indicate patterns of using certain materials and texts because they have been passed down or shared by other instructors. Second, I am referring to the weight of traditional literary canon and the "anthropological theory of education" from the 1980s that on teachers' course design.[57] When explaining how they designed their courses in light of

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[54] See Standard 7.H.1in NC DPI, "Social Studies 7th Grade Standards."

[55] Eric Donald Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James S. Trefil, Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know (New York: Vintage Books (Random House), 1988), xv.

[56] Loren Goldman, "Learning and Its Environments: On Chapter 2: Education as a Social Function," in *John Dewey's Democracy and Education: A Centennial Handbook*, ed. Andrea R. English and Leonard J. Waks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 23–30, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316492765.012.

[57] Eric Donald Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James S. Trefil, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1988), xv.

the freedom provided by NC standards, a few teachers indicated that they tended to ground their course design on materials handed down by fellow teachers. Yet, this form of tradition did not appear to limit teachers significantly since they regularly reviewed their materials in conjunction with other faculty, particularly in their Professional Learning Communities. Teacher 3 explained the ways in which the curriculum was both somewhat established but also subject to revision through collaboration with fellow teachers. She explained that "when [she] came in [to her current school], the curriculum was pretty much laid out [...] [and was] a product of collaboration across all the middle schools in our district." While that prefabricated course design could have proven limiting, this teacher clarified that she and her fellow teachers regularly reviewed the materials in order to evaluate their relevance. Teacher 3 explained:

> We are also asked to meet with our professional planning partners. So, my other fellow social studies teacher [and I]....were asked to plan and meet two days a week. That's where we look at standards, look at kind of where we're heading next in terms of history and big moments, and revise things from last year and previous years. If we don't like it, that's where we do some research [and] create new things.[58]

Yet, more powerful seemed to be "canon creep," or the encroachment of beliefs about canonicity on the structure of these courses. One ELA teacher reflected the conflict between the sense of freedom provided by NC standards and the restrictions brought about by expectations of teaching canonical texts. She explained:

> But it's funny because [...] at my school, we do it where... the 9th grade is about different genres, and we all teach mostly the same texts (and 10th is world [literature], 11th is American [literature], so on and so forth). But honestly, I think the standards don't dictate that that need be the way that they structure English classes at the high school level. The standards have never said, "You have to teach these texts." I think at one point it said that you needed to teach a Shakespeare play every year, but [...] they just updated [the standards] a year ago, and I don't know [the Shakespeare requirement] is in there anymore. So, the actual texts, we get to choose. But it's almost like there's been this unspoken rule that these are the texts that you need to expose them to. Which is interesting, because I wonder if one day someone is going to challenge that. But, you

[58] Teacher #3. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 7, 2019.

> know, I guess whoever created that sort of foundation was thinking, well, these are the texts... [that are] representative of the kinds of texts that students need to be exposed to because they're classics or they're in the canon... So, in terms of the skills, that's something that's very much prescribed to us. But in terms of the texts... the state isn't telling us what we have to do with that. It's just sort of a tradition.

This teacher's reflections provided interesting insights into how, even when standards removed requirements to teach texts held in high esteem, the influence of canonicity remained. This sentiment was echoed by Teacher 5, a self-identifying feminist who professed concern about balancing canonical texts (with the implication that those were written primarily by male authors) with significant texts written by women.

Teacher 8 continued explaining the balancing act that teachers engage in as they weigh tradition with ideas about texts that would work well in their schools. She observed that:

> So, we work in what are called PLCs- that's an acronym for professional learning community and... we get together with the other teachers that teach the same level of English […]I'll get together with all the English I teachers. We have talked about adding in maybe a dystopian novel. So, we thought about doing that. The great thing about our school is we also have the freedom to add in texts that we want to teach, as long as we get some of the... standard ones. And so, I could choose to teach a dystopian novel of my choice, as long as I got *Romeo and Juliet* in because that's a standard. So, we're given a lot of free rein, in that case. It's just sort of... there's this tradition of teaching certain texts that we're upholding. But we technically, we have the freedom to whatever we want, and then if we want to make ...so that all English I classes have to read this one, we can talk about that. But we can also do what we want in addition to what's already sort of expected.

Canonical status imparted greater educational value in those classrooms and created a hierarchy of texts that students *needed* to know versus those teachers chose to include otherwise. Interestingly, it also reflected ways in which canonicity could dampen teachers' ability to exercise their expertise and knowledge of their classrooms.

Another teacher, reflecting on her course design, evidenced this awareness of the hierarchy created by canonicity. She indicated that she and her co-teacher "[were] interested in kind of opening the canon to a wide array of voices." They "cover those important documents

like the Declaration of Independence or Benjamin Franklin's memoir," that reflect the "official history that we've all heard." However, they also ensure that students:

> hear from people living at the same time period that represent the marginalized. So, we're going to hear from women. We're going to hear from Black people and other people of color. So, for example, right now, we're in that early national period around the turn of the 19th century. And we have read Jefferson and de Crèvecœur and Franklin, but we've also read Judith Sargent Murray, Abigail Adams' letters to her husband, and Benjamin Banneker. So, we were [...] opening up to as diverse an array of voices and points of view as we can.[59]

The categorization of materials as "important" and part of an "official" history versus those of the "marginalized" evidenced the impact of the hierarchy created by canonicity.[60] While it is true that the voices of women and people of color historically were marginalized and so it is appropriate to refer to them as such, I believe this language of "important" and official" indicates a need for greater and more regular inclusion of women's history and writing so that they do not seem like "special subjects," when, in fact, their experiences made up a significant and continuing part of history.

The weight of tradition on course design seems to derive from historical emphasis on the value of the canon to students in educational theory. In her 2019 article, "Critical Canon Pedagogy: Applying Disciplinary Inquiry to Cultivate Canonical Critical Consciousness," Jeanne Dyches recounts that scholars in the 1980s, like E.D. Hirsch, and, "perhaps unwittingly, secondary English classrooms [...] often endorsed the ideology that canonical literature—[...] historically preserved bodies of literature that often project the voices and experiences of Anglo

[59] Teacher #1. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 19, 2019.

[60] Ibid.

White males—provides students with essential 'cultural literacy.'"[61] These 20th century theorists drew upon the work of 19th-century humanist educational theorists who argued, in contrast with Dewey, that "[p]erseverance in the study of a liberal arts curriculum cultivated a disciplined character, [and were] the best way for a person to develop refined thinking, aesthetic taste, and moral character." They argued that teachers need to ensure that students "encounter [..] carefully selected artifacts of human civilization."[62] This perspective is evident in Hirsch's 1988 text *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* in which he outlines what he deems to be "corrective" or "anthropological theory of education." This theory rejected Deweyan claims that "early education need not be tied to specific content" on the grounds that "all human communities, [in fact,] are founded upon specific shared information."[63] By learning that "communally shared information," Hirsch posits, "children [can] learn to participate in complex activities with other members of their community."[64] Hirsch even went on to claim that this focus on the most culturally valuable texts would have a democratizing effect since "cultural literacy constitutes the only secure avenue of opportunity for disadvantaged children, the only

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[61] Eric Donald Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James S. Trefil, *Cultural Literacy*.
Dyches and Purves qtd. in Jeanne Dyches, "Critical Canon Pedagogy: Applying Disciplinary Inquiry to Cultivate Canonical Critical Consciousness," *Harvard Educational Review* 88, no. 4 (Winter 2018): 538-564, 607.

[62] Avi I. Mintz, "What Is the Purpose of Education?: Dewey's Challenge to His Contemporaries: On Chapter 9: Natural Development and Social Efficiency as Aims," in *John Dewey's Democracy and Education: A Centennial Handbook*, ed. Andrea R. English and Leonard J. Waks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 81–88, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316492765.012.

[63] Eric Donald Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James S. Trefil, *Cultural Literacy*, xv.

[64] Ibid.

way of combating the social determinism that now condemns them to remain in the same social and educational condition as their parents."[65]

Yet Dyches, citing Alan Purves, notes that "[t]these cultural bodies… are 'exclusionary by definition'" and, in fact, "affirm and dismiss students' sociocultural backgrounds, biographical experiences, and lived realities."[66] Dyches subsequently reviews two ways in which scholars and teachers have pushed back against this "hegemonic" curriculum created by canonicity.[67] One way of fracturing the control exerted by the canon is by "teaching canonical literature in transformative ways as a means of subverting majoritarian stories and the ideologies at their foundation."[68] The second, more complex approach Dyches recommends is "critical canon pedagogy" through which teachers will change the texts typically in rotation in classrooms as they become "literacy stakeholders" who invite their students into discussions of "sociocultural dominance and oppression" that are enacted by disciplines and the texts taught within them.[69]

The teachers I interviewed demonstrated a significant investment in "critical canon study," particularly in recovering women's voices. Two teachers[70] viewed canon revision

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[65] Eric Donald Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James S. Trefil, *Cultural Literacy*, xiii.

[66] Dyches and Purves qtd. in Jeanne Dyches, "Critical Canon Pedagogy," 538.

[67] Jeanne Dyches, "Critical Canon Pedagogy,"539-540.

[68] Jeanne Dyches, "Critical Canon Pedagogy," 539.

[69] Jeanne Dyches, "Critical Canon Pedagogy," 540-541.

[70] Teacher #2. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, October 2, 201; Teacher #6. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.

through the "people's history" framework provided by Howard Zinn that "emphasizes the role of working people, women, people of color, and organized social movements in shaping history."[71] Multiple teachers affirmed the importance of teaching women's history and writing in their classroom, offered insight into the varying degrees to which they felt they were able to accomplish that mission, and indicated that they need access to ready-to-use materials on diverse women's histories. Teacher 2 explained that the diversity of voices represented in her and her fellow teachers' classes mattered and that they actively evaluated ways they could improve their course of study:

> This is my second year, teaching in this position. So, it's still fairly new. But at the end of last year, the other 8th-grade social studies teacher and I were reflecting on things that we did well and they want to improve. And that was something that was clear to both of us was that we feel like we didn't do a great job of providing women's history. So, what we try to do is basically, whenever a new topic is introduced, or we have notes to kind of cover general knowledge of a topic, we'll try to highlight the experiences [...] underrepresented [people] so, whether that's [...] Latinx, or African-American history, or women's history. [...] We tried to have a special highlight that shows how these various groups were contributing at that given time period.[72]

Teacher 2 indicated that she and her collaborator grappled with the ways they presented the material and the need for more resources on women's history. She noted that, when they made a special mention of "underrepresented voices" in their units "[they] still felt [that this method placed these groups of people] on the sideline [...] [when] what [they'd] really like to do is make that more of a focus." Interestingly, Teacher 2 assessed that they were able to integrate "African American history and [...] Latinx history" more neatly into their lessons [...] [but they] still [hadn't] quite done that with women." However, she assessed that they were likely to develop

[71] "About: Zinn Education Project: Teaching People's History," Zinn Education Project, accessed March 19, 2022, https://www.zinnedproject.org/about/.

[72] Teacher #2. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, October 2, 2019.

more lessons as the school year progressed since “it's something that [they’re] definitely conscious of” and since, “ over the summer, [they] were trying to compile resources on women's stories so that [they could] be more intentional about having that be at the center of what [they are] teaching.[73]

Teacher 7 likewise expressed a strong and urgent desire for more resources on women’s history. For Teacher 7, women’s history is integral to her social studies course. She reviewed that over the course of her units on the Renaissance and absolutism, she ensured she addressed women of historical import, including “Catherine the Great, [...] Bloody Mary, Elizabeth I.”[74] Yet, once the class reached “the Enlightenment,” she lamented that the unit was dominated by “so many old white” men and that the unit was both “inaccessible” and “one of the most boring parts of [...] teaching.” She indicated that she added Mary Wollstonecraft “in [...] for some diversity,” but still regretted that the unit did not introduce the writing and experiences of women in a more fulsome manner, in large part due to lack of resources.[75]

Teachers also emphasized the value of lessons on early women’s history when teaching students to evaluate gender bias.[76] Teacher 7 related that the major assignment for her unit on absolutism is a debate discussing Marie Antoinette’s role in the fall of the French monarchy and how her status as a woman and a foreigner affected people’s judgments of her. Later, in their unit

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Evaluating bias is part of social studies standards.

on the Industrial Revolution, Teacher 7 indicated she would discuss the intersection of gender and class in the labor women performed and work opportunities they had. It was evident that Teacher 7 was invested in incorporating the voices of women on the political stage, in intellectual circles, and of lower social status. [77]

Another teacher's reflection on literature used to discuss medieval history pointed to the need for greater inclusion of texts by women. That teacher indicated that the co-taught class "[used] [*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*] as sort of a lens into what the lifestyle and the relationships were between [...] men and women.[78] While Teacher 6 expressed admiration for contemporary female authors, early women writers did not feature in the course he co-taught. Teacher 6 reported that the class subsequently studied Machiavelli's *The Prince*, "texts by Martin Luther, and [...] Dante's *Inferno*," and *Candide*. He acknowledged that time constraints kept him from including additional texts he felt students would benefit from reading. Yet, the texts he wished he could have taught—*Gulliver's Travels* and *Essay on Man*—still did not include a single female-authored text.

Teachers emphasized that including women's history and writing was important for their students' development, particularly for female students. Research has shown that it's important for children to see themselves represented in the educational material they study. This need was echoed by teachers in ELA and social studies classrooms who identified a need both for more examples of women in history and literature and for more diverse histories and narratives to be represented in their courses. Teacher 7 noted that "the kids work harder" and that there "[is] a

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[77] Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019.

[78] Teacher #6. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.

measurable change in grades and attitude, when it's a good, culturally competent lesson."[79] Teacher 5[80] reflected on the importance of including "The Wife of Bath's Tale" and "The Prioress's Tale" when teaching *The Canterbury Tales*. She noticed that these narratives not only provided context for discussing gender roles and codes of conduct in medieval England, but it also struck a chord with the female students in her class. She observed:

> It's kind of like video games—You want the girl character. You want to play the girl. You want to see yourself. [...] [T]he kids jump towards — when we chose characters from the Canterbury Tales, the girls really wanted the Wife of Bath or the Prioress.[81]

This explanation emphasized the importance of gender identity as students engage with literary texts and point to the concerningly limited options young women have. In this case, the female characters are limited and further presented still through a male author's perspective.

The need for educational materials on women in early history was further evidenced through Teacher 7's frustrating search for female models to create a more engaging unit assignment. In her unit on the Age of Exploration, Teacher 3 excitedly explained the pedagogical value of a project in which students are:

> asked to research a biography for the explorer, chart the voyages that they took, talk about the significance and impact of the voyages, make a classroom connection to *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, [...] [and] to cite their sources. They're required to do at least two digital database sources and one print source. Then they are asked to write a historical narrative either from the perspective of the explorer, or a Native person who would have come into contact with that explorer. [At the end, the class] wrapped [the project] up with a gallery walk where [students] have the posters displayed around the room. They're

[79] Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019.

[80] These comments came after Teacher 5 reflected on the lack of information available to teachers on early women writers.

[81] Teacher #5. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Zoom, November 13, 2019.

> supposed to go and study six new explorers that they may not already know anything about. After they analyze six posters, they have to defend which explore out of the six should be the most celebrated and why.[82]

The teacher indicated that the educational and personal impact of this assignment, especially for female students, could have been greater had there been more resources on early women. She very purposefully chose to include female explorers, including Jeanne Baret and 19th century explorer Isabella Bird and noted that, from the "very limited [number] of female explorers that they could have done on this project, [she] had girls picking [them]." While she felt that the result ("having groups choose to represent women") was "awesome," but lamented that the examples tied in were "very minimal." She reflected that "our resources on that are very limited, and I think that's why."[83]

Teachers stressed that, in order to more readily include early women's writing and history, they need ready-to-implement educational materials. Teacher 5 likewise lamented that her survey of British literature did not include many women until they reached the 18th century and discussed Mary Shelley. Even as a professed " huge feminist" who "[has] studied a lot of feminist courses or feminist texts in grad school and in college" and who "[tries] to be really conscious of what [texts she's] using [and] how many women [she's] using," Teacher 5 found it to be challenging to identify female authors to include in the earlier portions of her survey course. When speaking about the authors she might include she framed that lack of information about early British women writers as "the problem with a survey course in Brit lit" and became less confident as she tried to recall examples of female writers, reviewing that she knew "some

[82] Teacher #3. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 7, 2019.

[83] Ibid.

of the early medieval poems are the Frauleiners, [sic] the poems that— right? the ones that are a woman's lamentation." Notably, her reflection then turned to the limiting factors that hindered her inclusion of more female authors as she distressed:

> But sometimes [it's] just hard with British literature. I mean, I do feel a lot of pressure. It's like, I could make this *not* a survey course. I could make this a course where they just study female writers from British literature and just cut out the men or... [study] women of color [in] British literature. I don't know, we'd be reading a lot of Zadie Smith... I could rearrange the curriculum, or I could change it to include more women writers, but I just—like, part of me is like, "Man, I just don't have the energy for that right now" and then another part of me is like, "Then we'd be missing out on...Shakespeare or, I don't know, Chaucer or some other guys that I just really like, and I think it's important for them to know [and] to read."[84]

The need for a central site providing ready-to-use classroom resources on women's writing was evident from this teacher's comments on the exhaustion derived from canonical reinforcement and changing bureaucratic norms. This exhaustion and overwhelm can further cloud educators' conceptions of the ease with which they can integrate women's history and writing into their curricula. This educator's comments on making her British literature course "*not* a survey course" and switching to "a course where [students] study female writers from British literature and just cut out the men" points to a lingering and damaging thought pattern that equates incorporating women's writing with supplanting or even razing the literary landscape of male authors. This idea feels aggressive and unwarranted and can make teachers hesitate to change the existing set of texts and authors. By providing educators with units organized around specific topics relevant to key movements in history (i.e. educational reform, humanism, the Scientific Revolution) and underrepresented cultures (those of women of color and Irish women), Project Illumine presents early modern women's writing less as a monolith and showcase the diverse ways (and degrees to which) early women's writing can be

[84] Teacher #5. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Zoom, November 13, 2019.

incorporated into pre-existing curricula. Instructors may incorporate a whole unit into their classes or simply assign an interactive contextual PowerPoint as a class activity or homework assignment. (Given the breadth of resources, though, it also provides interested educators with a rich opportunity to teach a course solely focused on women writers in early modern England and Ireland.)

The significant need for teaching resources on early women's history was evident from discussions with social studies instructors, as well. Teacher 3 observed that while, "[in] the Renaissance, [they] do talk a little bit about daily life [and] [...] about the role of most women during this time [...] [they] don't talk about any famous female figures of the Renaissance."[85] Teacher 3 specifically attributed absence to the dearth of available resources and asserted that she would include early women's history and writing if she had access to such materials, explaining

> I mean, that would be really cool if we had the resources. I think that anytime you can bring in a minority group or just a group that's not talked about as much I think that would be amazing. If we could get our hands on more resources, that would be awesome. I mean, I'll be honest, the only famous females I know from the Renaissance would probably be from the Borgia family. In terms of politics and influence and all of that. But they're not mentioned in the textbook. It's hard to find resources.[86]

The need for free, openly accessible lesson plans and videos was also evident from interviews with teachers. Teachers primarily sought out lessons that contained sufficient contextual information, were rich with primary sources, included fulsome guiding questions for their students, and contained visual content, including videos and images of primary documents,

[85] Teacher #3. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 7, 2019.

[86] Teacher #3. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 7, 2019.

for students to analyze. Teacher 1, for example, explained that she and her fellow instructors "[have] always valued things that are primary document-rich and give ideas about what kinds of critical thinking students can do with them."[87] Teacher 8 echoed this sentiment as she emphasized that primary source-based materials "[make] the historical [topics] come alive to them [and are] valuable. She explicitly stated that she was "looking for ways to tie [primary sources] in more to [her] instruction"[88]

For these primary sources to be incorporated into classrooms more readily, teachers need sufficient contextual materials, guiding questions, and activities that help students consider multiple perspectives. When reviewing model materials, Teacher 1 indicated that she looked specifically for "the questions that we should be asking our students about these documents and [the] context that we need to know to understand the documents."[89] Teacher 10 echoed this sentiment as she evaluated a sample lesson plan from the Folger Shakespeare Library on *Romeo and Juliet*. Looking at the lesson plan, she described it as "solid" and "a good lesson plan format" because it "gives steps" that explain "specifically what to do" in class discussions, incorporates a comparative study of primary source, and "gives an extension." She even said that such a lesson plan "is something [she] would pay for on "Teachers Pay Teachers."[90] She also indicated that she frequently looked for "graphic organizers, too, [...] guided notes, [...]

[87] Teacher #1. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 19, 2019.

[88] Teacher #8. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.

[89] Teacher #1. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 19, 2019.

[90] Teacher #10. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. In-person, November 16, 2019.

worksheets, [or] anything like that for students to complete and synthesize [...] historical background or context.[91]

Teachers indicated that they need visual materials—whether video or images for two reasons: 1) to make it easier to bring women's history and writing into their courses and 2) to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. When reviewing the educational materials listed on the National Women's History Museum website, Teacher 7 remarked that "the 50-second or one-minute video clips [...] [were] really nice [and] would be an excellent way to bring in some more women."[92] She suggested that such videos might help teachers who felt they could not dedicate a whole class period to the subject but still wanted to expose their class to women's narratives. Teacher 8 indicated that she frequently "[tries] to intersperse [her lectures] with some kind of video or visual content."[93] Teacher 10 even listed YouTube as one of her top three digital sources for creating class content. She said she frequently incorporates video clips into her classroom and favors videos under eight minutes long that include graphics and some animation to engage her students.[94]

The teachers' feedback also provided insight into the value of making Project Illumine one central, university-sponsored site for teachers interested in early women's history and writing. When discussing their desire to access such materials, teachers emphasized that they have limited time and are looking for high-quality, credible resources. They discussed their

[91] Ibid.

[92] Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019.

[93] Teacher #8. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019.

[94] Teacher #10. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. In-person, November 16, 2019.

frequent use of the Zinn Education Project, Stanford Education Group's site Think Like a Historian, the Southern Poverty Law Center's site Teaching Tolerance (which is now known as Learning for Justice), and Carolina K-12's materials.[95] Teachers indicated that they frequently turned to those sites in order to discuss "people's history," bias, and the histories of groups underrepresented in traditional narratives.[96] They trusted these resources and found them clear and efficient to navigate in comparison with the mixed feelings they had towards sources like YouTube and Teachers-Pay-Teachers. (While some found them useful, others felt there were too many low-quality resources that they had to sift through on those sites.)

Figure 1

[95] Teacher #2. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, October 2, 2019; Teacher #6. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019; and Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019

[96] Teacher #1. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 19, 2019; Teacher #2. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, October 2, 2019; Teacher #3. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 7, 2019; Teacher #6. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 14, 2019; and Teacher #7. Project Illumine Teacher Interviews. Phone, November 21, 2019.

Conclusions

Based on these interviews, I concluded that Project Illumine can provide a much-needed resource to North Carolina educators because it bridges the gap between university-based research and middle and high school classrooms. There is a demonstrated need and desire to teach more fulsome early women's history and writing in order to enrich students' understanding of women's history and gender studies. Given the tension between teachers' commitment to diversifying their curricula and the lingering pressures of canonicity, it is important for Project Illumine to deliver a wide range of materials that facilitate quick or more in-depth incorporation of women's history into North Carolina classrooms. Lessons should be grounded in primary documents, supported by contextual essays, and designed with a series of guiding questions to facilitate discussion and activities. Project Illumine will also include short videos providing overviews of women's accomplishments and brief biographies. Project Illumine has the power to light a path for teachers to bring these women out of the archives into students' lives.

CHAPTER 3: EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Chapter 3 presents the materials developed for the Project Illumine digital site. The materials are organized according to subject and explore the diverse literacies exhibited by women writers, as well as the cultures severely underrepresented in discussions of early modern British history and literature. Each unit contains a contextual essay and classroom resources (lesson plans, activities, assignments). Each unit includes a contextual lesson to so that teachers can readily introduce this history into their classrooms and provide sufficient context for diving deeper into the lives and accomplishments of designated historical figures and for performing thoughtful close readings of the selected texts.

I discuss the site design and implementation in Chapter 4.

Unit 1: Women and Humanism in Early Modern England

Contextual Essay

<u>Rationale:</u>

Project Illumine's aims are threefold. We exist to help educators:

- Discover the rich intellectual history of and multiple literacies practiced by women living in early modern England and Ireland
- Include more diverse voices and complex histories in their curricula
- Collaborate by sharing their unique lesson plans and activities to further expand the possibilities for teaching early women's histories

Let's take a look at why and how the stories of women involved in early modern humanistic culture can be included in your classrooms.

Why teach students about women's contributions to early modern humanistic culture?

In middle and high school classes, lessons on humanism provide essential insight into a turning point in early modern culture. Literature, philosophy, religion, and politics were all influenced by a) the newfound awareness of the power of the human mind and b) the global circulation of knowledge as scholars exchanged manuscripts and ideas. Humanist scholars shaped people's understanding of history, the role of government, and inspired the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century. As students study this critical philosophical and cultural movement, they likely will have questions about the extent to which women had the freedom and training required to contribute to humanistic scholarship.

Along with their studies of Thomas More and Desiderius Erasmus, students need to engage with the writing of female intellectuals like Margaret More Roper; Mary Sidney Herbert; Elizabeth, Lady Falkland; and Mary Wroth. These women contributed original works of poetry and provide prime examples of how humanist scholars engaged with Biblical and Classical traditions in their works. By studying the lives and writings of these exceptional scholars and poets, students will be able to understand how women were essential to the advancement of humanism.

NC Standards (full standards listed at the end of the document)

Middle School

- Social Studies: 7.B.1.1-2; 7.C&G.1.2; 7.C&G.1.4; 7.H.1.1-2
- English: RL.8.1-4; SL.8.1-2,4

High School

- World History: WH.B.1, 2.1-2.3; WH.C&G.1.2, 1.4; WH.H.1.1
- English: RL.9-10.1-4,6,9; SL.9-10.1,4; RL.11-12.1,2,4-7,9; SL.11-12.1,4

Essential Questions:

- How did humanistic culture develop from the medieval scholastic period?
- What were the defining features of humanistic culture?
- How did women participate in humanistic culture?

Humanism Contextual Essay

We have made you neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that you may, as the free and extraordinary shaper of yourself, fashion yourself in whatever form you prefer.

> "It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine. It will be in your power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Alternatively, you shall have the power, in accordance with the judgment of your soul, to be reborn into the higher orders, those that are divine." [97]

In his treatise "Oration on the Dignity of Man," the Italian 15th-century philosopher Pico della Mirandola celebrates the unique position and possibilities of human beings as he reimagines their moment of Creation. He calls on his readers to imagine the Christian God musing on humankind and proclaiming:

> "We have given you, Adam, no fixed seat or form of your own, no talent peculiar to you alone. This we have done so that whatever seat, whatever form, whatever talent you may judge desirable, these same may you have and possess according to your desire and judgment. Once defined, the nature of all other beings is constrained within the laws We have prescribed for them. But you, constrained by no limits, may determine your nature for yourself, according to your own free will, in whose hands We have placed you. We have set you at the [center] of the world."[98]

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[97] Pico della Mirandola, Pico Della Mirandola: Oration on the Dignity of Man: A New Translation and Commentary, ed. Francesco Borghesi, Michael Papio, and Massimo Riva (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139059565. See also Charles G. Nauert, Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe, 2nd ed., New Approaches to European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[98] Ibid.

Humans, in Pico's telling, are exalted—not for their dominance and command of earth's flora and fauna—but for the powers of their minds to study, discern, and decide the course of their lives. Pico's account stresses the freedom with which humans are imbued and opportunities they subsequently have for self-determination—to choose whether they will "become a brute animal," "[cultivate their] rational seeds [and]….become a heavenly being, [or]…[cultivate their] intellectual seeds [and]…. be [angels] and [sons] of God."[99] Pico saw the possibilities for humans' moral, spiritual, and intellectual improvement that could come from the study of the wisdom of the ancients and Christian leaders. This optimistic view of human capacity for intellectual and moral growth through study, reflection, and debate was characteristic of what we consider to be the "humanistic" culture of early modern Europe.

Shine a Light, Shine a Light

Was the Renaissance a new age that shunned the "darkness" of the Medieval period? No! The medieval period was rich with scholarship and reflected centers of culture. Historians explain that the Carolinian court in France, for example, was famous for its support of the arts and of scholars studying religion and philosophy.[100] This courtly culture provided the foundation for subsequent scholarly work and methods of study across England and Europe. Humanistic approaches were *incorporated* into existing courtly culture, rather than replacing it.[101]

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[99] Ibid. Of course this idea of self-determination does not include equal opportunities for people of all races, classes, and genders.

[100] Charles G. Nauert, *Humanism*.

[101] Roberto Weiss's 1957 text *Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century* referenced in Mary Thomas Crane, "Early Tudor Humanism," in *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* (London: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2010), 96, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444319019.ch7.

Nevertheless, we see the Renaissance as a remarkable age of development because of the significant strides it made in understanding Classical authors and because of the optimistic writings of scholars like Ficino and Pico della Mirandola that eloquently announced the possibilities of humankind to achieve something greater than before—to elevate ourselves through education and through thoughtful reflection on religion. We study the humanistic movement not only because of the beautiful, philosophical writing produced by scholars but also because the movement was foundational to and interconnected with subsequent movements, like the Protestant Reformation, and modes of scientific study, like natural philosophy.

Further, women were cultural creators during the humanist movement! Women were involved in humanistic scholarship and recognized for their intellectual leadership. They were not passive figures in the background, but writers and translators—scholars in their own right.

Teach Your Lawyers Well

Researchers have studied early texts to better understand the origins of the humanistic movement. While the some of the most well-known humanists today were members of the English nobility or associated with the Church (like Desiderius Erasmus), legal professionals planted seeds of humanism early on. Historians explain that 14th-century Italy was "a society…. based on individual property and private contract" which meant that the society depended on lawyers and legal professionals. In order to meet the demand for legal professionals, cities like Padua and Bologna needed more teachers.[102] Yet, these students did not only study law; in fact,

[102] Charles G. Nauert explains:

> As Italian capitalist society developed, there was an acute need for men skilled in drafting, recording, and authenticating contracts and letters. These were the notaries, specialists who did not need the long and costly education provided by law schools but who did receive a training in Latin grammar and a style of rhetoric….Such training in letter-writing and drafting legal documentation was often given by apprenticeship, but at major [centers] of legal study such as Padua and Bologna, there were professional teachers who not only taught the conventional legal forms of various kinds of business documents and the correct type of handwriting for documents of public record but also provided some instruction in Roman law.

they took an interdisciplinary approach and studied Classical philosophy, literature, and languages to better understand the origins of laws.[103] The increased number of lawyers, Nauert explains, meant there was more competition. So, how did lawyers "differentiate themselves from the general literate population"?[104] They achieved greater respect and increased their reputations by weaving together their Classical learning, Christian knowledge, and legal writing. While this styling may seem to turn Classical and Christian lines into early modern bumper stickers or empty flourishes tacked on to documents, legal and business professionals saw these as markers of the cultural belief in the important ties between the Classical world and the business of the day.[105] People saw these Classical and Christian texts as important means of reflecting on legal questions and "wise moral choices."[106] Crane notes that scholars Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine explained that "Italian humanism [....] introduced two intertwined [programs]: an interest in the recovery, restoration, and translation of classical texts from Greek and Latin antiquity, and a focus on training in writing and speaking elegant Ciceronian Latin (rather than the ' debased '

See *Humanism*, 5.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.
Nauert explains:

> Professional notaries had to differentiate themselves from the general literate population by acquiring more sophisticated skills, such as a good mastery of Latin, the language of the law courts , and the ability to embellish documents and letters with quotations from classical and Christian authors.

[106] Ibid., 15.

medieval Latin of the schoolmen).[107] The growth of humanist scholarship occurred as writers like Francesco Petrarch (who popularized what we call the Petrarchan sonnet form), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (whom we met earlier), Giovanni Bocaccio (the author of *The Decameron*), and Desiderius Erasmus (who authored *In Praise of Folly*) studied and translated works from writers like Plato and Cicero and dug through archives to find ancient manuscripts."[108] This recovery work and new scholarship was aided significantly by the advent of the Gutenberg printing press in Europe. While printing had been developed in China much earlier (the first printed book we have is from 868), printed books (as opposed to handwritten texts, or manuscripts) did not appear in Europe until 1455 when Gutenberg printed a copy of the Bible.[109]

Crane notes that, "humanism spread from Italy…. [to] scholars and teachers in France, Germany, the Low Countries, England, and elsewhere" "Low Countries, France, England" as scholars traveled, tutored members of aristocratic families, and created networks in which they exchanged letters and manuscript copies of their scholarly works.[110]

<u>Humanism, English Edition</u>

What did humanistic scholarship look like in England in the early modern period? To what extent did women participate in this movement? Historians note that English humanism (and northern European humanism more broadly) mixed with Christianity as scholars and

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[107] See references to Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's 1986 text *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* in Mary Thomas Crane, "Early Tudor Humanism," 92.

[108] Mary Thomas Crane, "Early Tudor Humanism," 92-93.

[109] Library of Congress, "Incunabula: The Art & History of Printing in Western Europe, c. 1450-1500," July 18, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/ghe/cascade/index.html?appid=580edae150234258a49a3eeb58d9121c&bookmark=Germany.

[110] Mary Thomas Crane, "Early Tudor Humanism," 93.

theologians grappled with the role and power assigned to the Church and individuals in learning and understanding the Christian faith. This influence informed the type of humanist instruction women received and created a framework through which women could produce knowledge without rocking the social order too greatly. We understand that Christian humanism existed in a space of privilege that allowed women to produce intellectual writings primarily for two reasons 1) (in the case of queens or women in line to the throne) for the benefit that their own intellectual improvement would carry when governing England or 2) for the support such an educated woman could bring to her family, particularly her husband and children.[111] Thomas More, one of the leading humanists in England in the 16th century, explained "in a letter to William Gonnell, a tutor of his children....that 'he believed....that a woman should be well educated in order to be a guide in her children's education and an erudite conversationalist for her husband.'"[112] Women's humanist education and writing was encouraged to be in the service of a more patriarchal order. Yet, even within these constraints, women's intellectual impact and individual identities shone through in their writings, translations, and decisions about publication.

Margaret More Roper, for example, was an accomplished humanist and published author of her own translation of *A devout treatise upon the pater noster*. Born to Sir Thomas More and Jane Colt, Roper grew up in a humanist household rich with educational opportunities. Her father, as mentioned earlier, took great care to educate his daughter in the "Latin, Greek, rhetoric, philosophy, theology, logic, mathematics, and astronomy."[113] Although More did not plan for

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[111] Retha M. Warnicke, "Women and Humanism in England," in *Renaissance Humanism*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), http://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.9783/9781512805765/html.

[112]Retha M. Warnicke, "Women and Humanism in England," 40.

[113] Ibid.

nor did he encourage his daughter to write for a public audience, Roper published a translation of Erasmus's *Treatise upon the Pater Noster* in 1523.[114] Why focus on a translation of a work written by a male author? Patricia Demers notes that Roper's training in "interlingual translation," would have "familiarized her with the classical touchstones about the advice, in Horace's *Ars Poetica*, against word-for-word slavish translation."[115] Instead of seeking to closely replicate Erasmus's writing, Roper would have approached her translation as a "creative" act that imbued her text with her own perspective and intellectual interpretation of the work.[116] In their analysis of Roper's translation, Demers and Steiner detail how her translation was full of "expressive idiomatic range and independent control of syntax" and her "'translation absorbed, shaped, oriented the necessary raw material.'"[117] It was an intellectual product of her own creation, infused with her interpretation of the original work. The individuality of her intellect is further reflected in the frontispiece of her translation. In the 1526 edition of her translation, a woodcut depicts Roper sitting at a desk with her hands holding open a large text. Her positioning depicts her at ease in this space and in a position of authority, seemingly discussing the work with an imagined listener or interlocutor. As a translator, she is depicted in command of the written works around her.

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[114] Ibid.

[115] See Patricia Demers, "Margaret Roper and Erasmus: The Relationship of Translator and Source," *Women Writing & Reading* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 4 referenced in Koren Whipp, "Margaret More Roper (1504-44)," Project Continua, 2022, https://www.projectcontinua.org/margaret-more-roper/.

[116] Ibid, 3-4.

[117] See Steiner qtd. in Patricia Demers, "Margaret Roper and Erasmus," 4-5.

The power of this educational training was evident in the next generation of the More family. Margaret More Roper's daughter, Mary Basset, was a notable translator in her own right. Basset translated Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* in Latin and English as well as Sir Thomas More's text *De Tristia Christi* [The Passion of Christ], which her grandfather had begun while imprisoned by King Henry VIII in the Tower of London but which he left incomplete. Basset not only translated More's text from Latin to English but also independently composed the remaining half of the text.[118] Historians found that Basset's readers so greatly her original work that they asserted that the printer should not just have packaged it alongside More's first half—It should have been printed as a separate text available for purchase.[119] Basset's work evidences not only her highly skilled Classical training and their ability to engage with the scholarship produced by their male peers—but, more notably, her ability to stand out on her own, intellectually. While women's writing was circulated through manuscript copies (which were handwritten and not mass produced), Basset's work was actually printed and made her "the only woman whose work appeared in print during [Mary Tudor's] reign."[120]

Poetry, likewise, was a medium through which women could evidence their humanistic learning and individual expression, protected by the shield of Christian morality and filial affection. Mary Sidney Herbert, a member of the prominent Sidney family who was educated in the humanist style, expressed such individuality through her translations of the Psalms and poetry dedicated to her late brother, Sir Philip Sidney. In one poem dedicated to her brother, "To

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[118] Katherine Gardiner Rodgers, "The Lessons Of Gethsemane: De Tristitia Christi," in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas More*, ed. George M. Logan, Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 239–62, https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521888622.013.

[119] Retha M. Warnicke, "Women and Humanism in England," 47.

[120] Ibid.

the Angel Spirit," Sidney Herbert deftly weaves together praise for her deceased brother (who was dearly beloved by the English people) with verses that describe her own distinct poetic muse. Her poem shows how she deftly navigated both claiming a genealogy of literary genius while asserting intellectual independence from her brother.

Also a member of the Sidney family, Lady Mary Wroth is famous for her genius sonnet sequence in her translation of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. In her edition of the text, Wroth depicts the female protagonist's emotion somewhat subversively as she claims that love makes her melancholic—an emotion that was typically reserved for scholarly, brooding men in the period.

Humanist women also made strides in the dramatic arts. In 1613, Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland authored "the first original play to be published by a woman in English," *The Tragedy of Mariam*. [121] Cary's play grapples with issues related to marriage and female political might and right through the lens of the Biblical story of Mariam and King Herod Scholars note that Falkland's own Protestant education provided her with the foundations for her later writing and encouragement of her daughters' educations, as well.[122]

Getting Back to Class

These women's histories and writings provide many opportunities for discussing women's roles within humanistic culture. By studying Margaret More Roper; Mary Sidney Herbert; Mary Wroth; and Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland, students can consider reflect upon the mediums through which women chose to express their ideas, question the extent to which women positioned themselves independently or in relation to male relatives, and study the

[121] Ibid., 51.

[122] Ibid.

importance of intergenerational support for women's humanistic learning. Students can better understand how women's scholarship challenged gender expectations or was folded neatly into a narrative that suggested women's learning still served a patriarchal order. Much remains to be discovered!

Classroom Materials

Lesson: Angelic Annotations: Analyzing "To His Angel Spirit"

Objectives:

Students will analyze Mary Sidney Herbert's poem "To the Angel Spirit" and study the ways Herbert depicts inspiration, characterizes her brother, explains the role of a poet in society, and crafts her identity in relation to and independent from that of her brother. Students will identify how this poem relates to humanistic culture in early modern England.

Student Background:

Students should have studied early modern humanistic culture in a previous class. Teachers may use the Humanism PowerPoint to facilitate that instruction.

Materials:

- Google Doc copies of "To His Angel Spirit," and access to computers for students to annotate live in class
- If students do not have access to laptops, this activity may be adapted using highlighters. (Students will highlight in two different colors and underline the text.) You might then break students into smaller groups so that students may more easily see the poem and mark-ups.

Activity

For the activity, students will work in groups to annotate the text. You may break the class into three groups or multiples of three. Each group will mark the poem in the manner outlined below. Afterwards, they will answer the questions that go with their section.

Group 1:

- Underline sections where Mary Sidney Herbert discusses her brother. Then, answer the following questions:
  - What images does she use to describe him?
  - What impression of Philip Sidney do these images create?
  - What is Mary Sidney Herbert's attitude towards her brother? Does this attitude remain the same or change over the course of the poem? Why do you think that is?

Group 2:

- **Bold** sections where Herbert discusses herself. Then answer the following questions:
  - What images does Herbert use to depict herself? Do they seem corporeal? Ethereal?
  - How does MSH relate to her brother? What is the effect?

Group 3:

- Highlight sections where Herbert discusses writing. Then answer the following questions:
  - What language does Herbert use to describe her writing process?
  - How does she characterize Philip Sidney's writing?
  - What impact does she claim writing has? On whom?
  - How might this poem reflect a humanistic spirit?

Lesson: Humanist Résumé and Cover Letter

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- perform biographical research
- synthesize secondary source information
- develop an argument about their figure's status as a humanist
- learn the conventions of business writing

Student Background:

Students should have reviewed the Renaissance Humanism PowerPoint to develop an understanding of the basic principles of humanism.

Materials:

- Renaissance Humanism PowerPoint
- Sample Early Modern Cover Letter
- Sample Early Modern Resume

Activity

Historians and literary scholars continuously work to better understand what humanistic culture was like in different parts of Europe and what it takes to be considered a "humanist." The study of the arts and rhetoric and a certain optimism for the possibility of humanity to improve are some of the characteristics scholars have long-associated with these intellectual leaders.

In this project, each member of the class will imagine they are a figure from early modern Europe applying for membership to the Humanist Honor Society, an organization of humanists that welcomes new members each year. To apply for membership, each prospective member must submit a résumé outlining their qualifications and a cover letter a) explaining what they have studied or written and why that is significant, b) naming at least one other scholar/humanist

they would like to collaborate with, and c) explaining why they would like to study alongside that person. For the purposes of this assignment, all figures can time travel. ☺ Students may choose partners who came before or after them. In their letters, students might explain:

- what they have in common with their chosen scholarly partner
- how their work is different from that of their chosen scholarly partner
- why it would be interesting to work together

Students will conduct biographical research in order to write their application materials. Students will use credible sources and are encouraged to use those accessible through databases instructors have access to. Some sample biographical resources are listed below for each figure.

Research Resources

- Mary Basset
  - Short Overview from Project Continua
- Queen Elizabeth I
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Pico de Mirandola
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Marguerite de Navarre
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Desiderius Erasmus
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Thomas More
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Margaret More Roper
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Miskawayh
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Katherine Parr
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch)
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Mary Sidney Herbert
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Juan Luis Vives
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies

Lesson: Humanist Flipgrid Elevator Pitch

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- perform biographical research
- synthesize secondary source information
- develop an argument about their figure's status as a humanist
- deliver an elevator pitch using Flipgrid

Student Background

Students should have reviewed the Renaissance Humanism PowerPoint to develop an understanding of the basic principles of humanism.

Materials

- Renaissance Humanism PowerPoint
- Flipgrid account

Flipgrid

(If you already use Flipgrid in your classroom, feel free to skip ahead to the Activity.) Flipgrid is a site that allows educators and students to post video recordings to a central grid (like posting sticky notes to a shared bulletin board or board in Padlet). The short videos are recorded independently using a computer, tablet, smartphone, or other device with a camera. Flipgrid can be used to facilitate discussions (as students record and respond to each other) or to post short video presentations (as they will in this activity).

For instructions on creating an account, **visit the Flipgrid site**.

Introduction

Historians and literary scholars continuously work to better understand what humanistic culture was like in different parts of Europe and what it takes to be considered a "humanist." The study of the arts and rhetoric and a certain optimism for the possibility of humanity to improve are some of the characteristics scholars have long-associated with these intellectual leaders.

In this assignment, each member of the class will imagine they are a figure applying for membership to the Humanist Honor Society, an organization of humanists that welcomes new members each year. To apply for membership, each prospective member must submit a video elevator pitch in which they introduce themselves and

- explain what they have studied or written and why that is significant
- name at least one other scholar/humanist they would like to collaborate with
- explain why they would like to study alongside that person.

For the purposes of this assignment, all figures can travel across time and space. ☺ Students may choose partners who came before or after them. For example, Thomas More (who was killed by King Henry VIII in 1535) might choose to work later in the future with his granddaughter, Mary Basset (1523-1572). Mary Sidney Herbert (1561-1621) might choose to work with Catherine Parr (1512-1538).

In their elevator pitches, students might explain:

- what they have in common with their chosen scholarly partner
- how their work is different from that of their chosen scholarly partner
- why it would be interesting or challenging to work together

Activity 1

Students will conduct biographical research in order to draft their elevator pitch. Students will use credible sources and are encouraged to use those accessible through databases

instructors have access to. Some sample biographical resources are listed below for each figure.

Research Resources

- Mary Basset
  - Short Overview from Project Continua
- Queen Elizabeth I
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Pico de Mirandola
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Marguerite de Navarre
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Desiderius Erasmus
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Thomas More
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Margaret More Roper
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Katherine Parr
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch)
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Mary Sidney Herbert
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies
- Juan Luis Vives
  - Short Overview from Oxford Bibliographies

Students may use the tables below to organize their research.

Biographical Research

Topic	Research	Citation
Name		
Year Born – Year Died		
Birthplace (City, Country)		
Family Members		
Social Status (royal? in the religious orders?)		

Education

Topic	Research	Citation
How were they educated? (at home, at court, by tutors, by parents)		
What subjects did they study?		
What languages did they know?		

Scholarly Work

Topic	Research	Citation
What writing did they produce? Did they translate others' texts? Did they write their own texts? Did they write fiction or nonfiction? What subjects did they write about? Who were they influenced by?		

Activity 2

After they complete this background research, students will be ready to draft their elevator pitches! They may use the template below to draft their pitches and then should record them using Flipgrid.

Sample Template for Humanist Elevator Pitch

Hello! My name is _______________ and I am very excited to apply to the Humanist Honor Society. I have long admired the work of and method of scholarship espoused by humanists in your organization.

I believe I am qualified for membership for a few reasons.

- First, _________. [Discuss education here]
- Second, ______________. [Discuss scholarly works they have written or translated and tell us why they are significant]

I would love to join the Humanist Honor Society so that I could learn from and study alongside [name of scholarly partner]. I [admire/am intrigued by/am puzzled by] [name of scholarly partner]'s studies of [subject]. [one additional sentence explaining the significance of the chosen scholarly partner's work. This partnership would be [useful/interesting/challenging] because __________. Together, we could _____________.

I'm excited about the opportunity to join this remarkable group of scholars. Thank you!

<u>(Optional) Activity 3:</u>

After students have posted their video elevator pitches to Flipgrid, invite the class to view and respond to their peers' pitches. Students should watch at least one other video and record a short response back indicating whether or not that figure should be admitted to the Humanist Honor Society and recommending an additional humanist partner. The goal is to further expand students' knowledge of humanists in the period and make new connections between figures. Students can use the following templates to guide their responses:

<u>Acceptance:</u>

Hi, [name of original figure, like Mary Sidney Herbert]. Thank you so much for applying to Humanist Honor Society. As you know, humanists value [name one or two qualities or

qualifications the figure has]. Your work on [mention an example of a piece of writing or aspect of their studies] shows that you are well-qualified for membership. I am so glad you are excited to work with [name of original scholarly partner]. I'd also like to recommend that you partner with [new humanist partner] because [reason explaining why the two should work together]. I hope you'll get a chance to talk with both of them at our next meeting!

No Acceptance Yet/Need More Information

Hi, [name of original figure, like Mary Sidney Herbert]. Thank you so much for applying to Humanist Honor Society. As you know, humanists value [name a few qualities that make a humanist]. We think you might be a good fit for our society, but we need more information. Could you please share more about [state what original poster needs to explain further]? I am so glad you are excited to work with [name of original scholarly partner]. [I'd love to hear more about why this partnership is exciting to you. I'd also like to recommend that you partner with [new humanist partner] because [reason explaining why the two should work together]. We look forward to hearing from you again. Thank you!

Unit 2: Women and Educational Debates in Early Modern England

Contextual Essay

<u>Why teach women's writing on education?</u>

A Learned Woman is thought to be a Comet, that bodes Mischief, when ever it appears.[123]

In *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*, Bathsua Makin first introduces the image of an educated woman a force of Nature—at once powerful, bright, and illuminating the night sky, but also foreboding, troublesome, elusive, and disruptive—a threat to the order and stability of the community where she lands. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, educational writers held such a debate, questioning the degree to which women's education could be beneficial or disruptive. These debates provide essential insight into the forces shaping women's lives in the early modern era. Central to these debates were

- questions about individuals' right to education based on use value for the community or personal enrichment
- beliefs about girls' roles within families and society
- an understanding of women's potential for political leadership
- religious beliefs about humans' God-given natures and capacities for learning

By discussing debates about women's education, students will be able to gain a deeper understanding of women's experiences and see how global leaders, including female educational theorists, pushed for educational reform that would affirm girls' intellectual capabilities and advance women's positions within their communities. These writings will help students think

[123] Bathsua Makin, *An Essay To Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts & Tongues.* (London: J.D., 1673), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.49015000536079.

critically about the value of education and push back on possible assumptions that girls' education was either nonexistent or not a major concern in the early modern era.

NC Standards (full standards listed at the end of the document)

Middle School

- Social Studies: 7.B.1.1-2; 7.C&G.1.4; 7.H.1.1-2
- English: RL.8.1; RL.8.4; RI.8.1-6; SL.8.1,4

High School:

- World History: WH.B.1.1-2, 2.1; WH.C&G.1.2-3; WH.H.1.1
- English:
    - RL.9-10.1-2,4,6; SL.9-10.1,4
    - RL.11-12.1-,4-6,9; SL.11-12.1,4

Essential Questions:

- What was schooling like in early modern England?
- What were some of the arguments for and against women's education?
- What role did women play in educational reform movements in early modern Europe?

  How did early modern English women advocate for expanding girls' education?

Contextual Essay:

Diversity of Schooling

When discussing early modern European schooling, scholars emphasize that it was not so much a formalized educational system as it was a diverse landscape of schools and student bodies. R.A. Houston explains that:

> Varieties of schools were legion in the early modern period. There were, for example, petty schools, poorhouses or 'hospitals', work schools, evening classes, grammar schools, academies, colleges, and 'normal' schools (teacher-training establishments). The range of

> size, curriculum and prestige between the smallest village school and the grandest *college* was enormous.[124]

In order to enter grammar schools, Charlton notes, students ideally would have learned how to read and write "either by the parish priest or [....] by the chantry priest" or from older students or literate members of a family.[125] Depending on the type of school, teachers ranged from "curates" to "private" and "freelance school teachers."[126]

Education in these contexts traditionally had two main goals. First, it would teach young people the skills needed to practice a trade, serve the government, join the Church, work in an agricultural setting, or run a household (where household training was the primary option available to girls) [127]. Second, education had the power to improve civic society through religious and moral instruction.[128]

You Are What You Read: Education as Moral Formation

Since education held the power to shape a more godly and obedient body politic, curricula (outside of technical training) focused on spiritual and moral improvement. In order to accomplish this Christian formation, teachers at grammar schools instructed students in the study not only of "'grammar and inferior Latin books [....] English books and fair writing, [....] casting

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[124] R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education 1500-1800*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 11, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unc/detail.action?docID=1710552.

[125] Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England /* (London: Routledge, 1965), 98-99, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b113097.

[126] Rosemary O'Day, *Education and Society, 1500-1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (London: Longman, 1982), 26, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015008873997.

[127] Ibid., 25

[128] Ibid.

accounts [Arithmetic], [....] the ABC, Primer, Catechism and such other English books whereby they may attain to the perfect reading of the English tongue.'"[129] Yet, the "most important purpose of learning the arts of reading and writing was to enable the child to master the elements of his religious life, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Seven Sacraments."[130] Those students copied ideas and lessons down into common place books using grammars, dictionaries, and emblem books.[131] Charlton and O'Day both emphasize that grammar schools were not meant to increase social mobility (an opportunity we might value, today). Instead, education was "an important instrument with which to maintain public order and achieve political and religious conformity."[132]

Refer to the Textbook

Among the texts used in classrooms to advance knowledge and students' moral growth—including grammar books, primers, and Catechisms—were emblem books and commonplace books. Emblem books were texts filled with an array of images, or emblems, that represented particular concepts, like Agriculture or Medicine.

Emblem books, Michael Bath notes, were often infused with symbols from *The Greek Anthology* as well as "Alexandrian and Petrarchan conceits, epigrammatic and erotic topoi, and [other] emblems of Cupid."[133] The allusions in emblems led students to recall their previous

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[129] Aldenham Statutes, 1600 quoted in Kenneth Charlton, *Education*, 100.

[130] Kenneth Charlton, *Education,* 100.

[131] Ibid., 121.

[132] Kenneth Charlton, *Education*, 130 and O'Day, *Education and Society*, 38.

[133] Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture* (New York: Longman, 1994), 31.

knowledge of the texts alluded to or directed those unfamiliar with the references to read more widely in order to fully understand the emblems. They instructed young students to view learning as a process of carefully studying and synthesizing knowledge for their individual intellectual development. Emblem books like Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* encouraged readers to see learning as a process of accreting knowledge from earlier traditions and assessing the thematic connections among materials studied. Emblems helped students grasp the historical scholarly dialogue surrounding abstract ideas rather than necessarily driving them to engage more with the natural world.

The organizational activity involved in the study of emblem books for the development of commonplace books further highlights the didactic nature of emblem books and their usefulness in the development of an individual's collective knowledge. As students prepared commonplace books, they were called to copy emblems into texts and to consider the thematic ties between them. As students processed this raw literary material, Bath affirms, they became familiar with "the structure of conventional organizing topics and headings [that] supplied various meta-systems," or frameworks for how people conceived of the world in the period (33). Emblem books sometimes categorize the emblems for the reader, too. In the *Iconologia*, Ripa includes seven indices that categorize the emblems: "main" and "notable things," emblems related to the human body, "artificial things" "animals," "plants," "fish," colors" "cited authors," and "ancient medals." The *Iconologia* could thus help to instill in students a sense of the interconnectedness of the images and ideas they studied.

Taking Attendance: Limitations on Girls' Education

Engagement with learning and enrollment in grammar schools, though, was largely determined by class, gender, and geography. Historians explain that typically children from

middle class or "lower-upper-class" families had access to grammar schools, while children in rural areas had less access to formal schools."[134] In her study of Free Grammar Schools in Bury St Edmunds (a town in Suffolk, about 85 miles northeast of London and about 30 miles east of Cambridge) and Colchester (a town in Essex, about 65 miles northeast of London), for example, O'Day found that no students came from the laboring or farming classes.

Social Group	**Percentage of Bury St Edmunds School**	**Social Group**	**Percentage of Colchester Free Grammar School**
Aristocratic	52%	Aristocratic	31%
Clergy/Professional	17%	Clergy/Professional	20%
Tradesmen	16%	Tradesmen	37%
Yeomen	c. 15%	Yeomen	12%
Husbandmen	0	Husbandmen	0
Laborers	0	Laborers	0

Figure 2

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Girls had fewer educational opportunities due to cultural attitudes that claimed their learning should reflect their future roles. Separate from the serious instruction of women who might enter political life and high society,[136] daughters of the gentry were sometimes sent to

[134] Rosemary O'Day, *Education and Society*, 38.

[135] Charts copied (with my own addition of laborers to the Bury St Edmunds School chart) from Rosemary O'Day, *Education and Society*, 36-37.

[136] See the unit on humanism on the Project Illumine website for a more detailed discussion of learned aristocratic women.

convent schools where they would receive religious instruction and be taught the arts that defined gentlewomen. The education of young girls was likewise somewhat physically segregated. While they learned the same subjects, boys and girls could be physically separated inside the school. Another major challenge to girls' education came from cultural attitudes that undervalued girls' education. Historians have found that "evidence [....] suggests that it was not so much that schools were barred to girls as that education at school was not demanded by their parents."[137] These attitudes limited the extent to which girls might proceed beyond a basic level of schooling.

The headmaster and educational theorist Richard Mulcaster, for example, stopped short of recommending girls be educated beyond an elementary level. He affirmed that, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, "young maidens ordinarily [shared in] [....] the first elementary training," and that they should continue to receive *elementary* training for four reasons. First, "it [was] the custom of the country [....] [to] allow them to learn." Second and third, Mulcaster considered it English people's "duty [....] not to leave them deficient" especially when they had God-given "aptness to learn." Finally, Mulcaster argued that such a "good upbringing" yielded a variety of "advantages" to the family.[138] Girls educated in reading, writing, music, and needlework would be able to handle "matters of business," "[read] comforting and wise discourses, either in the form of history or directions to live by," and "govern and direct her household."[139] Yet, when it came to education beyond the elementary level, Mulcaster stopped

[137] Rosemary O'Day, *Education and Society*, 185-186.

[138]Richard Mulcaster, *The Educational Writings of Richard Mulcaster*, ed. James Oliphant (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1903), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/61900/61900-h/61900-h.htm, 52.

[139] Ibid., 57.

short. He characterizes continued schooling in "higher studies" as impractical due to marriage and class. When reflecting on the necessity of elementary education, Mulcaster claims that "it is but little that girls can learn, the time being so short, because they are always in haste to get husbands" (which ascribes intentionality to girls in this "haste" to get married and seemingly blames them for cutting short the window in which they might receive a more advanced education). If girls were to receive any further education, Mulcaster explains, it would have to be tied to usefulness and the girl's social position (emphasizing, seemingly, its use for *others*, not just for the individual girl being educated). Mulcaster writes that:

> When the question is *how much* a woman ought to learn, the answer may be, "as much as shall be needful," and if this is doubtful also, the reply may be, either as much as befits what her parents hope to obtain for her, if their position be humble, or as much as is in keeping with the prospects naturally belonging to their rank, if that rank be high.[140]

Even for women deemed fit to receive additional training, Mulcaster warns that what we name STEAM subjects are outside women's purview. Mulcaster explains that he:

> [fears] women would have little turn for geometry or the sister sciences, nor would [he] make them mathematicians, except in so far as they study music, nor lawyers to plead at the bar, nor physicians, though skill in herbs has been much commended in women, nor would I have them profess divinity, to preach in pulpits, though they must practice it as virtuous livers.[141]

Mulcaster restricts girls' learning to subjects that would improve their service to their families but keep them out of roles with public and intellectual authority attached to them. They would be herb-workers instead of physicians, musicians instead of mathematicians, and nice Church ladies but never Church leaders.[142]

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[140] Ibid., 59.

[141] Ibid., 60.

[142] Ibid.

Elizabeth Brooke Jocelin's *The Mothers legacy to her unborne childe* (1624), for example, reflects this trend of under-cultivating girls' minds. Although the publisher of the memorial text, Goade, praises his friend's (Jocelin's) intellectual accomplishments and casts her as a learned and wise woman, the text does not necessarily demand an intellectually rigorous education for daughters.[143] In her instructions to her husband concerning the education of their future child, Jocelin distinguishes between the requirements for boys and girls.[144] She requests her husband to have their son study religion deeply at school so that he might come to an understanding deep enough that he may serve as a minister.[145] For her daughter, however, she requests that she be taught by her mother in some subjects like reading and writing as well as in the skills of good housewifery, but she suggests that a daughter's learning may be limited.[146] She even cautions that an improper amount of learning may be even more dangerous to a woman and lead her to assume false wisdom and authority (and to fall into sinfulness) since she is a more Fallen being.[147] Jocelin is not opposed to more advanced learning, but does not feel that it is necessary for her daughter to become a model Christian wife who is obedient, humble, and good.

Calls for Reform

In the seventeenth century, a number of educational reformers—including John A. Comenius, Bathsua Makin, and Mary Astell—came to the fore to challenge the attitudes that

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[143] Elizabeth Jocelin, *The Mothers Legacie, to Her Vnborne Childe.* (London, England, 1625), A3r-4v, http://search.proquest.com/docview/2240874100/citation/3C8A063F015E4292PQ/1.

[144] Ibid., B4r-B5r.

[145] Ibid., B5r.

[146] Ibid., B5v-B8v.

[147] Ibid.

snubbed women's intellectual abilities and limited their opportunities to advance their education. One of global leaders in this push for expanding girls' access to education was the Czech educational theorist, John A. Comenius. Comenius, alongside reformers Samuel Hartlib (born in what is today Poland and who lived and worked in England) and John Dury (born in Scotland and who lived and worked across Europe), was one of the first educational theorists to call for universal education, or *pansophia*. Comenius's plan for universal education shifted the from a more didactic approach to more inductive educational methods in a way that elevated girls' intellectual abilities and pushed back on narratives of their intellectual inferiority.

The root of Comenius's plan for *pansophia* was his belief in children's God-given rationality. Comenius promoted an active form of learning that required children to engage with the world around them and to exercise those natural rational abilities. Comenius explains that learning must be founded upon observation and understanding of "the circumstances by which we are surrounded;… ourselves;… Christ the God-man, the most perfect example of our perfection."[148] Comenius further explains that children should be taught to study "objects that we can observe, such as the heavens, the earth, and all that it is them."[149] In doing so, children have the opportunity to observe "the marvellous order which pervades all things, and which man ought to imitate in his actions."[150]

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[148] Johann Amos Comenius, *The Great Didactic of John Amos Comenius; Now for the First Time Englished, with Introductions, Biographical and Historical*, ed. M.W. Keatinge (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896), 223, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo.31924032702189.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Ibid.

The presupposition of the rational ability and the dignity of all children contributed to the more egalitarian educational program that Comenius put forward. In *The Great Didactic*, Comenius rejected intellectual elitism and instead asserts that "not the children of the rich or of the powerful only, but of all alike, boys and girls, both noble and ignoble, rich and poor, in all cities and towns, villages and hamlets should be sent to school."[151] Comenius represented education as a means of improving both the mental and moral faculties of individuals so that they may improve in their own labors and communities. Comenius's Latin textbook *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, reflected this experimentalist pedagogical theory, or belief in the communion of natural and human labor and order, and egalitarian educational program.[152] The instructional text was created as a means of teaching children Latin by systematically describing the creation of the world, the organization of the natural environment, groups of animals, and finally the means by which humans cultivate the earth. The textbook breaks down the component parts of each natural system or labor system it introduces so that the reader might fully understand how each worker, tool, or natural element functions in relation to the entire system. Placed in equal visual footing are women at work. In the section illustrating laborers, Comenius includes images that illustrate women spinning and making clothes out of linen in between images of men weaving and tailoring clothes. Women are included as an integral part of the community and their work is valorized in this text.

[151] Ibid., 218.

[152] Johann Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus* (London, 1672), http://search.proquest.com/docview/2240912266/citation/C03BF4EA43754F60PQ/1.

Bathsua Makin

Born around 1600, Bathsua Makin produced one of the first English tracts arguing for women's educational rights, *An Essay To Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts & Tongues, With An Answer to the Objections against this Way of Education*. Makin's text reflects a life rich with learning. In an early account from Sir Simon D'Ewes, "a Parliamentarian, antiquarian, and Anglo-Saxon scholar," Makin is described as an intellectual star whose reputation preceded her. He recounts:

> Bathsua [....] had an exact knowledge in the Greek, Latin, and French tongues, with some insight also into the Hebrew and Syriac; much more learning she had doubtless than her father, who was a mere pretender to it; and by the fame of her abilities, which she had acquired from others, he got many scholars which else would neither have repaired to him nor have long staid with him.[153]

Makin's impressive abilities are credited in part to the excellent schooling she received from her father, Henry Reynolds, a renowned schoolmaster.[154] Makin later became the tutor to Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles I, along with John Dury (the famed educational reformer who was part of the Hartlib-Comenius circle). Scholars report that, in addition to the classical subjects in which she instructed Princess Elizabeth, "Makin might also have taught the princess a more controversial skill."[155] Ciphering, Pal explains, was a somewhat "subversive" skill to master.[156] This ability to create new coded language offered the writer and her reader the chance to

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[153] Sir Simonds D'Ewes, *Journals of all the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1682) qtd. in Carol Pal, *Republic of Women: Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 180, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139087490.

[154] Carol Pal, *Republic of Women*, 180.

[155] Ibid., 198.

[156] Ibid., 185.

communicate secretly and to evade those who might claim the authority to read a woman's writing.[157] Makin's aptitude for writing and language enabled her not only to teach well but also to publish her own original works. Her first book *Musa Virginea*, published when she was sixteen, contained "original encomia written in six languages."[158] Her second published work, *Index Radiographia*, spelled out a method for writing in shorthand.

Importantly, Makin was not alone; instead, her writing points to the significant place educated women held in intellectual circles (those including men and women) in the seventeenth century. She connected with the circle surrounding the educational reformer Samuel Hartlib and corresponded with the renowned Anna Maria van Schurman, a Dutch scholar, mentor to other women in the region, and a central node in a larger network of intellectuals.[159] In their correspondence, van Schurman and Makin discussed their belief in women's right to an education and expressed mutual admiration. van Schurman wrote to Makin:

> I was highly pleased with the reading of your letter. From it it is possible to see that you have touched, not merely dipped into the beauty of the language of the Greeks. Now the most wonderful thing is that in spite of your being pursued by many household duties, you have not seldom conversed with Philosophy and in no way whatever have your Muses become voiceless in the midst of the much resounding weapons. As therefore I very highly value such a disquisition about Beauty, I can praise you especially because your encyclopedic knowledge compelled you to serve Theology, the Science of Sciences. [....] For the rest, you should not be worried about anything in order to lend your talent in the education of the royal little girl, that you may continue revealing to us that famous Elizabeth as living again (under whose saintly and just reign your island prospered so much).[160]

[157] Ibid., 184-196.

[158] Ibid., 180.

[159] Ibid., 180-196.

[160] Van Schurman to Makin, October 31, 1645, in Opuscula, 164–5. Translation in Pieta van Beek, "One Tongue Is Enough," 32; also in van Schurman, Whether a Christian Woman, 67–8. qtd. in Carol Pal, *Republic of Women*, 196.

Van Schurman's admiration for Makin's learning was reciprocated and evident in Makin's justification of women's education in *An Essay To Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen*. In the beginning of her tract, Makin toys with the reader who might object to women's education by first examining the examples of women who seemed to plant and "[propagate]" the seeds of "Evil" in Biblical history:

> As Plants in Gardens excel those, that grow wild; or as Brutes, by due Management (Witness the Philosophers Dogs) are much altered: So Men, by liberal Education, are much better'd, as to intellectuals and morals. All conclude great Care ought to be taken of the Males: But your doubt in your Letter is concerning the Females. I think the greater Care ought to be taken of Them: Because Evil seems to be begun here, as in *Eve*, and to be propagated by her Daughters. When the Sons of God took unto themselves the Daughters of Men, Wickedness multiplied apace. It was the cursed Counsel of *Balaam* to debauch *Israel* by *Balack's* Idolatrous Women. Wretched *Jezebel* excites *Ahab* to greater Wickedness, than he could ever have thought of. God gave strict Command to the Israelites, not to marry with heathenish Women. When *Solomon* himself (the wisest of Men) did this, they soon drew his Heart from God. Bad Women, weak to make Resistance, are strong to tempt to evil: Therefore without all Doubt great Care ought to be taken, timely to season them with Piety and Virtue.[161]

Her warning focuses on the power of ill-educated and immoral individuals to corrupt and disrupt the state. For an audience that saw the family as a microcosm of the state, Makin advises them to take care of the training they afford their daughters for the benefit of the family and the nation. Makin does not feign humility or flatter male members of her readership. Instead, she cheekily suggests that, "Were a competent number of Schools erected to Educate Ladyes ingenuously, methinks I see how asham'd Men would be of their Ignorance, and how industrious the next Generation would be to wipe off their Reproach."[162] She suggests that girls' education would bring further benefit to the nation because this rise in intellectual status would threaten male egos

[161] Makin, *An Essay to Revive the Antient Education*, 7.

[162] Ibid., 4.

and create a productive (although misogynistic) educational race to the top. She then assertively says that " [she] shall speak distinctly to" what she anticipates to be "[male readers'] Questions, and then answer [their] Objections" with historical evidence.[163]

Makin makes her case for women's education by providing a rich catalogue of wise and accomplished women in history. She catalogues these figures according to the fields to which they made significant contributions, noting that "Women [...] have been educated [....] [and eminent in] Arts[,]Tongues" (the study of languages), and "Logick," and that "Some Women have understood the Mathematicks."[164] In doing so, she emphasizes that women not only received training in these subjects but also that they comprehended it successfully, and, in the case of arts and languages, were recognized by others for their accomplishments.[165] She emphasizes the more public nature of their intellectual learning in that way. Makin further seeks to change readers' perceptions of women's abilities by establishing a history in which women have occupied particular intellectual roles. She does not simply state that women have studied certain subjects but outlines:

> *Women have been good Linguists.*
> *Women have been good Oratours.*
> *Women have been profound Philosophers.*
> *Women have been good Poets.*

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[163] Ibid., 8.

[164] Ibid., 9-15.

[165] Ibid., 9-10.

The repetition of “Women have been” followed by the scholarly role[166] more firmly gives women a role of authority and leadership within that field. They are not simply understudies, but main actors on those intellectual stages.

Mary Astell

Mary Astell was born in 1666 into a wealthy family of coal merchants. She and her family lived in Newcastle upon Tyne, a city in northeast England that sits on the River Tyne. During the late 17th-century, Newcastle was known for its production of coal, which became a much-sought-after source of energy after timber had become less available in Europe.[167]

Her family’s fortune and educational privilege allowed Astell to receive educational training at home. She received instruction in philosophy and theology from her uncle, Ralph Astell, who had studied at Cambridge. Ralph Astell not only shared his schooling with Astell but also passed on his collection of books to her.[168]

Possibly in response to the English Civil War and its resulting regime changes (the Astell family were Royalists and, Mary Astell, herself, was a fairly strong defender of the English monarchy and divine right), Astell left Newcastle for London.[169] Interestingly (if we look at her later plans for increasing girls’ education), Astell settled in a neighborhood known for its girls’ boarding schools.[170]

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[166] Ibid., 8-21.

[167] Ruth Perry, “Mary Astell,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1093/ref:odnb/814.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

Mary Astell held the rather unique status of a singlewoman throughout her life. As referenced in the lessons on Cattelena of Almondsbury, singlewomen had a more independent but precarious legal status. Legally, they were their own persons- unattached to a husband or children- but could face difficulties such as financial insecurity and social rejection from people who felt the singlewoman was stepping out of the normalized patriarchal social structure. Astell experienced some pressures as a single woman, but her family's elevated social status (even after its fortunes decreased), social connections, and Astell's own education and intellectual curiosity allowed her to establish herself as an intellectual force in London. As Ruth Perry explains, Astell had great influence on philosophical and educational discussions even though she was "perhaps the first woman not of royal blood to enter seriously into mainstream political discourse."[171]

In her 1695 tract *A serious proposal for the ladies,* Mary Astell outlines an educational reform that calls for a greater recognition of women's contributions not just to a moral community but also to intellectual, philosophical, and political communities. Like Comenius in *The Great Didactic*, Astell asserts that women have inherent dignity and rationality granted by God that instills them with "imbred [or inherent] self-esteem."[172] That sense of self-worth has the power to mobilize women to seek out their improvement and the improvement of their communities—provided it is cultivated properly and not suppressed by patriarchal systems.[173]

[171] Ruth Perry qtd. in Michal Michelson, "'Our Religion and Liberties': Mary Astell's Christian Political Polemics," in *Virtue, Liberty, and Toleration: Political Ideas of European Women, 1400–1800*, ed. Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2007), 123, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5895-0_8.

[172] Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest by a Lover of Her Sex,* 29-35.

[173] Ibid.

Astell's work calls for change to current systems of educating and valorizing women that stunt their intellectual and moral growth. Astell laments that, too frequently, women's religious education entails memorization and imitation of moral principles. Religious education encourages more passive forms of engagement with philosophical and spiritual concepts as women rely upon others' interpretations of Scripture. Within the church settings, people are taught to rely upon a minister's interpretation of Scripture and to adhere to the preaching set forth for the community. Likewise, within a home, husbands are granted authority over women in hierarchical marriages and are charged with spiritually guiding their wives towards salvation. Wives are expected to more passively receive the teachings of their husbands, as well. Women might have the opportunity for engaging in spiritual discussions if the marriage was more companionate and focused on the mutual development of conscience, but that was not always the case.

Astell laments that this greater spiritual dependence becomes cyclical as parents do not encourage the greater intellectual development of their children equally. Astell's assertion that women are not Fallen individuals but are endowed with rationality and esteem challenges this passive or eclipsed educational model. Instead, her tract calls for women's education in the same mode and subjects as men. In her female convent or religious academy, Astell envisions that women will engage in learning rooted in critical thinking, reflection, and conversation. They will not be limited to "reading idle *Novels* and *Romances,"* which, as Wollstonecraft and later reformers critique, teach women to embody sentiments or virtues in a more one-dimensional way.[174] They will not be taught that their lives revolve around relationships. Instead, their self-

[174]Mary Astell, A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest by a Lover of Her Sex. (London), accessed April 30, 2021, 85-86, http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/serious-proposal-ladies-advancement-their-true/docview/2240948007/se-2?accountid=14244.

esteem will be cultivated so that they will see themselves as responsible for their own intellectual and spiritual formation.[175] They will exercise their faculties through the study of philosophy and learn to reason through questions proposed in Scriptures and also to develop interpersonal relationships with other women for their mental improvement.[176] With this training, women will be able to challenge the "Tyrant Custom" that renders them more dependent and that teaches them that their value to society is rooted in their beauty, titles, or wealth (which, as transitory qualities render them more susceptible to age, changes in opinion, and changes in fortune).[177]

Astell recommends her program not only for the individual growth it will bring to women but also for the ways in which communities will benefit from women's advancement. Astell adds that this educational model will facilitate more companionate marriages in which husbands are not solely responsible for advancing the salvation of their family members; instead, they will have partners to encourage the family's spiritual health and enable them to model the unfallen state of Adam and Eve. Likewise, educated women are more advantageous to society as they may provide greater support for political and social institutions.

Conclusions

Makin and Astell's writings thus can help students dig deeper into questions of inclusion and gender equality in early modern educational settings, consider the purpose of education, reflect on humans' capacity to grow intellectually and morally and the inherent right to an education.

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[175] Ibid., 60-72.

[176] Ibid., 80-85.

[177] Ibid., 120-122.

Classroom Resources

Lesson: Contextual Lecture on Women's Education

A Learned Woman is thought to be a Comet, that bodes Mischief, when ever it appears.

- Bathsua Makin

Overview

Born around 1600, Bathsua Makin produced one of the first English tracts arguing for women's educational rights: An Essay To Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts & Tongues, With An Answer to the Objections against this Way of Education. Makin's writing reflects a life rich with learning. In a time when girls' education was limited by gender and class, she received an advanced education in the classics, languages, and coding from her father, Henry Reynolds, a renowned schoolmaster. She even later became the tutor to Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles I, along with John Dury (a famed English educational reformer). Makin further was a member of renowned intellectual circles in the seventeenth century that argued for educational reform and advancement of girls' education. In this unit, students will learn more about the educational milieu of seventeenth-century England, attitudes that limited girls' advancement in schools, and the ways authors like Makin argued for change.

Essential Questions

- What was schooling like in early modern England?
- What role did women play in educational reform movements in early modern Europe?
- How did Bathsua Makin advocate for expanding girls' education?

Materials

- Early Modern Women's Education Google Slides Presentation

- Copy of the frontispiece of Makin's treatise with guiding questions

Preparation

- Read the background essay on educational reformers in early modern England.

Activity: Google Slides Lecture

- Introduce essential questions to students [SLIDE 2].
- Introduce students to the types of schools in early modern England, the subjects studied, and the importance of forming "good citizens" of the state.[SLIDES 3-4]
- Discuss types of textbooks used in classrooms by referencing emblem books and commonplace books. [SLIDE 5] Ask students to analyze what they see the emblem for Medicine. How is Medicine represented? Why is Hermes/Mercury to the right of the figure of medicine? Why does the figure of Medicine hold a staff with an eye at the end? How is the eye depicted? Whose eye might it be?

Optional Activity:

Ask students to draw an emblem of medicine that represents contemporary science and attitudes. What would the emblem look like? Be attentive to gender if students create figures to represent "Medicine." Do students gender certain roles (doctors or nurses)?

- Ask students what parallels they might see to commonplace books today. (journals, notebooks, Pinterest boards, Instagram posts/feed, collections of saved Instagram stories) Unpack the parallels as a class. Do they make connections based on collecting culturally significant content, content that is personally meaningful or inspirational, information that is required for learning, etc.?
- Discuss factors that kept children out of school (class and gender).(SLIDE 6)

- Review ways male and female educational writers reaffirmed attitudes that diminished women's abilities to participate in intellectual circles. (SLIDES 7-8)
- Introduce the students to John A. Comenius (SLIDE 9) and Bathsua Makin (SLIDE 10).
- Optional: Present students with the cover image and letter to the reader from Makin's treatise, *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*. Discuss the guiding questions accompanying these primary sources.

Lesson: Bathsua Makin's Arguments Advancing Women's Education

A Learned Woman is thought to be a Comet, that bodes Mischief, when ever it appears.

- Bathsua Makin

<u>Overview</u>

Born around 1600, Bathsua Makin produced one of the first English tracts arguing for women's educational rights: An Essay To Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts & Tongues, With An Answer to the Objections against this Way of Education. Makin's writing reflects a life rich with learning. In a time when girls' education was limited by gender and class, she received an advanced education in the classics, languages, and coding from her father, Henry Reynolds, a renowned schoolmaster. She even later became the tutor to Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles I, along with John Dury (a famed English educational reformer). Makin further was a member of renowned intellectual circles in the seventeenth century that argued for educational reform and advancement of girls' education. In this unit, students will learn more about the educational milieu of seventeenth-century England, attitudes that limited girls' advancement in schools, and the ways authors like Makin argued for change.

<u>Essential Questions</u>

- What was schooling like in early modern England?

- What role did women play in educational reform movements in early modern Europe?
- How did Bathsua Makin advocate for expanding girls' education?

Materials

- Early Modern Women's Education Google Slides Presentation
- Copy of the frontispiece of Makin's treatise with guiding questions
- Copy of the Letter to the Reader in Makin's treatise with discussion questions

Preparation

- Read the contextual essay on educational reformers in early modern England.
- Students should have been introduced to the history of debates on women's education (covered in the "Contextual Lesson").

Procedure

- After introducing students to the history of debates on women's education in the early modern era ("Contextual Lesson"), instructors will dig deeper into the life and writing of Bathsua Makin and those of her contemporaries.
- Present students with the cover image and letter to the reader from Makin's treatise, *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*. Discuss the guiding questions accompanying these primary sources.
- Discuss the ways in which Makin challenged and reinforced stereotypes both through her lived example as well as in her written arguments supporting more widespread and thorough education for girls (SLIDES 11-14).
- Explain that Makin supported her arguments for women's education by providing examples of accomplished women from Biblical, classical, and early modern history.

Frontispiece Guiding Questions:

- What is the goal of the essay, according to the title? What does this tell us about how long women's education has existed?
- What subjects will women learn?
- What does she anticipate will come from publishing this text?

To the Reader Guiding Questions:

- What does the letter suggest men fear about women's education?
- What does the writer say will actually happen if women receive an education? What benefit will it bring?

Group Members:

Name of Historical Figure:

What kind of education did this woman receive? What subjects did she study? Who taught her? Did she learn in a classroom? Through a private tutor?	
What social class did this woman come from?	
Is there evidence that this woman communicated with other women about scholarly ideas?	
Is there evidence that this woman communicated with other men about scholarly ideas?	
Did this woman publish any of her writing? List the titles and tell us what they were about.	
Did the woman deliver speeches? Tell us about the context in which she delivered them.	
Why might Bathsua Makin reference this woman as a reason that all girls should receive an education?	

Unit 3: Women and Scientific Debates in Early Modern England

Why teach women's contributions to scientific debates in early modern England?

Bacon, Browne, and Boyle...Hooke and Hobbes: Those are often the names that come up when teaching the Scientific Revolution in middle and high school classrooms—and rightfully so! The four men performed key research that led to the development of the scientific method, advancements in the study of air, a shift towards studying cells, and atomistic theory. Yet, recent research has challenged the narrative focused only on men's contributions to the advancement of scientific study in early modern England. That recovery work research has brought light to the scientific writings of Margaret Cavendish and Lucy Hutchinson, who engaged in scholarly debates surrounding knowledge, the power of observation, the usefulness of scientific tools (like the microscope), and the existence of atoms. This essay will explore their intellectual contributions, publication history, and concerns about the religious and social implications through a discussion of experimental philosophy and atomism in early modern England.

NC Standards (full standards listed at the end of the document)

Middle School

- Social Studies: 7.B.1.1-3, 7.C&G 1.2, 7.H.1.-2
- English: RL.8.1.,4; RI.8.1-4,6; SL.8.1,4

High School:

- World History: WH.B.1.1-2; WH.B.2.1-2; WH.C&G.1.3; WH.G.1.2; WH.H.1.1
- English:
  - RL.9-10.1-4,6; SL.9-10.1,4
  - RL.11-12.1-2,4-7; SL.11-12.1,4

Essential Questions:

- What were key scientific concepts studied in seventeenth-century England?
- How did Margaret Cavendish and Lucy Hutchinson's literary texts engage with and contribute to scientific debates in the period?

Contextual Essay

Return to Nature

The seventeenth century saw a shift away from the ivory towers of academic institutions to the verdant and fruitful fields of the natural world with the advancement of natural philosophy. What knowledge was to be reaped in this natural setting? Early intellectuals including Francis Bacon, Thomas Browne, and Robert Boyle suggested that the Earth contains a natural order about which humans could learn through careful observation (and later with the assistance of new scientific tools). These natural philosophers pushed for a more methodological, evidence-based development of scientific theories. Francis Bacon outlined some of the earliest ideas for this new scientific method of observation in his texts *The Great Instauration* and *Novum Organum*. In *The Great Instauration*, Bacon challenged other scholars to reject the reliance upon "[t]hat philosophy of ours which we have chiefly derived from the Greeks…. [that] appears to me but the childhood of knowledge" and is simply "fruitful of controversy and barren of effects."[178] Bacon warned that relying too heavily upon theorizing could lead to incorrect ideas about nature because, according to Bacon, "human understanding, from its peculiar nature, easily supposes a greater degree of order and equality in things than it really finds."[179] The human mind

[178]Francis Bacon, "The Great Instauration," in *The Works*, ed. Basil Montague, vol. 3, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Parry & MacMillan, 1854), https://history.hanover.edu/texts/Bacon/gi.html.

[179]Francis Bacon, "Novum Organum," in *The Works*, ed. Basil Montague, vol. 3, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Parry & MacMillan, 1854), https://history.hanover.edu/texts/Bacon/gi.html.

is predisposed to try to make sense of the world according to its limited set of knowledge (rather than seek out additional information and sit with the discomfort of unfamiliarity). As a counter, Bacon advised that they "search for and procure a greater number of experiments, but also introduce a completely different method, order, and progress of continuing and promoting experience."[180] This method would rely heavily on observations of patterns within the natural world, systematic record-keeping and gathering of evidence, and methodical experiments that could be produced by other scholars around the globe.

As Far as the Eye Can See

This focus on experimentation was put into practice as scholars developed tools for further discovering the "hidden" properties of and patterns found within Nature and debated the results of these experiments. In the late 1660s, Robert Hooke and other members of the Royal Society (the premier and exclusive organization for scientific research in England founded in 1660) began testing the findings presented earlier by Antoni van Leeuwenhoek. van Leeuwenhoek, a Dutch scholar, "made a number of important discoveries, including the existence of red blood cells, sperm cells, and 'little animalcules' (protozoa and bacteria)."[181] After members of the Royal Society studied his findings, they began conducting their own experiments examining the microscopic composition of organisms and, in the process, began discovering unexpected properties of organisms and inorganic matter (including identifying the existence of a single "cell").[182] Hooke's studies famously challenged pre-existing notions held

[180] Francis Bacon, "Novum Organum," #100.

[181]Howard Gest, "Homage to Robert Hooke (1635–1703): New Insights from the Recently Discovered Hooke Folio," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 52, no. 3 (2009): 392–99, https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.0.0096.

[182] Ibid.

about objects. In one experiment described in his text *Micrographia*, Hooke "[showed].... how the point of an apparently sharp needle appeared blunt and rounded when viewed under his microscope, and the cutting-edge of a sharp razor looked flattened."[183] These experiments "served to show the underlying truth of matters that appeared otherwise to the unaided senses."[184]

Yet, such experimentation was subject to critique by scholars including the first woman to attend a meeting of the Royal Society: Margaret Cavendish. Cavendish was a natural philosopher, poet, and author of one of the first works of proto-science fiction, *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing-World,* also referred to as *The Blazing World*. Cavendish was an active member of intellectual debates in seventeenth-century England, writing on the power of experimental knowledge, questioning the possible limitations of microscopes, and studying materialism and atomism. In her text *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy* (1666), Cavendish famously took aim at claims stemming from Hooke's studies that pins and knives do not appear extremely sharp under a microscope.[185] There, she joins the camp of philosophers who reject the reliance on senses (and observed phenomenon) and favors rationalism.[186] Cavendish challenges Hooke's findings:

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[183] Peter Dear, "A Philosophical Duchess: Understanding Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society," in *Science, Literature and Rhetoric in Early Modern England*, ed. Juliet Cummins and David Burchell (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007), 136.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Peter Anstey, "Margaret Cavendish: Speculative Philosopher | Early Modern Experimental Philosophy," Early Modern Experimental Philosophy, March 3, 2014, https://blogs.otago.ac.nz/emxphi/margaret-cavendish-speculative-philosopher/.

> [I]f the edge of a knife, or the point of a needle were naturally and really so as the microscope presents them, they would never be so useful as they are; for a flat or broad plain-edged knife would not cut, not a blunt globe pierce so suddenly another body, neither would or could they pierce without tearing and rendering, if their bodies were so uneven.[187]

For Cavendish and others, the observations did not seem to make sense.

A Critical Community

Importantly, Cavendish was not alone in her critique. Despite later critics' tendency to focus disproportionately on Cavendish's questions and to even "claim that her assessment of microscopes was based on ignorance or childish folly," Cavendish was, in fact, a knowledgeable critic[188] and part of a community of scholars who likewise called for further investigation of the claims presented by Hooke's studies.[189] Cavendish was able to critique these findings, in part, because she had used microscopes, herself. Excluded from participating in meetings of the Royal Society, her family's private collection of microscopes and telescopes still enabled her to participate in experimentation. After witnessing the imprecision of the tools herself and viewing Hooke's artistic renderings of various creatures and organic matter as seen under a microscope, Cavendish espoused a certain skepticism about the validity of Hooke's conclusions. This skepticism and critique were shared by scholars including John Locke, John Sydenham, and Thomas Hobbes.[190] Contemporary scholar Emma Wilkins reports that:

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[187] Margaret Cavendish, *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy to Which Is Added The Description of a New Blazing World* (London, 1666), https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A53049.0001.001?view=toc. qtd. in Juliet Cummins and David Burchell, *Science, Literature and Rhetoric in Early Modern England* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007), 136.

[188] Peter Dear, "A Philosophical Duchess," 125–44.

[189] Emma Wilkins, "Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 68, no. 3 (September 20, 2014): 245–60, https://doi.org/10.1098/rsnr.2014.0015.

[190] Ibid.

Sydenham and Locke echoed Cavendish's view that microscopes failed to reveal the internal workings of organisms. Thus, Locke argued:

> *Now it is certaine and beyond controversie that nature performs all her operations on the body by parts so minute and insensible that I thinke noe body will ever hope or pretend, even by the assistance of glasses … to come to a sight of them … and though we cut into these inside, we see but the outside of things and make but a new superficies for ourselves to stare at.*33

Sydenham was of the same mind, arguing that knowledge derived from microscopes was limited to 'the outer husk of the things that we would know.'[191]

This community of critical scholars kept pushing the debate about experimental philosophy forward.

Cavendish also introduced scientific debates into her works of literature, including the proto-science fiction utopian text, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World*. In *The Blazing World*, Cavendish creates an imaginative world beyond Earth ruled by a figure called the Empress (who had been kidnapped from Earth and made Empress of this new "blazing world"), inhabited by various animal-peoples, and visited by a woman named the Duchess (a stand-in for our author, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle). The Duchess is invited on account of her genius to join the Empress in this Blazing World and to conduct a "world-in-review" of sorts in which they examine various systems that constitute this world – the political structure, social groups, and knowledge-makers (including scientists and philosophers). As the women review these systems, Cavendish provides commentary on and critique of English social, political, and scientific bodies and, including not-so-subtle references to Robert Hooke and other member of the Royal Society (who are depicted as "bear-men"). In this blazing world, the

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[191] Ibid.

Duchess explains, the “bear-men” are “experimental philosophers who use telescopes and microscopes to better understand Nature.”[192] The reports of the bear-men on their use of telescopes, however, provoke a tense debate with the Empress. Cavendish explains:

> these Telescopes caused more differences and divisions amongst them, then ever they had before; for some said, they perceived that the Sun stood still, and the Earth did move about it; others were of opinion, that they both did move; and others said again, that the Earth stood still, and Sun did move; some counted more Stars then others; some discovered new Stars never seen before; some fell into a great dispute with others concerning the bigness of the Stars; some said, The Moon was another World like their Terrestrial Globe, and the spots therein were Hills and Vallies; but others would have the spots to be the Terrestrial parts, and the smooth and glossie parts, the Sea.

The experimental philosophers, relying on newly developed scientific instruments, appear unable to come to a consensus about objects beyond their planet. This inconsistency causes “the Empress…to grow angry at their Telescopes, that they could give no better Intelligence; for, said she, now I do plainly perceive, that your Glasses are false Informers, and instead of discovering the Truth, delude your Senses.” The Empress rejects the usage of such instruments and, instead, insists that these scientists “ break them, … [since] their Glasses [telescopes] were…[mere] deluders, and will never lead [them] to the [knowledge] of Truth.” She claims “Nature has made [human] Sense and Reason more regular then Art has your Glasses [telescopes]” and pushes them to stay away from such misleading tools. However, after the bear-men/experimental philosophers implore her not to break these tools, the “Empress at last consented to their request, but upon condition, that their disputes and quarrels should remain within their Schools, and cause no factions or disturbances in State, or Government.”[193] The Empress’s warning reflects Cavendish’s own concern (and that of her scientific peers) that

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[192] Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing-World* (London: A. Maxwell, 1668), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/51783/51783-h/51783-h.htm.

[193] Ibid.

mistruths about the order of the universe could disrupt the social and political order, as well. (This concern was well-founded given the charges of heresy that stemmed from Galileo Galilei's assertions of a heliocentric universe.)

Cavendish's critique continues as the bear-men try to save face and show off the power of their microscopes. The Duchess narrates that the experimental philosophers

> told her Majesty, that they had several other artificial Optick-Glasses, which they were sure would give her Majesty a great deal more satisfaction. Amongst the rest, they brought forth several Microscopes, by the means of which they could enlarge the shapes of little bodies, and make a Lowse appear as big as an Elephant, and a Mite as big as a Whale. First of all they shewed the Empress a gray Drone-flye, wherein they observed that the greatest part of her face, nay, of her head, consisted of two large bunches all cover'd over with a multitude of small Pearls or Hemispheres in a Trigonal order: Which Pearls were of two degrees, smaller and bigger; the smaller degree was lowermost, and looked towards the ground; the other was upward, and looked sideward, forward and backward: They were all so smooth and polished, that they were able to represent the image of any object, the number of them was in all 14000.

Despite the seeming impressiveness of this window into the microscopic world, the Empress remains skeptical and "replied, That they might be glassie Pearls, and yet not Eyes; and that perhaps their Microscopes did not truly inform them." The bear-men, undeterred and perhaps with an air of superiority,

> smilingly answered her Majesty, That she did not know the vertue of those Microscopes: for they never delude, but rectifie and inform the Senses; nay, the World, said they, would be but blind without them, as it has been in former ages before those Microscopes were invented.[194]

The depiction of these experimental-philosophers as bear-men, historians note, is used to draw the reader's attention to the limitations of Hooke and his peers.[195] Like the bears featured in bear-baiting entertainment, who were "preoccupied with an immediate task" and who showed "futile

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[194] Ibid.

[195] Ian Lawson, "Bears in Eden, or, This Is Not the Garden You're Looking for: Margaret Cavendish, Robert Hooke and the Limits of Natural Philosophy," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 48, no. 4 (2015): 583–595.

bluster," these experimental philosophers had been put on the spot by the Duchess to share their learning only to show their limitations. These men, like their bearish counterparts, "were forgetting their own status as finite parts of the same nature."[196]

Yet, interestingly, while Cavendish engages with these men deeply on multiple fronts and questions certain aspects of experimentation that depend on human intervention and manipulated perspective, she also uses that manipulation to her own end and includes caveats throughout her writing about her use of methods and forms when they suit her ends. Historians note, for example, that "Cavendish admits she too is guilty of trying 'to write beyond my experience, for which 'tis probable Artists will condemn me" and that, while Cavendish "had condemned alchemy …[in her text] *Philosophicall Fancies*,…[she] used some of its terminology to explicate her emerging natural philosophy."[197] While she critiques the imperfections of early scientific tools, Cavendish's writings reveal inconsistencies in her own scientific theories (despite being based on the supposedly superior human reason and fancy).

Getting Smaller: The Continued Study of Atomism

While scholars were experimenting with microscopes to study the composition of matter, the theoretical debate about the existence of a fundamental particle (a corpuscle or atom) also continued on. The debate over atoms was nothing new by the time of the seventeenth century. Greek philosophers including Aristotle in the 4th century BCE and Democritus in the 5th century BCE had theorized about the organization of matter. In the seventeenth century, though, scholars like Robert Boyle (1627-1691) an Anglo-Irish philosopher, began investigating the issue further

[196] Ibid., 595.

[197] Lisa T. Sarasohn, *The Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish: Reason and Fancy During the Scientific Revolution* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 161, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unc/detail.action?docID=4398319.

and debated the existence of an indivisible particle and its defining features. Though most famous for "Boyle's Law," which explains the properties of vacuums, Boyle was a key contributor to the "mechanical" philosophy of atoms that asserted earthly atoms are the most indivisible or "[impenetrable]" forms of matter, as created by God, reflecting the orderliness of Creation.[198] Mechanical atomists believed that atoms had certain fundamental properties that could be seen in the properties assigned to matter.[199]

During this time, scholars frequently revisited ancient philosophical works to advance their understanding of atomism. Lucy Hutchinson— a Puritan noblewoman, biographer, philosopher, and poet— translated one such work— Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*— and left a legacy of poetic might (as the first English translator of the work) and religious anxiety. Contemporary scholar Reid Barber notes that Hutchinson's peers could have seen Lucretius as "among the most crabbed, obscure, and dangerous."[200] To take on— and spectacularly succeed at translating his work— was a monumental task. Hutchinson's translation required intellectual engagement with Epicurean theories of atomism with which she was fascinated but which later proved to provoke deep religious anxiety and a literary about-face of sorts with the publication of her later text *Of Order and Disorder*.[201] Barber explains that, in translating Lucretius's poem, Hutchinson engaged with

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[198] Alan Chalmers, "Atomism from the 17th to the 20th Century," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2019 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/atomism-modern/.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Reid Barbour, "Between Atoms and the Spirit: Lucy Hutchinson's Translation of Lucretius," in *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700: Volume 5: Anne Clifford and Lucy Hutchinson*, ed. Mihoko Suzuki (Routledge, 2020), 333.

[201] Ibid

> the….beliefs [including]….that the world is created by the fortuitous collision and combination of atoms in an infinite void, that all worlds and everything in the world, including mortal human souls, are made of atoms and void;....that human happiness depends on the imitation of gods whose bliss derives from their detachment from the world….; that tranquility follows from the rational analysis of all phenomena in atomic terms, which leads in turn to the expulsion of superstition and of the fear of death.[202]

This characterization of the composition of the world seemed to conflict with Puritan beliefs in a divinely ordered Creation, and her translation later generated great anxiety over its possible expression of atheistic beliefs. Years after, that she condemned the text.[203] She then went on to write an original poem, *Of Order and Disorder*, (oft-compared with Milton's *Paradise Lost*) that incorporates her own biblical scholarship to create an alternative narrative that celebrates the intentionality and orderliness of God's Creation and emphasizes humans' importance in this divinely ordained world.[204] In the opening canto, Hutchinson exclaims that her "ravistt [ravished] soul" desires

> To sing those mystick wonders it admires,
> Contemplating the Rise of every thing
> That, with Times birth, flow'd from th'eternal spring:
> And the no less stupendious Providence
> By which discording Natures ever since
> Have kept up universal Harmonie;
> While in one joynt obedience all agree,
> Performing that to which they were design'd
> With ready inclination.[205]

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[202]Ibid. 334.

[203] Lucy Hutchinson, *Order and Disorder*, ed. David Norbrook, 1st edition (Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001), xxxii.

[204] Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, "Lucy Hutchinson, the Bible, and Order and Disorder," in *Forms of Engagement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199676521.003.0007.

[205] Lucy Hutchinson, *Order and Disorder*.

Hutchinson's text doubles down on the sense of pervasiveness of this order as she mentions far-reaching and "universal Harmonie." Not only does Creation move "in one joynt obedience," but it does so "With ready inclination" according to a predetermined design that originated with God, the Creator. Hutchinson's depiction of Creation in this poem following her monumental translation of Luctretius mirrors broader concerns about the power of scientific research to distance Christians for a God-centered view of life or to deepen individuals' understanding of Nature thereby affirming and even strengthening their faith.

Yet, even in Hutchinson's later text, historians explain, the trace of atoms remains. In her retelling of Adam and Eve's Fall, Hutchinson depicts their departure from Eden in a seemingly corpuscular way that is reminiscent of Lucretian atomic theory.[206] Scholar Cassandra Gorman notes that:

> Hutchinson ties the grievances of the sin so closely to the accompanying corporeal disintegration…[so that] [p]hysical form has become inconstant…she merges her description of the physical deterioration triggered by sin with language that evokes atomic penetration and dissolution. As Adam and Eve dissolve in sin their bodies no longer retain independent shape amongst the natural objects of their surroundings. They begin to disintegrate while other substances pierce through their skin, as in the description of the futility of their clothes devised from foliage:
>
> But ah! these coverings were too slight and thin
> To ward their shame off, or to keep out sin,
> Or the keen air's quick-piercing shafts, which through
> Both leaves and pores into the bowels flew (4:251-4)
>
> The "quick-piercing shafts" of the air she describes in Order and Disorder recall the motion of Lucretian atoms, moving through the material world and restructuring corporeal forms "by impulsiue force", "perplext agitations" and "secret tumults" (to use the words of Hutchinson's translation). Lucretius regularly uses combative metaphors to describe atomic motion, as the above-quoted examples from the second book reveal. In her corporeal narration of the Fall, Hutchinson parallels the Lucretian recognition of transient physical form.[207]

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[206] Cassandra Gorman, "Lucy Hutchinson, Lucretius and Soteriological Materialism," *The Seventeenth Century* 28, no. 3 (2013): 293–309.

[207] Cassandra Gorman, "Lucy Hutchinson."

Hutchinson's work reflects the concerns of many scientific theorists in the period as they grappled with the degree to which the Earth and human nature reflected a divinely-ordained, human-maintained order. Hutchinson, like Cavendish, raises questions about the extent to which humans, who are both divinely made and Fallen, could fully understand the order and disorder of the world around them.

Classroom Resources

Lesson: Contextual Lecture on Women and Scientific Debates

Essential Questions

- What were major scientific debates in the early modern era?
- What role did women play in advancing scientific knowledge?
- How did Lucy Hutchinson participate in scientific debates?

Materials

- Early Modern Women and Scientific Knowledge in Early Modern England Google Slides

Preparation

- Read the background essay on women and scientific debates in early modern England.

Activity: Google Slides Lecture

- Introduce essential questions to students [SLIDE 2].
- Invite students to share what they might already know about the Scientific Revolution. Students may have prior knowledge from previous social studies/history courses as well as from introductory science courses that address the history of the microscope and atoms. [SLIDE 3]

- Discuss the history of major advancements in scientific research, including the scientific method, the heliocentric view of the universe, and the use of microscopes to understand the structure of matter. [SLIDE 4]
- Ask students to reflect on the following question: How might some of these views aligned with or challenged a Christian understanding of the world in Renaissance Europe? [SLIDE 5]
- Share that, while conflicts between scientific researchers and the Catholic Church may first come to mind, the relationship between science and religion in the period was much more complicated. The two were not entirely opposed to one another. [SLIDES 6-8]
- Invite students to read the selection from Francis Bacon's text *Novum Organum*, and reflect on the ways in which Bacon aligned researchers with divine order and God. [SLIDES 9-10]
- Introduce students to atomism in the early modern period (drawing on your reading from the contextual essay). [SLIDE 11]
- Introduce student to Lucy Hutchinson's background and work translating Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*. Explain the concerns Hutchinson had with her production of the text (including its reception) and subsequent decision to compose her own original work *Of Order and Disorder*. [SLIDES 12-15]
- Ask students to reflect on the extent to which the atomism presented in her translation of Lucretius is rejected in *Of Order and Disorder* by sharing the selections from Cassandra Gorman's article. [SLIDES 16-18]

- Emphasize the intellectual complexity found in Hutchinson's work. Feel free to use this moment as a springboard for discussing the complexities of Margaret Cavendish's scientific writings, as well. [SLIDE 19]

Lesson: Margaret Cavendish's Atomic Poetry

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lessons, students will have:

- Learned about Margaret Cavendish and women's participation in scientific discussions in early modern England
- Learned about the development of atomic theory during the Scientific Revolution
- Practiced close reading analysis of selections from Cavendish's text Poems and Fancies
- Identified areas of scientific research with which Cavendish engaged

Materials Needed:

- Women and Scientific Knowledge in Early Modern England Contextual Essay
- Primary Sources "To the Reader" and Selected Poems
- Note that more of Cavendish's poems can be found on Liza Blake's digital critical edition of Poems and Fancies.

Activity 1:

Review contextual Google slides presentation with students and introduce Poems and Fancies.

Activity 2:

Class Close Reading Activity:

Excerpts from Cavendish's letter "To the Reader"

- Invite a student to read the selections below aloud.

- Then, invite the students to discuss how Cavendish portrays herself and relays her intentions in writing this book.
    - What is one of the first pieces of information we learn about Cavendish's status as a woman? (no children/no estate) What feelings might that evoke?
    - What does her letter imply would have happened if she had had children and a household to attend to? (perhaps would not have written the book)
    - What connection does Cavendish make between good housekeeping and good poetry? What is her rhetorical goal in making this comparison?
    - How else does she downplay expectations? (Ex. Has not been in the country long, Concerned about husband's wellbeing)
    - What prompted her to write this text? What "gamble" did she take? What does she hope to gain from this text?

<u>Activity 3:</u>

Read Cavendish's poems and discuss:

- What scientific topics does Cavendish address?
- Are these subjects ones that you expected an early modern woman to be writing about?
- Despite her claims of being not an advanced poet in the letter "To the Reader," what do these poems suggest Cavendish has studied?
- Why might she have downplayed her knowledge? Here, it is important to share with students that both male and female authors would downplay their abilities in professions of seeming self-doubt or self-deprecation. Cavendish's letter is interesting to us because of the gendered framework she uses to downplay her work while admitting she seeks fame.

Lesson: Studying Gender Bias Through Samuel Pepys's Diary

Introduction:

In this lesson, students will reflect upon gender bias in discussions of women in STEM fields by analyzing the writing of Samuel Pepys, an Englishman whose diary has provided insight into citizens' thoughts on current events and theatre (taking a people's history perspective). Scholars have analyzed the gender bias that colors some of the retellings in his diaries. One salient and well-known instance of such bias is his relation of Margaret Cavendish's attendance at a meeting of the Royal Society, the premier scientific institution in England (founded in 1660 by Robert Boyle, William Petty, and Christopher Wren)— an institution which later elected Pepys as its president in 1684. Notably, the Royal Society did not admit women into its membership until the early 20th century.

Objectives: By the end of this lesson, students will have:

- Learned about Samuel Pepys, the Royal Society, and Margaret Cavendish
- Analyzed primary sources to evaluate gender bias surrounding this early "woman in STEM"

Materials Needed:

- Women and Scientific Knowledge in Early Modern England Contextual Essay
- Copies of Selections from Samuel Pepys's Diary

Overview of Activities:

- Review contextual PowerPoint with students.
- Introduce students to Samuel Pepys, emphasizing:
    - How he has been received by historians: He is most often noted for his diary that provides insight into citizens' thoughts on current events and English society. He

was an avid playgoer, and his diary records his reactions to English theatre, including performances of Shakespeare's plays. His diary also provides a firsthand account of the Great Fire of London in 1666.

    - His political and scientific endeavors

- Present students with the text of Samuel Pepys's diary entries (30-40 minutes) and complete the close reading activity.

Close Reading Activity:

Instructions: Read the following entry, paying particular attention to the way that Pepys describes different figures with whom he interacts or whom notices. Then, fill in the chart below. Leave squares blank if he does not provide the listed information.

Options for Modifying the Lesson:

- Read Aloud: Pepys's diary entries are somewhat colorful and critical in tone. You may invite students to read each entry aloud and then consider the effects of hearing the critiques read by speakers of different gender identities.
- Skip to the Entry for Thursday 30 May 1667: The first two entries provide contextual information for understanding Pepys's biases and overall characterization of Margaret Cavendish. However, you may also skip ahead to the third diary entry in which he discusses Cavendish's appearance before the Royal Society. This entry will allow students to focus directly on his depiction of Cavendish in this intellectual and scientific setting.

Samuel Pepys's Diary Entry for Wednesday, 1 May 1667

Person's Name	Gender	Occupation	Relation to Pepys (how he knows or interacts with that person)	Quotes from the Diary Entry
Pepys's Wife				
W. Hewer				
W. Hewer's Mother				
William Ashburnham				
Sir Stephen Fox				
Milk maids				
Nelly				
Doll Lane				
Mrs. Bocket				

Reflection:

- What appears to be Pepys's tone when relating his interactions with men?
- What tone does Pepys use when discussing the milkmaids, Nell Gwyn, and Mrs. Bocket, respectively? How does he characterize these women?

Pepys Discussing the Newcastles: Wednesday 18 March 1667/68

Discussion Questions:

- How does Pepys characterize Margaret Cavendish's writing? What evidence does he provide?

- How does he characterize Cavendish's husband on account of her writing? What is implied about their relationship?

Pepys on Cavendish's Attendance at a Meeting of the Royal Society: Thursday 30 May 1667

Discussion Questions:

- How does Pepys characterize the public's response to Cavendish's attendance at a meeting of the Royal Society?
- Why was it so significant for Cavendish to attend this meeting?
- How does Pepys characterize Cavendish? To flesh out your interpretation, review the following details extracted from his entry and analyze their significance. Think about the criteria he uses to inform his judgment, which aspects of her life and accomplishments Pepys leaves out, and what appears to motivate his characterization.

Detail	**Significance**
"Anon comes the Duchesse with her women attending her"	
"among others, the Ferabosco, of whom so much talk is that her lady would bid her show her face and kill the gallants. She is indeed black, and hath good black little eyes, but otherwise but a very ordinary woman I do think, but they say sings well"	
"The Duchesse hath been a good, comely woman"	
"but her dress so antick, and her deportment so ordinary"	
"I do not like her at all"	
"nor did I hear her say any thing that was worth hearing, but that she was full of admiration, all admiration"	

"After they had shown her many experiments, and she cried still she was full of admiration, she departed,"	
"being led out and in by several Lords that were there; among others Lord George Barkeley and Earl of Carlisle, and a very pretty young man, the Duke of Somerset."	

Differentiated Instruction Activity:

In this activity, students will be provided with the analytical framework and then asked to apply it back to the text (rather than students providing the interpretation of textual significance). You can adjust the instructions according to whether you're working with a digital or print copy of the diary entry.

Instructions:

Re-read Pepys's entry on Cavendish's attendance at a meeting of the Royal Society. As you read, mark up the paragraph as follows:

- Highlight in yellow places where Pepys describes and evaluates Cavendish's appearance.
- *Italicize* where Pepys seems to express admiration based on the attractiveness of people around Cavendish.
- Enlarge the font size where Pepys talks about Cavendish's likeability.
- **Bold** where Pepys critiques Cavendish's contributions to the scientific discussion.
- Underline where Pepys shares information about
- Cavendish's scientific theorizing or writing
- how Cavendish is otherwise engaging in scientific debates of the period
- Authors with whose work Cavendish's ideas engage

Teacher's Reference: Marked Copy of Diary Entry

After dinner I walked to Arundell House,.... where I find much company, indeed very much company, in expectation of the Duchesse of Newcastle, who had desired to be invited to the Society; and was, after much debate, pro and con., it seems many being against it; and we do believe the town will be full of ballads of it. A*non comes the Duchesse with her women attending her; among others, the Ferabosco, of whom so much talk is that her lady would bid her show her face and kill the gallants. She is indeed black, and hath good black little eyes, but otherwise but a very ordinary woman I do think, but they say sings well.* The Duchesse hath been a good, comely woman; but her dress so antick, and her deportment so ordinary, that I do not like her at all, **nor did I hear her say any thing that was worth hearing, but that she was full of admiration, all admiration**. Several fine experiments were shown her of colours, loadstones, microscopes, and of liquors among others, of one that did, while she was there, turn a piece of roasted mutton into pure blood, which was very rare....**After they had shown her many experiments, and she cried still she was full of admiration,** she departed, *being led out and in by several Lords that were there; among others Lord George Barkeley and Earl of Carlisle, and a very pretty young man, the Duke of Somerset.*

Student Takeaways:

Students will notice the lack of details related to Cavendish's work, the overemphasis on her appearance and alignment with others who fall under Pepys's gaze, and his emphasis on likeability.

Lesson: Let's Get Visual: Infographics to Represent Early Modern English Women's Scientific Contributions

Objectives:

In this project, students will:

- Study visual representations of research presented in infographics
- Create an infographic representing their learning about early modern English women's contributions to scientific studies

Materials Needed:

- Women and Scientific Knowledge in Early Modern England Contextual Essay
- Tools for Designing the Infographic
  - Piktochart: This site includes free infographic templates for those who register for a free account. The free infographics include "comparison, informational, list, process, and timeline" designs.
  - Canva: This site also includes free infographic templates.
- Google Docs and Google Jamboard or another platform for collaborative writing. (See chart below.)

Activity 1:

- In this first activity, the class will break up into groups and analyze a sample infographic.
- Each group will analyze the infographic below and complete the following chart.
- One person from each group should be designated as the "speaker" ready to report their analysis back to the class.

Question	**Answer**
Who is the subject of this infographic?	
What types of information does the infographic present about this figure?	
Why is this information significant?	

What is the ratio of words: visuals? What types of visuals are used? (Symbols, pictures, charts) Which and how many colors are used?	
How would you characterize the writing? Does the author use bullet points, short phrases complete sentences, or paragraphs? Why is this writing style effective for an infographic?	

European Renaissance Women in STEM and Resources

Margaret Cavendish (English)

- Project Vox Biography

Anne Conway (English)

- Project Vox Biography

Camilla Erculiani (Italian)

- See Introduction to *The Other Voices*

Lucy Hutchinson (English)

- See The Perdita Project's Brief Biography

Elizabeth Hevelius

- See "Johann and Elizabeth Hevelius, astronomers of Danzig"

Margherita Sarrocchi

- Brief Biography from Lisa Kaborycha

Caterina Sforza (Italian)

- See Brief Biography from the NEH

Sor Juana (Spanish)

- Project Vox Biography

Anna Maria Van Schurman (Dutch)

- Project Vox Biography

Anna Zieglerin (German)

- See Alisha Rankin's *Panaceia's Daughters*
- See *Anna Zieglerin and the Lion's Blood Alchemy and End Times in Reformation Germany*

Activity 2: Concept Mapping and Drafting

Concept Mapping

Students will plan out their infographic using Google Jamboard. Instructors may refer to this handout on concept mapping from the UNC Learning Center to guide students through mapping. Students should include citations or references to help keep track of outside resources or quotations from source materials.

Selecting a Template

After they have completed their concept map, students will browse through the available templates and select one that matches the rhetorical goal of their infographic. Students should post the link to their selected template on their Jamboard slide and a 3-sentence note explaining why this template makes sense for their topic.

Drafting

Students will then draft their infographic.

Activity 3: Peer Review Workshop

Peer Review Workshop

- Students will work in pairs to review their infographics.
- Students will first take a few minutes to read through the infographic before providing feedback using the following chart.
- Students will share their feedback with their partners using Google docs or a separate Jamboard.

Peer Review Chart

Who is the subject of this infographic?	
What types of information does the infographic present about this figure? Is there any information that is missing?	
Does the author balance visuals and text? Do the visuals (charts, symbols, images) contribute to our understanding of the figure's history? Do any of the visuals seem random or not clearly connected to the figure's history?	
Is the author's writing clear and concise? Does the author avoid long paragraphs? Is the text clear and legible (not too small)?	

Optional Wrap Up

Instructors may invite one or two students to share their infographics with the class.

Unit 4: Women's Scientific Life Writing

Contextual Essay

Why teach early modern scientific life writing?

What types of knowledge can be found inside a typical recipe book? A few types may come to mind-knowledge of available ingredients, an understanding of flavor, cooking techniques, and means of preserving foods like fruits to meats. Recipe books can also tell us even more about their compilers, including personal and family stories as well as local customs and cultures. They serve up ideas for meals and a bit of history.

Scholars of early modern English women's writing have long valued the treasure trove of historical insight contained in recipe books. These handwritten texts help us understand which recipes women wanted to record, how they classified and organized knowledge about food when organized intentionally (which many cooks today know is not always the case when putting your recipe book together), and the networks the writers were tapped into (evidenced in attributions to another individual).

Recipe books in early modern England often were in a hybrid form called receipt books. Receipt books were very similar in style to recipe books but included medical recipes, as well. In Lady Ann Fanshawe's receipt book, for example, we find treatments for everything from jaundice and to the plague. The receipt books show how women participated in the circulation and assessment of medical knowledge.

Diaries also offer crucial insight into the contexts in which this culinary and medicinal knowledge was put into practice. Recordings of daily life offer insight into the origins of recipes, cross-cultural exchanges that facilitated changing cuisines in a region, and advancements in techniques like cooling or preserving foods. They likewise offer insight into the challenging

moments when a medicinal treatment is required, the hypothesizing and discussions held with physicians, and the psychological illness experienced within families or communities. Taken together, diaries and receipt books open windows into the exchange of knowledge and the practice of medicine in the everyday lives of their authors.

NC Standards (full standards listed at the end of the document)

Middle School

- Social Studies: 7.B.1.1-3, 7.C&G 1.2, 7.H.1.-2
- English: RL.8.1.,4; RI.8.1-4,6; SL.8.1,4

High School:

- World History: WH.B.1.1-2; WH.B.2.1-2; WH.C&G.1.3; WH.G.1.2; WH.H.1.1
- English:
    - RL.9-10.1-4,6; SL.9-10.1,4
    - RL.11-12.1-2,4-7; SL.11-12.1,4

Essential Questions:

- How did women create and circulate of scientific knowledge by composing receipt books and diaries?
- How do receipt books reflect the flow of more formal scientific knowledge developed by experimental philosophers to households in early modern England?

Contextual Essay

When it comes to early modern recipes, one of the most famous comes from the manuscript recipe book of Lady Ann Fanshawe, a Royalist noblewoman who wrote her memoirs and a hefty, historically-rich recipe book beginning in 1651. Nestled in the 400+ pages of her manuscript is the earliest recorded manuscript recipe for ice cream:

To make Icy Cream;
Take three pints of the best cream, boil it with
A blade of mace, or else perfume it with orange flower water
or ambergris, sweeten the cream, with sugar let it stand
till it is quite cold, then put it into boxes, either of silver
or [tin] then take ice chopped into small pieces and
put it into a tub and set the boxes in the ice covering
them all over, and let them stand in the ice two
hours, and the cream will come to be ice in the boxes,
then turn them out into a [salver] with some of the same
seasoned cream, so serve it up to the table.[208]

Reading between the lines of this recipe, scholars have found a history as rich as this delectable frozen treat. Lady Ann Fanshawe's first culinary encounter with "icy cream" tells us a bit about her noble status, experiences at the Spanish royal court, and shared knowledge with another English noblewoman.[209] Ann Fanshawe was born in London in 1625 into the noble Harrison family, received a classic education in the arts and humanities, and, in 1644, married Sir Richard Fanshawe, "one of the chief diplomats and linguists in the service of the Stuarts."[210] Fanshawe traveled with her ambassador-husband to Europe, spending time in the Spanish court of King Phillip and Queen Elisabeth, where, as she recounts in her *Memoirs*, she witnessed the monarchs' impressive Ann, Lady Fanshawe, by Cornelis Janssens van Ceulen diet, which included snow-cooled beverages.[211] The recipe Fanshawe recorded reflects her attentiveness to

[208] Lady Anne Fanshawe, *Mrs. Fanshawes Booke of Receipts of Physickes, Salves, Waters, Cordialls, Preserves and Cookery.* (Wellcome Library MS 7113, 1651), http://archives.wellcomelibrary.org/DServe/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqSearch=%28RefNo==%27MS7113%27%29.

[209] Ivan Day, "Food History Jottings: Lady Ann Fanshawe's Icy Cream," *Food History Jottings* (blog), April 5, 2012, http://foodhistorjottings.blogspot.com/2012/04/lady-anne-fanshawes-icy-cream.html.

[210] "Fanshawe [Née Harrison], Ann, Lady Fanshawe (1625–1680), Autobiographer," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, accessed November 14, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9146.

[211] Ann Fanshawe, "Memoirs of Lady Fanshawe Wife of Sir Richard Fanshawe, Bt., Ambassador from Charles II to the Courts of Portugal and Madrid.," https://www.gutenberg.org/files/6064/6064.txt, accessed November 14, 2021,

Continental cuisine and cooking techniques, and she is even considered "among that small group of Caroline gentry….who introduced the cookery of the continent into their English households."

Recipes Are Meant to Be Shared

Yet the story of this "icy cream" does not end with Fanshawe. In fact, ice cream makes an appearance later c. 1690 in the recipe book of Grace, Viscountess Carteret and Countess Granville.[212] Upon comparing the two and studying Fanshawe's accounts of her family's relationship with the Carterets in her *Memoirs*, scholar Ivan Day noted that these recipes could point to an exchange of culinary knowledge between the two women and their households. For scholars of early modern British women's writing, Lady Ann Fanshawe's ice cream recipe is not simply a how-to on a delectable frozen treat. Mixed into lists of ingredients and step-by-step instructions are individual stories, family and cultural customs, and clues about women's knowledge of food science and medicine.

Receipt Books: Feeding and Healing Families

Perhaps even more intriguing than an early recipe for ice cream is the inclusion of medicinal recipes inside Lady Fanshawe's receipt book, from "a medicine for the yellow jaundice" to "directions in time of plague." These recipes showcase the role women like Fanshawe took in the medical treatment of their families and in the preservation and circulation of medical information. Fanshawe's recipe for medicine to treat jaundice, for example, instructs the reader in the preparation of ingredients as she tells them to

Take [green broom], and burn it in a clean oven as much

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https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6064/pg6064-images.html.utf8. qtd. in Ivan Day, "Food History Jottings: Lady Ann Fanshawe's Icy Cream," *Food History Jottings* (blog), April 5, 2012, http://foodhistorjottings.blogspot.com/2012/04/lady-anne-fanshawes-icy-cream.html.

[212] Ibid.

as will make a quart of ashes, and then put the ashes into a

[bottle/[pottle] of white wine, then slice into it 2 nutmegs and take [3d weight]

of saffron, and dry it well, and bruise it very small, & put it into the wine.[213]

She draws the reader's attention to the precise measurements for the ingredients and the techniques used to best combine them and release their medicinal properties. She further showcases her medical knowledge as she advises the proper dosage for patients and refines the amounts recommended based on the patient's age (and presumably size), regardless of gender. Her recommendations include instructions on how to manage the body's reaction, as she advises patients remain active and refrain from eating immediately after:

> if it be for a man or a woman, let them drink ½ a pint of it, if for a child, let him drink a quarter of a pint eleven mornings together, every time they drink of it they must shake it together, and put a little sugar, drink it cold and fast 2 hours after it, and either walk, or use some exercise.[214]

Fanshawe's final note— "This is very good also for the dropsy"— highlights Fanshawe's analysis of the connection between jaundice and swelling in the body.[215]

Fanshawe's circulation of that medical knowledge and connection to medical professionals is further evidenced by her recipes as well as her *Memoirs*. Fanshawe had experienced the plague and widespread diseases firsthand. In her *Memoirs*, Fanshawe recounts that, in 1641, she witnessed "plague [infect] the whole nation," and further suggests that some

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[213] "The Wellcome Collection, "Fanshawe, Lady Ann (1625-1680)," Wellcome Collection, accessed November 15, 2021, 7, https://wellcomecollection.org/works/tw7bkjtq/items.

[214] Ibid.

[215] Ibid.

“sicknesses of other kind” came about “by reason of so many people being packed together.” Her recipe for treating the plague cites the work of a Dr. Burges whose medicine is described as being so effective that “there was never none died of the plague that took it” and that, beyond treating “the common plague,” the medicine is fit to treat “the measles, smallpox , [surfets], and diverse other kind[s] of diseases.”[216]

Early modern scholars have noted the importance of these genres of life writing — receipt books and diaries included— in uncovering women’s role in sharing medical knowledge and the impact of disease and illness upon their families. Elaine Leong observes that “the production and circulation of recipes [was, in fact] at the heart of what we might call ‘household science’ — that is quotidian home-based investigations of the natural world” in multiple forms, including human anatomy, disease and its spread, human development, and psychological health.[217] The practice of recording these recipes further reflected the experimental philosophical value of experimentation and replicability.[218] The collection and recording of recipes, or what Leong describes as the “enthusiastic gathering of ‘experiments,’... [occurred] alongside other contemporary practices like…. Francis Bacon’s manuscript notebooks.”[219] Receipt books reflect women’s participation in the modes of inquiry promoted by experimental philosophers. Their

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[216] Ibid.

[217]Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and the Household in Early Modern England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb10366443.

[218] Ibid., 6.

[219] Ibid.

recipes emphasized testing, observing changes produced by revising recipes, and recording optimal results.

Tracing History through Receipt Books

Receipt books also provide insight into the intergenerational circulation of knowledge. Along the margins of many recipes, a small note appears "My Mother A. Fanshawe." Historians have ascribed this note to Fanshawe's daughter, Katherine, who also inscribed in the front of the book, ""Given mee by my Mother March 23th 1678."[220] This inscription reflect how recipe books were vessels of scientific and medical knowledge, family history, and cultural practices from one generation to the next.

Classroom Resources

Lesson: Contextual Lecture on Women and Scientific Debates

Essential Questions

- What constitutes life writing?
- What knowledge is contained within that writing?
- How do such texts reflect early modern women's multiple literacies?

Materials

- Early Modern Women's Education Google Slides Presentation (See Appendix E.)

Preparation

- Read the background essay on women and scientific life writing in early modern England.

Activity: Google Slides Lecture

[220] Hillary Nunn, "The Fanshawe Project," *Emroc (Early Modern Recipes Online Collective)* (blog), 2014, https://emroc.hypotheses.org/ongoing-projects/ann-fanshawe.

- Invite students to share what they know about scientific life writing. [SLIDE 2]
- Introduce examples of life writing common in the early modern era. [SLIDE 3]
- Ask students to reflect on the multiple meanings of "literacy," emphasizing competence and or knowledge of a certain subject or skill. [SLIDE 4]
- Invite students to consider how life writing reflects multiple literacies and contains a variety of knowledge. Consider emphasizing the medical knowledge found in receipt books, the scientific methodology at practice in cookery books, the development of historical records through memoirs, and the theological understanding evident in diaries (among other examples) [SLIDES 5-7].
- Invite students to reflect on contemporary genres of life writing and to consider the extent to which their intellectual labor is observed and valued. Consider asking students to consider biases that might come into play as groups and cultures assign intellectual value to various genres. [SLIDE 8]

Lesson: Scientific Life Writing Lesson: Follow The Recipe!

<u>Introduction:</u>

What types of knowledge can be found inside a typical recipe book? A few types may come to mind—knowledge of available ingredients, an understanding of flavor, cooking techniques, and means of preserving foods like fruits to meats. Recipe books can also tell us even more about their compilers, including personal and family stories as well as local customs and cultures. They serve up ideas for meals and a bit of history.

Scholars of early modern English women's writing have long valued the treasure trove of historical insight contained in these books. These handwritten texts help us understand which recipes women wanted to record, how they classified and organized knowledge about food when

organized intentionally (which many cooks today know is not always the case when putting your recipe book together), and the networks the writers were tapped into (evidenced in attributions to another individual).

Recipe books in early modern England often were in a hybrid form called receipt books. Receipt books were very similar in style to recipe books but included medical recipes, as well. In *The Receipt booke of Rebeckah Winche* (featured below), for example, the author provides treatments for everything from a headache or stomach ache to jaundice and the plague. The receipt books show how women participated in the circulation and assessment of medical knowledge.

Objective:

- Students will examine how receipt books showcase women's scientific knowledge using primary sources.
- In this lesson, students will analyze the indices included in the manuscript, *The Receipt booke of Rebeckah Winche*. Students will identify the categories of knowledge represented within these recipes.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Rebeckah Winche's indices. The indices are divided according to the categories found in the original manuscript. The left-hand column contains the text collectively transcribed by scholars and published by the Folger Shakespeare Library. The right-hand column contains my modernized spellings and definitions of terms that may be unfamiliar to many students.
- Printouts of the indices cut into strips
- Index cards

Activity:

Preparation

Print out 5 copies of Winche's indices. Cut out each item into a separate strip, making sure to create 5 separate groups as you go (to avoid extra sorting).

Group Work

Give each group a copy of the index strips and ask them to group them according to similarities they observe. Groups should write down the title of each category on an individual index card.

Report Back

Invite one leader from each group to come up and write their category titles on the board.

As a class, discuss what similarities and differences there are between the groups' categories.

Synthesis Class Discussion

Discuss the following questions as a class:

- What types of knowledge are represented in these categories?
- Where would you expect a person to obtain this knowledge?
- Did the author attribute the recipes to anyone?

Introduce Winche's biography to the class, emphasizing

- her association with the medical community in late seventeenth-century England
- the roles women played in circulating medical and health-related knowledge

Unit 5: Women of Color in Early Modern England:

Contextual Essay

Why teach the history of early modern women of color in England?

Well-behaved women seldom make history.

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's now-famous saying that both acknowledges the tendency for non-conformists to make it into the history books and has evolved into a battle cry for women and girls to stand up for the causes in which they believe. Yet, the proliferation of this phrase should not go without critical questioning of who makes it into our historical narratives and why they do. In this unit, students will study both the lives of early modern women of color living in England and examine how historical processes have left these women out. Why must women misbehave in order to make it into the history books? Who typically gets left behind?

Studying about early modern women of color in early modern literature and history courses is essential to more fully depicting their rich and diverse experiences and combating the narrative of a single story (to borrow from Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie) of a Black experience in or connected to early modern Europe. In providing these explorations, this unit aims to both discuss the racial injustice in the period while also working to account for the diversity of women's experiences and accomplishments.

NC Standards (full standards listed at the end of the document)

Middle School

- Social Studies: 7.B.1.1-3, 7.G.1.1, 7.H.1.1-2,5
- English: RL.8.1,4; RI.8.1-4,6; SL.8.1,4

High School

- World History: WH.B.1.1, 2.1-3; WH.C&G.1.3-4; WH.E.1.1; WH.G.1.2; WH.1.2-4

- English
    - RL.9-10.1-2,4,6; SL.9-10.1,4
    - RL.11-12.1-2,4-6,9; SL.11-12.1,4

Essential Questions:

- In creating historical records and crafting the historical narrative of a particular place and time, who might be excluded? Why?
- How are scholars working to uncover the voices of those kept out of historical narratives?
- How can scholars nuance historical narratives to illuminate individual identities and experiences?

Expanding the Record Collection

Recently, scholarly work has focused on recovering the experiences of people of color living in the early modern era and 18th century by more carefully and systematically looking for evidence in the archives. Through *The 1619 Project*, Nikole Hannah-Jones and other scholars brought to light the experiences of people of color pre-1776, challenged narratives around the founding of the United States, including rethinking whose experiences are considered central in the "American story," examining the ideologies debated in England and the thirteen colonies, and considering the influence of British abolitionism on the institution of slavery in the United States. As part of this work, Hannah-Jones and others propose a more longer historical lens through which readers and students can understand Black experiences and draw attention to the intertwined histories of people of color in the United States and England.[221] *The 1619 Project* intersects with the work being done by scholars of British history and literary studies to recover

[221] Jake Silverstein, "The 1619 Project and the Long Battle Over U.S. History," *The New York Times*, November 9, 2021, sec. Magazine, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/magazine/1619-project-us-history.html.

voices lost in the archives and challenge historical narratives that left people of color in the historical wings instead of onstage with others. Scholar Imtiaz Habib explains that one of the first steps needed to advance scholarship on the lives of people of color in early modern England is to shed the narrow perspective inherited from previous scholars that "'actual' black people were probably a 'tiny' population" and merely "stray figures in an 'anecdotal landscape, too accidental and solitary to be even a historical statistic."[222] Habib laments that, up until recently, major historians failed to account for the experiences and history of people of color living in early modern England.[223] Literary scholars, like Mary Floyd-Wilson,[224] Margo Hendricks, Patricia Parker,[225] Dympna Callaghan,[226] and Lynda Boose,[227] have been working alongside historians to push back against incorrect historical assumptions, as well.[228]

Habib and Onyeka Nubia explain that people of color were part of the rich social fabric of English society. In fact, people of color held "many visible professions, [....] [including]

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[222] Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives*, 1.

[223] Ibid., 7.

[224] See Mary Floyd-Wilson, "Moors, Race, and the Study of English Renaissance Literature: A Brief Retrospective," *Literature Compass* 3, no. 5 (2006): 1044–52.

[225] See Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker, eds., *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (London: Routledge, 1994), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015066071070.

[226] See Dympna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women*.

[227] See Lynda E. Boose, "'The Getting of a Lawful Race': Racial Discourse in Early Modern England the Unrepresentable Black Woman," in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994), 35–54, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015066071070. cited in Mary Floyd-Wilson, "Moors, Race," 1044–52.

[228] Ibid.

trumpeter, diver, royal page, entertainer, laundress, servant, [....] maid, [....] professional soldier[,] [....] needlemaker[,] [....] [and] [goldsmith]."[229] Immigrants to England may have brought their expertise and training with them or they may have learned a trade or profession after arriving in England. By searching a variety of primary sources, they have been able to uncover evidence of diverse experiences and identities. Onyeka Nubia, for example, uses "Tudor parish records [....] [and] documents include parish registers, some of which are written on single sheets of paper, others [....] bound together as books[,] [....] [including] memorandum daybooks [....] which often contain notes written by a parish priest or clerk about the people who they baptised, married or buried," in order to illuminate the experiences of Black individuals and families living in England.[230] Uncovering the lives of women of color through these archives is particularly important given that white-centric frameworks through which students might encounter discussions of people of color living in early modern England. In literature classes, students might read the Black experience through the fragmented lens of a white, male author, such as William Shakespeare in *Othello* or Ben Jonson in *The Masque of Blackness*. Boose explains that the "few depictions of black women [....] in Tudor and Stuart drama" tend to depict women of color as "lascivious servants" or refuse to "[represent their] racial status" (as in the case of Cleopatra in Shakespeare *Antony and Cleopatra*).[231] Discussions of Black women

[229] Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives*, 4.

[230] Onyeka, *Blackamoores*, XIX.

[231] Boose explains that "The black man is representable. But within Europe's symbolic order of dominance and desire, the black woman destroys the system, essentially swallowing it up within the signification of her body. By contrast to the way that repeated allusions to both skin color and physiognomy foreground the racial identity of the black male figure in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Othello*, the unrepresentability of Cleopatra's racial status is what gets foregrounded by *Antony and Cleopatra*'s use of only two such allusions, both of which help obfuscate rather than situate the issue." Lynda E. Boose, "'The Getting of a Lawful Race'," 47.

depicted on stage sometimes are framed through Queen Anne's "request [....] to perform in blackface" as part of Ben Jonson's famous *Masque of Blackness*.[232]

It is crucial to ground the history of early modern people of color in England and Europe in their experiences. People of color lived and worked in early modern England, both in local communities and at Court. John Blanke, for example, was a trumpeter with the English court under King Henry VII and King Henry VIII. Records show that he was an active part of the court, performing at the Westminster Tournament (as evidenced in the painting of the event) and likely performing at the coronation of Henry VIII. He was paid for his musical services (as recorded in payroll records, a sample of which is listed below) and advocated for equal pay, after noting that his monthly wages were lower than those of his peers. A record of his petition to Henry VIII petition is included below.) Blanke successfully got a 100% pay increase, raising his wages from 8d to 16d.

Other people of color worked in the Scottish court under James IV (James I of England), as well. Historians from the British National Archives further report that the Scottish Treasury records show that Black musicians were employed by the court. Additionally, the Treasury records show that materials, including "gowns, satin, ribbons, slippers, and gloves" were purchased for "Moor women," including women named "Elen More" and "Blak Margaret." Historians indicate that "it is unclear whether or not they were servants" given the costliness of the materials given to them.[233]

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[232] Dympna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women*, 81.

[233] The National Archives and The Black and Asian Studies Association, "Black Presence: Asian and Black History in Britain," 1991, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/early_times/moors.htm.

It is imperative for scholars and teachers to incorporate research on real people of color living and working in early modern England, and— where known—include the history of these women's birthplaces in the framing, so as not to erase those aspects of their identities.

Pocahontas

For some students, Amonute, known as Pocahontas, may be one of the first women of color who lived in England about whom they learn, and for good reason. Pocahontas was an extraordinary figure. The favorite daughter of the Powhatan chief Wahunsenaca, Pocahontas was a key player (and, at times, victim of) political and economic relations between the Powhatan people and the English colonizers who settled in the area around the Chesapeake Bay. Historians note that Pocahontas was instrumental in negotiating with English colonizers, including John Smith (whose 1608 text *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Hapned in Virginia* provided early information on Pocahontas's history, including claims that have been corroborated by further archival research and others which have proven false.) After surviving kidnapping and being held hostage by English settlers, Pocahontas further negotiated peace between the two groups through her decision to marry Englishman John Rolfe.[234] Pocahontas's elite status was recognized while in England as she met with King James I and Queen Anne and joined them in watching a masque.[235] In addition to Pocahontas's extraordinary life, though, historians have worked to illuminate the histories of non-elite women to better understand the ways women of color lived and worked in English communities..

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[234]Debra Michals, "Pocahontas," National Women's History Museum, 2015, https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/pocahontas.

[235]Historic Jamestowne, "Pocahontas: Her Life and Legend - Historic Jamestowne Part of Colonial National Historical Park," National Park Service, accessed March 4, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/jame/learn/historyculture/pocahontas-her-life-and-legend.htm.

Mary Fillis

One individual whose history has been brought to light is Mary Fillis, a woman living in England in the late 16th century. Fillis emigrated from Morocco which was a center of intellectual, economic, and cultural exchange. Early modern Morocco occupied an interim period between what is considered intellectual flourishing of the Ottoman era and the later "Arab 'renaissance' and Islamic 'revival'" that came about in the 19th century.[236] Moroccan cities had been invaded and occupied by Portugal and Spain in the 16th century and regional groups competed for power.[237] By the late 1570s, the Sa'di sultan Ahmad al-Mansur was in power.[238] Al-Mansur, Naylor notes, was "one of the most dynamic sultans in Morocco's history" through his navigation of relationships with major political players, including Spain, the Ottoman Empire, and England.[239] He notably "cultivated close [political and economic] relations with England," working with Elizabeth I on Spain's role in the region and "[encouraging] commercial enterprise [....] [so that] a transcultural panoply of merchants, especially the English" came to trade in Morocco.[240]

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[236] Khaled El-Rouayheb, "Introduction," in *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1, https://www-cambridge-org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/core/books/islamic-intellectual-history-in-the-seventeenth-century/introduction/C2B67165B14194D23EA4F96FE684987C.

[237] Phillip C. Naylor, North Africa: A History from Antiquity to the Present, Revised Edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 124.

[238] Ibid., 126.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Ibid.

In 1577, right before Ahmud al-Mansur's reign began, Mary Fillis was born into a family of basket-weavers and shovel-makers.[241] Why is it important that we know Mary Fillis's first and last name? In some records, the identities of people of color could be constructed through the lens of the white society in which they lived. Mary Fillis's father, from whom she got her surname, for example, went by the name "Fillis of Morisco." In his case, Kaufmann explains:

> 'Morisco' [was used] as a noun, meaning Morocco. The name Fillis might be linked to the profession of basket-weaving, as 'fillis' is a 'kind of loosely twisted string, made of hemp (*hemp fillis*) or jute (*jute fillis*), used by horticulturists as a tying material', which could have also been used to weave baskets.[242]

Habib and others have noted how records in England, at times, added words to signify a person's racial background.[243] Looking through archives, scholars sometimes find a person's first name saddled with descriptors like "Moor," "blackamoor," and Spanish and Portuguese terms for "black".[244] In Shakespeare's play *Othello*, the renowned general is characterized in a similar way as the "Moor of Venice." This "Othering" of people of color was bolstered by political policies that sought to oppress people of color living in England.[245] In 1596 and 1601, for example, Queen Elizabeth I issued proclamations aimed at expelling people of color from England, in part, historians note, "as a convenient scapegoat at a time of [a public poverty] crisis."[246] The Crown

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[241] Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors*, 135.

[242] Ibid.

[243] See Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness : Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb2795222, qtd. in Floyd-Wilson.

[244] Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives*, 12.

[245] Onyeka, *Blackamoores*, XXV.

[246] "The National Archives | Exhibitions & Learning Online | Black Presence | Early Times," accessed June 11, 2021, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/early_times/elizabeth.htm.

even "made an arrangement for a merchant, Casper van Senden, to deport Black people from England," but the efforts largely failed, in part because slaveholders resisted releasing people of color they enslaved.[247] Although slavery was never permitted by law in England—the English Star Chamber Court, in fact, claimed in the "that England was too pure an Air for Slaves to breathe in'"—slavery was permitted in practice[248] and "thirty London Merchants, the Company of Adventurers, were granted the slaving concession."[249] The identities of people of color could further change during the process of conversion. People coming from non-Christian regions or communities could face "the pressures of the conversion process." Habib notes that conversion often meant that "ethnic identities [disappeared] under Christian names,"[250] though Kaufmann challenges the ways in which contemporary views impact our understanding of name changes.[251] She explains that:

> To some, these baptisms, and the giving of Christian names, seem an effacement of African identity, an arrogant assertion of English cultural superiority. These arguments are rooted in a modern political perspective that would have made no sense to the Tudors.

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[247] Ibid.

[248] In the period, people of diverse backgrounds were enslaved, including the Irish who, Bose explains, were "first to be shunted into [....] discursive derogation and thereafter ranked as almost a paradigm of inferiority. (37) Nevertheless, the treatment of the Irish does not equate with the much longer and more brutal oppression of people of color through the transatlantic slave trade.

[249] Miranda Kaufmann, "Slavery and English Common Law," in *Encyclopaedia of Blacks in European History and Culture*, ed. Eric Martone (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), http://www.mirandakaufmann.com/common-law.html and Lynda E. Boose, "'The Getting of a Lawful Race': Racial Discourse in Early Modern England the Unrepresentable Black Woman," in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994), 35–54, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015066071070.

[250] Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives*, 7.

[251] Kaufmann, 161-162.

> This was a time when people died for their faith. They believed there was only one way to heaven, and that by bringing Africans into their church they were saving their lives.[252]

Nevertheless, the intentions of white Christians must be distinguished from the impact such beliefs had on others.

Mary Fillis's conversion experience provides an interesting case to consider female agency related to identity and beliefs. Fillis grew up largely as a servant in the London household of the wealthy Barker family, which was run throughout much of Fillis's service by the widow Anne Barker. Kaufmann surmises that Fillis may have come to work in the household because "John Barker [Anne's husband] was a factor in the Spanish trade for Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester [....] [who had an] interest in the burgeoning trade to Morocco."[253] These connections may have facilitated Fillis's entry into service and move to London. In the Barker house, Fillis worked alongside two other African servants, including a young woman named Leying Moueya and a man named George.[254] Unlike other servants (including, possibly, Cattelena of Almondsbury, who is discussed below) who received a portion from the head of the household upon his death, Fillis received nothing from John Barker. Eight years later, after serving the wealthy widow Anne, Fillis took on a new position as "the servant of Millicent Porter, a seamstress dwelling in East Smithfield [....] [which] lay just outside the city walls[,] [....] was beyond the jurisdiction of the City authorities[,] [....] [and] had a community of foreigners, mostly Dutch and French."[255] Kaufmann notes that, since "Mrs. Barker [was still

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[252] Ibid.

[253] Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors*, 139-142.

[254] Ibid.

[255] Ibid., 153

alive at the time], the move suggests that Mary was able to choose her employer."[256] Her time with the widow seems to have been a formative one, according to Kaufmann. After being charged with having an extramarital relationship, Millicent Porter committed herself to a life more deeply involved with the church. Kaufmann infers that Fillis, living in this household, may have grown more aware of and attracted to Christianity, thus beginning preparation for conversion.

Did Fillis convert to better assimilate into this household? While we do not have personal accounts of her conversion experience, Kaufmann explains, the process of conversion required significant study, participation in services, and the support of godparents (Fillis had three).[257] Nevertheless, the social benefits granted to those who assimilated into this Christian society could have incentivized conversion to varying degrees. Kaufmann notes that conversion was "a very public indicator of full participation in post-Reformation Tudor society, [...] [signalled acceptance into the parish, [and meant that] she could get married" to another member of the Church, whether white or a person of color.[258] Though the records leave remaining questions about Mary Fillis's intentionality, they do provide an important framework for students to think about the degrees of agency women of color may have experienced in early modern England.

Cattelena of Almondsbury

[256] Kaufmann, 154.

[257] Kaufmann notes that Fillis's godparents included Millicent Porter, her employer, as well as William Benton and Margery Barrick, 156.

[258] Such information can accompany American history lessons that cover the 1967 Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia*, which prohibited laws banning interracial marriage in the United States, as well as those discussing the 2000 Alabama Amendment 2 which finally removed the state's ban on interracial marriage.

The life of Cattelena of Almondsbury likewise provides a different approach to our evaluation of women of color's independence during the period. In her research, Kaufmann also made the archival acquaintance of "Cattelena of Almondsbury," a Black singlewoman who lived in the mid 1500s. What we know about Cattelena actually comes from a list of her belongings left behind after she passed away. Cattelena's belongings share insight into the experience of a singlewoman living in the south of England. What is a singlewoman, or *femme sole*? Scholar Mary Froide aptly describes singlewomen as "never-married" women in contrast to women who were married at some point in their lives—wives, widows, and engaged women.[259]

While you might not encounter singlewomen in Renaissance plays and poems you read in school, singlewomen actually were a sizable group. Froide's research found that across 100 towns, single women made up about 30% of women living in England while only about 15% were widows.[260] While married women's identities were absorbed into their husbands' in English law, single women had separate legal status as a *femme sole*. That separate legal status allowed them to retain their own property and income.[261] Yet this independence did not always bring peace and security. In fact, single women could face harsh economic and social persecution.[262]

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[259] Habib, 236-237

[260] Ibid.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Ibid., 240-255.

What was so scary about single women? Froide and Kaufmann relate that single women challenged the social norms that valued the nuclear family — families typically made up of a husband, a wife, and their children.[263] That standard unit reinforced patriarchal values that gave men greater degrees of economic and moral power. Early modern conduct manuals are one place we see those values expressed. Many writers of conduct books—like Robert Cleaver in *A godly forme of household government*— emphasized the ways in which the household was a microcosm of the country and that fathers had a special role in leading the family towards good Christian living and promoting social harmony within the Commonwealth.[264] Women who existed outside this nuclear family order were like free agents whose presence could be seen as a challenge to the social organization.

Widows, on the other hand, were granted greater social support. Town officials were much more likely to offer relief to widows and their children as they still represented the original family unit. One ballad "*A Lanthorne for Landlords*" warns of the God-given punishments to come to those who refuse to offer succor to a widowed mother. In the tale, "a wicked Landlord straight/Did ponder in his mind" how to remove the widow from his property following her soldier-husband's death. Not only did he kick her "[turn] her out of door/... the day she went to Church" but also he "left her scarce a ragge to weare" after taking some of her belongings to cover her owed rent. After enduring further suffering, the widow returns to try to bring a suit against her former landlord. While he has since passed, she comes to learn that his cruelty was returned upon him by providential forces. God "Sent downe a fire from heaven, which

[263] Froide, 237 and Kaufmann.

[264] Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Forme of Household Government* (London: R. Field for Thomas Man, 1621), A7r.

soone/consumed all his store:/By which this wicked mizer man,/Was brought to beggery." As if that was insufficient warning, God further curses the landlord's family. [265]

In some instances, town officials pressured single women to take jobs as servants so that they would morph into the family unit.[266] Amy Froide recounts that in some towns, "in practice[,] widows were allowed to engage in formal trades, but single women usually were not."[267] In one instance, a woman named Mary Shrimpton Junior was forced to work in a workhouse after she was suspected of and subsequently charged with stealing cheese after local officials deemed her "to be an idle and suspicious housewife."[268] Later in life, town officials demanded she stop running a small business from her home because she was not "employed by the freemen of the town."[269] If a man was most likely going to work in that trade to support his wife and children, some authorities claimed, shouldn't he get priority? Shouldn't he get to earn profits by running a business? Those ideas are worth puzzling over today— Might there be ways in which single women supported others in their extended families, neighbors, and other community members? Does work bring individual benefits outside of economic gains? What about intellectual? Artistic?

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[265] *A Lanthorne for Landlords* (London: J. Wright, 1630).

[266]Amy Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 246.

[267] Ibid.

[268] qtd. in Amy Froide, *Never Married*., 247.

[269] Ibid.

Other single women, however, did live more independently by choosing to be employed in a household, running small businesses in more supportive communities, or by earning income from their property.[270] Froide notes that one single woman named Anne Janverine who lived in Southampton in the 1650s was able to sell 'fish, salt, candles, butter and other victuals" and more single women small-business owners followed suit in the 1680s and again in the early 17th century.[271] From Miranda Kauffman's archival research, we learn that Cattelena was living a fairly independent lifestyle as a single woman based on the records we find of her belongings. While not wealthy, Cattelena had enough items in her possession at the time of her death to be inventoried. A woman living in Almondsbury who would have known Cattelena brought her belongings in for assessment. Most important among Cattelena's possessions was her cow. As Kauffman notes, this single animal could provide security from a single woman thanks to the milk and milk products it could generate (249-253). In Almondsbury, as in many towns during the 16th century, Cattelena would have also had access to a shared resource called the commons. Think of it like a large open town square or park where people could bring their cows and other livestock to graze. The free nature of the commons gave townspeople some relief as even the poor had access to a free source of feed for their animals. However, the commons later went through a period of enclosure, a troublesome policy in which local landowners started taking over small parcels of common land and fencing them off as private property. But while Cattelena lived in Almondsbury, the commons was still open for business.

When we look through a person's possessions left behind, we get some insight into what that person's experience was like. Similarly, when we look through the list of Cattelena's

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[270] See Amy Froide, *Never Married* and Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors*.

[271] qtd. in Amy Froide, *Never Married*, 244.

belongings we gain some insight into the possessions that might have been valued. Kaufmann notes that, in her estate, Cattelena had items including a sheet, candlesticks, boards for cutting and eating, and pots and pans.[272] Like other single women in the period, Cattelena may very well have boarded, or rented a room, in a nearby house, Kauffman explains.[273] While previously she may have worked in a larger household performing domestic labor, at the time of her death she most likely was living in a rental. Owning a home would have been very unlikely given her income level, but this boarding house would have provided a place to sleep and a kitchen to prepare her meals.

The presence of Cattelena of Almondsbury and Mary Fillis in the archives is a powerful one that belongs in classrooms, as well. Their experiences by no means erase the hard histories of slavery and racism in England and in the United States, but they call out to scholars and teachers to grapple with assumptions about the presence of people of color living and working in early modern England and to nuance the historical narrative to bring the lives and accomplishments of such women to light.

Classroom Resources

Lesson: Contextual Lecture on Women of Color in Early Modern England

Introduction:

One of the challenges facing scholars looking to recover the stories of women of color in early modern England comes from the pages "missing" from historical records. Researcher Onyeka explains that, too often, previous early modern scholars suggested that people of color did not have a significant presence in early modern England. By digging deeper into the

[272] Ibid., 251-254.

[273] Ibid., 250.

archives, however, contemporary historians have recovered the voices and experiences of people of color who were part of English communities and who were part of local economies.

In this lesson, students are asked to analyze selections from a historical account of England and consider who gets a seat at the historical table, and who is left out. Students will reflect on the importance of record-keeping and memorialization of women and men from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds today. They will discuss the following questions.

Essential Questions:

- What kinds of records exist that document the experiences of individuals living in this place and time?
- Whose experiences are captured in these records?
- Do any groups of people seem to be missing from these historical accounts?
- Why is it important to have firsthand accounts from different individuals?

Materials:

- Women of Color in Early Modern England Slides
- Pear Deck

Activity: Lecture with Discussion Questions

After students discuss the ways such historical accounts leave out women and people of color, introduce students to the work of researchers on early modern women of color through the slides listed above (See Appendix F.)

Pear Deck:

(If you already use Pear Deck in your classroom, feel free to skip ahead to the Activity.)

Pear Deck is an add-on to Google slides that allows educators to create interactive Google slide presentations. Educators have options to ask students to respond to questions with a typed answer, to answer multiple choice questions, or to draw out reactions and responses to a question (among other features). Pear Deck is useful for encouraging and recording class participation. Instructors can lead students through the presentation or share it as an independent, self-paced activity.

- To conduct this activity, you will need to add Pear Deck to your Google account.
- Once you have Pear Deck, you'll copy the slides into a new presentation of your own.
- This Google slides presentation includes four PearDeck questions (three written responses and one multiple-choice question). Recreate those questions in your new Google slide presentation using Pear Deck. This step is very important so that YOU receive your students' responses (rather than the creator of the original Google slide presentation :-).
- To open up Pear Deck, simply go to the "Add-ons" menu, click "Pear Deck for Google Slides Add-on," and then click "Open Pear Deck Add-on."

The Pear Deck panel will appear on the right, and you can add the questions in for each slide by clicking "Text" for free-writing questions and "Choice" for the multiple-choice question. Feel free to adjust these interactive questions to meet the needs of your class!

Activity: Student Reflection

In the final part of class, invite students to consider how the public, scholars, and institutions (like the Smithsonian Museums, for example) can take action to ensure that the stories of people typically left out of history make it into historical records today.

- What are some ways we can keep track of people's responses to personal life events or major historical moments?
- What might individuals do to keep track so future historians can study our present day?
- How can scholars help members of the public record their thoughts and ideas?

These questions are discussed further in the "Contemporary Connections" lesson. These questions can also be used as the basis for a short writing assignment.

Lesson: Investigating Historical Records

Introduction:

One of the challenges facing scholars looking to recover the stories of women of color in early modern England comes from the pages "missing" from historical records. Researcher Onyeka explains that, too often, previous early modern scholars suggested that people of color did not have a significant presence in early modern England. By digging deeper into the archives, however, contemporary historians have recovered the voices and experiences of people of color who were part of English communities and who were part of local economies.

In this lesson, students are asked to analyze selections from a historical account of England and consider who gets a seat at the historical table, and who is left out. Students will reflect on the importance of record-keeping and memorialization of women and men from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds today. They will discuss the following questions.

Essential Questions:

- What kinds of records exist that document the experiences of individuals living in this place and time?
- Whose experiences are captured in these records?

- Do any groups of people seem to be missing from these historical accounts?
- Why is it important to have firsthand accounts from different individuals?
- How might historians today capture the experiences of people whose histories were more often left out and left unrecorded?

Teachers interested in connecting this material to NC history may add on the Contemporary Connections lesson. This lesson introduces students to Cattelena of Almondsbury and ties in the work of historians today who are trying to record a wider variety of voices.

Activity: Read and Discuss

In the first part of the lesson, students will read selections from John Stow's text, *The chronicles of England from Brute unto this present year of Christ. 1580*, which provides an overview of English history, from its Roman and Anglo-Saxon origins to the reigns of (then-recent) kings. Students will read selections from the Epistle Dedicatory and Preface to the Reader in order to better understand the rhetorical goals of this book before looking at title pages of chapters in order to understand and critique Stow's method of representing English history.

Dedication (Epistle Dedicatory)

Preface to the Reader

Transcribed Selections from the Dedication (Epistle Dedicatory):

The good acceptance of my summary dedicated to your Lordship five years since (right honorable & my singular good Lord) hath so emboldened this treatise, grown now to a greater volume, that it presumeth with assured hope of like acceptance, to present it self to your Honor, & under the protection thereof, to venture into the world, and view of men: and that the more boldly, being an historical discourse of this our native country, setting before our eyes, to our

instruction & profit, the incredible inconstancy, & continual alterations of this transitory world, with the worthy exploits of our Kings and Governors.

Transcribed Selections from the Preface to the Reader

Amongst other books which are in our learned age published in great numbers, there are few [....] to be preferred before the Chronicles and Histories. What examples of men deserving immortality, of exploits worthy great renown, of virtuous living of the posterity to be embraced, of wise handling of weighty affairs [....] what encouragement of nobility to noble feats, what discouragement of unnatural subjects from wicked treasons, pernicious rebellions, and damnable doctrines: to conclude, what persuasion to honesty, godliness, and virtue of all sorts, what dissuasions from the contrary is not plentifully in them to be found? [....]

Guiding Questions

- What historical information does Stow include in his book? What topics does the book cover?
- How can reading history help people, according to Stow?
- What does reading history prevent, according to Stow?

Activity: Read and Discuss

Option 1:

Students will review Stow's lists of authors included in his history. Beforehand, explain to the class that some aspects might look unfamiliar at first glance. They will observe how some of the text may take a minute to unpack because early modern printing used different fonts than those we might see in books today. Certain letters will look unfamiliar — like extra-long s's— because they were meant to save space when lining up letters on a plate for printing. Finally,

certain words are in Latin because the Latin language was commonly studied and understood widely in England and Europe.

After you unpack the oddities of the page with the class, begin the think-pair-share portion of the lesson. Invite students to reflect on

- What are some examples of the people and things listed as authors in this book?
- What gender likely would have been assigned to the authors listed? Do you find the authors are predominantly male or female?
- What class do you think these authors might have come from? Why?

Option 2:

Invite students to review the title pages of chapters dedicated to early modern English history. There are twenty-three images representing the twenty-three rulers of England, beginning with William the Conqueror. Depending on the size of your class, you might:

- Break the class into small groups and give them each a set of images
- Review the set (or a selection) of images as a class

Ask your students to discuss the following questions after reviewing the images silently.

- What is the first or last name of each figure shown in your chapter?
- What descriptors go along with their names?
- How is each figure drawn? What is he or she wearing? What is he or she holding?
- What do these chapter titles tell us about the way Stow explained English history? What did he focus on? What does he value in telling English history?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this model of history-keeping? What might be included? Who or what might be left out?

Activity: Lecture with Discussion Questions

After students discuss the ways such historical accounts leave out women and people of color, introduce students to the work of researchers on early modern women of color through these slides.

Activity: Student Reflection

In the final part of class, invite students to consider how the public, scholars, and institutions (like the Smithsonian Museums, for example) can take action to ensure that the stories of people typically left out of history make it into historical records today.

- What are some ways we can keep track of people's responses to personal life events or major historical moments?
- What might individuals do to keep track so future historians can study our present day?
- How can scholars help members of the public record their thoughts and ideas?

These questions are discussed further in the Contemporary Connections lesson. These questions can also be used as the basis for a short writing assignment.

Unit 6: Early Modern Irish Women's History and Writing:

Contextual Essay

Why teach early modern Irish women's history and writing?

Irish history and literature are already important parts of many curricula. Given the immigration of an estimated 4.5 million Irish people into the United States between 1820 and 1930,[274] Irish history is frequently taught in history classrooms (and was recently mentioned in North Carolina's Essential Standards).[275] Irish immigration serves as an excellent case study that challenges students to think critically about the economic, social, and political factors that spur on immigration; the history of nativism; as well as national identity and heritage.

Yet, Irish history is more fraught than many students realize. The country was colonized by England in the early modern era, which created a fractured sense of national identity and excluded the largely Catholic Gaelic Irish and Old English from civic and economic life. By studying early modern Irish history and literature that came out of that period, educators can offer an additional lens through which students can understand colonialism and analyze its impacts on national identity and cultural heritage. This history is especially important given the long-term impact of colonial-era laws. In Northern Ireland, for example, the Ulster Plantation of

[274] The Library of Congress, "Irish-Catholic Immigration to America," web page, The Library of Congress, accessed February 11, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/irish/irish-catholic-immigration-to-america/.

[275] See for example: North Carolina 2019 Standards for American History I: The Founding Principles, for example, includes "Essential Standard: AH1.H3: Understand the factors that led to exploration, settlement, movement, and expansion and their impact on the United States development over time. Concept(s): Exploration, Settlement, Movement, Expansion, Diversity, Prejudice, Migration; Clarifying Objectives: AH1.H3.3 Explain the roles of various racial and ethnic groups in settlement and expansion through Reconstruction and the consequences for those groups (e.g. Germans, Scotch-Irish, Africans, American Indian Indians, Irish, Chinese, etc.)"

the early 17th century which dispossessed the native continues to shape the political landscape of Northern Ireland.[276]

Additionally, by studying Irish poetry, educators will be better equipped to push back on the traditional exclusion of *early* Irish literature from classes on literature in English. Educators in the United States will not have to wait until the 19th and 20th centuries arrive to bring Irish authors (like James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett, and William Butler Yeats) into their classrooms—and even then still wait to meet Irish women writers. This unit will help educators in the United States counter that truncated understanding of Irish women's writing. This unit will help bridge the gap between scholarship on early women writers in Ireland and classrooms.

So, let's set our intellectual ships asail on the Muir Éireann (the Irish Sea) and travel to meet Caitilín Dubh, an Irish poet and our guide into the literary traditions and fraught political landscape of sixteenth-century Ireland.

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[276] See the following historical account from Sean O'Hagan:

> The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) had been formed [in 1967] before by a broad coalition – trade unionists, radical socialists, republicans and members of the Northern Irish Labour and Liberal parties – with the same basic aim: to challenge anti-Catholic discrimination in jobs and housing. One of its defining slogans was the now quaintly sexist "One man, one vote", which demanded an end to the system of plural voting that prevailed in Northern Ireland long after it had been abolished in the rest of the UK. To be eligible to vote in a local election in Northern Ireland you had to be a homeowner, most of whom were middle- and upper-class Protestants. Many of them were business owners, which entitled them to several extra votes.
>
> To make matters worse, the state also employed gerrymandering (manipulating ward boundaries in local elections to maintain a false unionist majority). This meant that in 1968 in predominantly Catholic Derry, where the total nationalist vote was 14,000 and the unionist vote 9,000, the local council comprised 12 unionist and eight nationalist members. Since its inception in 1921, when Ireland was partitioned, Northern Ireland, though remaining part of the UK, was a place apart. One of its founders, Lord Craigavon, had promised "a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people." Four decades later, the state was essentially and unapologetically biased in favour of its majority population in terms of the allocation of council houses and jobs.

Sean O'Hagan, "Northern Ireland's Lost Moment: How the Peaceful Protests of '68 Escalated into Years of Bloody Conflict," *The Observer*, April 22, 2018, sec. Politics, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/apr/22/lost-moment-exhibition-northern-ireland-civil-rights-1968-troubles-what-if.

NC Standards (full standards listed at the end of the document)

Middle School

- Social Studies: 7.B.1.1-3, 7.G.1.1, 7.H.1.1-2,5
- English: RL.8.1,4; RI.8.1-4,6; SL.8.1,4

High School

- World History: WH.B.1.1, 2.1-3; WH.C&G.1.3-4; WH.E.1.1; WH.G.1.2; WH.1.2-4
- English
  - RL.9-10.1-2,4,6; SL.9-10.1,4
  - RL.11-12.1-2,4-6,9; SL.11-12.1,4

Essential Questions:

- What are some of the traditional formal and informal poetic traditions of early modern Ireland?
- How did women participate in this poetic culture?
- How was Ireland affected by English colonialism?
- How did the Irish poet Caitilín Dubh fuse gendered poetic traditions and national identities in her work?

Poetry of Bards and the Bereaved

While we do not know much about the origins of Caitilín Dubh (pronounced Duv, meaning "Dark-Haired"), her writings indicate that she was a poet associated with the O'Brien family of the small kingdom of Thormond, now known as County Limerick, in the Mid-West Region of Ireland. What do we mean by a poet's family association? Let's first take a look back at the role of bardic poets more broadly.

Early Ireland was a structured society, and poets traditionally occupied positions of prestige and power within the courts of noble families. The prestige stemmed from their intensive training—they trained for years at specialized bardic schools to learn a very precise poetic form, memorize poems, and develop their individual voices; their power reflected their dual roles as interpreters of political and social events and historians who commemorated in verse the deeds (and misdeeds!) of the noble family and local community.[277] Their roles were even codified in Brehon (Irish) Law (pronounced BRAY-hone Law) until the English colonized Ireland, cast Brehon Law aside in 1603 and supplanted it with English law. Before that date, specific classes (with resulting privileges) were assigned to poets, including the prestigious group that wove together poetry, law, and history, called the *filídh* (FILL-ah, singular filí). The most prestigious and highly trained poets, the *ollamh* (UH-liv), were even more powerful than some nobility.[278] Yet the power held by these poets lay not only in the esteem afforded by their mastery of poetic forms, but also in their social role within Irish courtly culture. Sarah McKibben explains that "Bardic patronistic verse in syllabic meters was for more than a thousand years a crucial form of cultural currency across Gaelic Ireland and Scotland" as it was recognized not only for its literary merit, but also "as validation and proclamation of the authority, genealogy, wealth, and prestige of those in power, commemoration of events and goods of significance to

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[277] Traditionally, bardic poets were "professional *fileadha* ('poets' [....]) [and] were attached to noble families and patrons. They came from "bardic schools" where they "trained [....] in the rules of literary composition, genealogy, history, saga, metres, rhymes, and literary dialect."[277] Coolahan notes that these poets adhered to strict forms to ensure "the prosody of Gaelic verse:"

> Quatrains [had] a fixed number of syllables per line, with consonants rhyming instead of vowels, Strict versification, or *dan direach*, demanded the highest level of skill and expertise in an array of established rules regarding metre, rhyme, assonance, consonance, [and] alliteration.

See Marie-Louise Coolahan, *Women, Writing, and Language in Early Modern Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 16.

[278] Ibid.

their patrons; they also inscribed counsel on questions of diplomacy, decorum, and protocol, highly attuned as they were to shifting balances of power."[279] Coolahan likewise explains that the *fileadha* recorded historical events (recording "heroism, military valour and leadership"), crafted the character of their patrons (noting "noble descent and genealogy [....], physical prowess and beauty")[280], and (perhaps unexpectedly to contemporary readers), could "satirize and declaim" their patrons in order to push them to care for the needs of their people.[281] Upon the death of a leader, bardic poets composed elegies recalling the deceased's esteemed qualities and accomplishments and lamenting the impact of their absence from the community.

Were there female poets?

While less common, women in Ireland certainly wrote poetry and were involved in the cultural production of poetry! Historians note that records show evidence of an Irish female poet living as early as 900 A.D. This woman whose name is recorded as *Iníon Uí Dushláine* (ih-NE-in oh de-LAY-ney, meaning "Daughter of Delaney"), was a *bainletcherd* (where *bain* is a form of the Irish word for woman, *bean*, and *letcherd* refers to a poet's rank, like the aforementioned *ollamh*). The records indicated that this "Daughter of Delaney" had achieved the second highest rank and had even "set out on her poetic "'cuairt,' a kind of Grand Tour that poets used to make."[282] No small feat!

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[279] Sarah E. McKibben, "Bardic Poetry, Masculinity, and the Politics of Homosociality," in *A Companion to Irish Literature*, ed. Julia M. Wright, vol. 1 (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, n.d.), 59.

[280] Note that these poems praised both male and female patrons.

[281] See Marie-Louise Coolahan, *Women, Writing, and Language*, 15-16.

[282] Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, "An T-Anam Mothala / The Feeling Soul : The Woman Poet in the Irish Tradition," *Études irlandaises* 19, no. 1 (1994): 27–32.

But that's just one woman…

Importantly, there was not just one, singular, exceptional female poet in medieval and early modern Ireland. Fictional texts and records refer to other female poets referenced in records including "Brighid iníon Iustáin (BRI-gid in-EE-in oo-STIN), Liadán ben Chuirthir (LE-ah-dun ben QWEER-thur), and Uallach iníon Mhuineacháin (UL-luck in-EE-in MWEE-ne-han).[283] While opportunities for women to train as poets were quite curtailed by the 17th century, when we meet back with Caitilín Dubh, women still found opportunities to participate in the Irish cultural production through poetry and the practice of keening (more on keening in a moment). Scholars have established that, among the many poets that lived and worked in Ireland's kingdoms, there existed a class of poets "who lacked formal schooling in poetry but whose compositions might still be highly regarded," and that women found a home in this informal but respected poetic tradition.[284] Women's leadership in the cultural practice of keening further granted them cultural respect and authority.

What is keening?

Keening was a formal and often poetic tradition that facilitated communal mourning and spiritual passing. Keening, in contrast to bardic poetry in the 17th century, was guided by the *mna chaointe* (ma-NAW HOINT-a), or professional keening women. Historians explain that these performances were full of emotion and carried spiritual power, as the verses, melodies, and cries of the keening women were thought to help facilitate the transition from living to the afterlife

[283] Ibid., 32.

[284] Ailbhe Darcy and David Wheatley, eds., "Introduction I: Why Foremothers?," in *A History of Irish Women's Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 1–23.

and guide the community through this loss. [285] During the keen, women would sing poems, refer back to the deceased's family history, and recall the lived experiences of the deceased. The keeners did so by invoking the spirit of the *bean sí* (known today as "banshee").[286]

<u>What a *bean sí* is and isn't:</u>

People often associate often associate "banshees" with contemporary popular depictions ranging from the flying dragons, or "Mountain banshees," in James Cameron's film *Avatar* to the demonic figures in horror films like *Banshee Chapter*. While the early Irish *bean sí* might have evoked some fear since it was associated with death, these spirits were not just simply spooky figures. A *bean sí* as deeply connected with individual families and reflected women's power rooted in customs related to death and spirituality. The early Irish *bean sí* was a female spirit—sometimes described as a frail old woman or as a young woman—who was (spiritually) attached to a family or region and whom people (most often family members) detected—either through a visual sighting or by hearing the *bean sí* wail—before or at the time of a family member's death. Their cries preceded the subsequent mourning orchestrated by female keeners. Notably, while its cries were seen as ominous, the *bean sí* were not responsible for a person's death. In fact, historians note, a *bean sí* could be seen as "territorial goddess," as was Aoibheall, "the famous *bean sí* of County Clare."[287] These female spirits were believed to remain with families through generations, giving them a sense of spiritual authority.

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[285] Gearóid Ó Crualaoich, "The Merry Wake," in *Irish Popular Culture 1650-1850*, ed. James S. Donnelly and Kerby A. Miller (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999) qtd. in Mary McLaughlin, "Keening the Dead: Ancient History or a Ritual for Today?," Religions 10, no. 4 (April 2019), http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.3390/rel10040235.

[286] Ailbhe Darcy and David Wheatley, eds., "Introduction I," 15.

[287] Marie-Louise Coolahan, *Women, Writing, and Language*, 17.

Fusing Gendered Poetic Traditions

Caitilín Dubh's elegies provide insight into the remarkable weaving of the male bardic tradition with that of the female-gendered *caeoineadh* (the keen sung by female mourners). Let's first now read Dubh's poem, paying attention to Dubh's description of the *bean sí* Aoibheall, explanation of how she compares with Aoibheall, and the information she relates about Diarmaid Ó Briain (DER-mid O'Brian).

Caitilín Dubh's poetic laments makes clear the emotional devastation O'Brian's death brings to his people. She speaks of the sadness flowing throughout the land, affecting men and women from all backgrounds, from "foolish harlot[s]" to "white-fingered ladies" and elderly women, and from "clerk[s]" to devoted Bible readers to "gambler[s]." The baron's death even disrupts the order of nature as:

> The sleek deer does not leap across the pathway,
> the long snouted hound does not run in pursuit,
> the stars no longer rise by night,
> the ethereal skies are a quaking mass.

The poetry of loss and mourning in which Caitilín Dubh aligns herself with the *bean si* ("you have made an Aoibheall of me in your wake,/or a *bean si* frequenting every fair hillside")[288] fuses with the bardic tradition as Caitilín Dubh moves into "established bardic topics—genealogy, military valour, patronage, and hospitality."[289] She recounts:

> Bravo the nobleman of the sons of Míle,
> of the line of Cas[42] who was not soft with enemies,
> of Éibhear[43] and Féidhlim son of Críomhthann,[44]
>
> of Cormac mac Airt[45] who fought the Battle of Mídhe,[46]
> of Gerald the Greek,[47] of Niall the devout[48]
> and of mighty Fearghus[49] who defended in the island.

[288] Dubh qtd. in Marie-Louise Coolahan, *Women, Writing, and Language*, 20.

[289] Ibid., 21.

Dubh's poem thus presents a fusion of traditions that elevated the feminized custom of keening and demonstrates her creative poetic prowess.

The Personal Is Political: Caitilín Dubh's Poetry Confronts Colonialism

Caitilín Dubh's poetry further provides insight into

- early modern political tensions in Ireland as English forces colonized the country,
- the mixture of English and Irish political allegiances that formed in response,
- changing senses of national identity as New English and Irish communities came into contact, and
- the seepage of these concerns into Irish literary canon.

To better understand the political tensions and complicated sense of Irish identity in her poetry, we will first take a look back the English conquest and colonization of Ireland.

English Colonial Conflict: Irish Edition

The systematic campaign by the English to colonize Ireland and dispossess the Irish ramped up in the early 16th century. The colonization process has a complex history and entailed different policies and campaigns under leaders including King Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I, James I, and Oliver Cromwell.[290] Efforts to colonize Ireland in the 16th and 17th centuries included

- military campaigns to invade Ireland and seize land
- legal policies that stripped Irish landowners of their property rights or encouraged Irish landowners to give up their property rights

[290] For a more detailed historical account, we encourage reading texts like Nicholas P. Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2001) or T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne, eds., *Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

- incentives for the English to take ownership of Irish lands (policies which the English politely termed "settling" and "planting" Ireland)
- the replacement of Brehon law with British rule
- the establishment of Protestantism as the official religion and suppression of Catholicism

The English conquest brought into focus different ideas over national identity and created competing allegiances. At the time of the English colonizing efforts, there were considered to be roughly four distinct identities held by people living in Ireland:

1. The "Native" or Gaelic Irish: The Gaelic Irish were those whose ancestors arrived in Ireland thousands of years before the early modern period and were largely Catholic.
2. The Old English: The Old English were descendants of invading Anglo-Normans who were mostly Catholic, learned Irish, and integrated into the Gaelic Irish population through marriage. [291]
3. The New English: The colonizing class that was supported by the English Crown, curtailed Irish political and economic power, and suppressed expressions of Gaelic culture (including language)
4. The Ulster Scots: Another part of the colonizing class supported by the English Crown that settled in Northern Ireland (Ulster)[292]

As the colonizing groups asserted political power in Ireland, Gaelic Irish and Old English leaders and citizens had to determine the degree to which they would resist English rule or try to negotiate with the colonizers.

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[291] Marie-Louise Coolahan, *Women, Writing, and Language*, 21.

[292] Ibid., 2-15.

Caitilín Dubh's Poetry: Fusing Identities and Allegiances

Caitilín Dubh's poetry, scholars note, reflects her awareness of the strain on political leaders and showcases for us the seepage of the English rule in Ireland into the Irish poetic canon.[293] Her poem to Donnchadh (DON-ah-huh), fourth earl of Thomond, in fact, "demonstrates an elasticity in composing Gaelic verse which was prepared to accommodate cooperation with the English crown in order to preserve literary culture."[294]

In her elegy to Donnchadh, fourth earl of Thomond, Dubh first hints at the interwoven connections between Gaelic Irish, New English, and the English Crown as she emphasizes a vast political network that grieves the earl's death. She suggests that:

> If these tidings of [his death] have been confirmed
> And have gone to be heard in London,
> then King James has suffered great dejection
> as have the honourable princes,
> dukes and powerful magistrates.
> …
> Your death is a ruinous loss to young and old,
> To the foreigners and to the Irish[.]

She elevates Donnchadh by highlighting the extensive grief felt by Irish and English, alike. The sorrow the English Crown feels over Donnchadh's death further gives respectability to his alliance with the English. She stresses that he mattered to the Crown. Historians emphasize that Caitilín Dubh also smooths over the fact that he sided with the English during the conquest by navigating "an elaborate genealogy" that suggests that Donnchadh is not only Gaelic Irish; he is a man with a complex and noble heritage that reaches back even to the mythic level. Donnchadh is:

[293] Ailbhe Darcy and David Wheatley, eds., "Introduction I," 15.

[294] Anne Fogarty, "Introduction II: The Reception of Irish Women Poets," in *A History of Irish Women's Poetry*, ed. Ailbhe Darcy and David Wheatley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 32.

of the line of the House of Austria,
a kinsman of the battle-inured king in London
and of the stately king of mighty Spain,

of the king of Poland, whose crown was not brought low
and of the king of the French, so stout in his demands.
Kinsman of the noble king of Bohemia,
of Charlemagne and of Caesar,

and of Paris who fought the prolonged battle in Troy,
of the emperor who started the feast
and who gave the kings of the entire world to each other.
Kinsman of every other exalted noble.

With each genealogical connection drawn, Dubh makes sure to align Donnchadh with the king of most countries, including England. This genealogy "[could have directed] [Dubh's] audience toward multiple continental connections and away from the binary opposition of Gaelic-English"[295] and established a line of kindship that more easily justify the earl's willingness to partner with the English forces occupying Ireland. The poem raises important questions about how leaders and citizens navigate political and cultural survival in the face of oppression.

Conclusion: Irish Literature's Place in the English-Language Literary Canon and English Literature Coursework

While the *bean si* in Caitilín Dubh's elegy laments the loss of Diarmaid, Baron Inchiquin, this sense of loss and imbalance has also characterized the status of early Irish literature, particularly that written by women, in literary studies until recently. While feminist recovery work successfully illuminated the work of early modern women writing literature and about politics, the sciences, and philosophy, scholars have more recently sought to recover the

[295] Ibid, 28-29.

experiences of women whose lives and cultures were altered and, at times, suppressed by the British colonial project.[296]

This decentralization does not ignore England's rich literary history[297] but rather asks scholars, educators, and students to see the complexities of literature, culture, and identity in a region that includes Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.[298] Project Illumine thus helps educators introduce students to an "'archipelagic'" perspective by investigating those countries' cultural histories and questioning the hierarchies existing in literary studies.[299] After inviting students to set their intellectual boats ashore on the Irish coast, we hope that they will sail onward with increased cultural curiosity toward new destinations.

Classroom Resources

Lesson: Contextual Lecture on Early Modern Irish History

Introduction

This lesson will introduce students to early modern Irish history, particularly the events of the English colonial conquest of Ireland. The lesson will teach students about the ways colonialism can disrupt pre-existing legal systems, social orders, and culture.

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

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[296] Julia A. Eckerle and Naomi McAreavey, "Introduction," in *Women's Life Writing and Early Modern Ireland* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 2.

[297] Eckerle and McAreavey cite John Kerrigan as "probably the best-known proponent of [....] a 'devolutionary approach." Kerrigan qtd. in Julia A. Eckerle and Naomi McAreavey, "Introduction," 3.

[298] Julia A. Eckerle and Naomi McAreavey, "Introduction," 2-3.

[299] Kerrigan qtd. in Julia A. Eckerle and Naomi McAreavey, "Introduction," 3.

- learn key historical moments in the colonization of early modern Ireland
- reflect on how English colonial policies impacted Ireland economically, politically, and culturally
- answer reflective questions using Pear Deck

Student Background:

No prior knowledge of early modern Ireland is needed. This activity will provide the contextual information.

Materials:

- Early Modern Ireland Contextual Google Slides
- Pear Deck Account

Pear Deck:

(If you already use Pear Deck in your classroom, feel free to skip ahead to the Activity.)

Pear Deck is an add-on to Google slides that allows educators to create interactive Google slide presentations. Educators have options to ask students to respond to questions with a typed answer, to answer multiple choice questions, or to draw out reactions and responses to a question (among other features). Pear Deck is useful for encouraging and recording class participation. Instructors can lead students through the presentation or share it as an independent, self-paced activity.

- To conduct this activity, you will need to add Pear Deck to your Google account.
- Once you have Pear Deck, you'll copy the slides from Early Modern Ireland Contextual Google Slides into a new presentation of your own.
- This Google slides presentation includes four PearDeck questions (three written responses and one multiple-choice question). Recreate those questions in your new

Google slide presentation using Pear Deck. This step is very important so that YOU receive your students' responses (rather than the creator of the original Google slide presentation :-).

- To open up Pear Deck, simply go to the "Add-ons" menu, click "Pear Deck for Google Slides Add-on," and then click "Open Pear Deck Add-on."

The Pear Deck panel will appear on the right, and you can add the questions in for each slide by clicking "Text" for free-writing questions and "Choice" for the multiple-choice question. Feel free to adjust these interactive questions to meet the needs of your class!

<u>Activity:</u>

Students will proceed through the slides either through instructor-paced or student-paced modes. Students will answer the following questions as part of the activity:

- (Free response) What topics do you think Brehon law covered?
- (Multiple Choice) How did English rulers enact colonial rule over other peoples and regions?
    - A: Military conquest
    - B: Economic control
    - C: Political control
    - D: Cultural suppression
    - E: All of the above
- (Free Response) What did these laws seek to restrict? What freedoms did they curtail? How would these empower the English Crown?
- (Free Response) How was Ireland transformed by English colonialism in the early modern era?

Lesson: Bardic Elegies

Introduction:

This lesson invites students to study the Gaelic Irish bardic tradition, its place within Irish society in the early modern period, and the work of a female bardic poet, Caitilín Dubh. In studying Dubh's poems, students are asked to study the genre hybridity found in Dubh's poems as she mixes the Irish keening and traditional bardic poetic forms.

Materials:

- Early Modern Ireland Contextual Google Slides
- Copies of Caitilín Dubh's poems

Activity 1: Freewriting

In the beginning of this class, students will spend some time reflecting on the significance of memorials to public leaders in order to better understand the function of Gaelic Irish bardic poets, like Caitilín Dubh.

- Invite your students to spend some time freewriting in response to the following questions.
    - How are public leaders (whether government officials, activists, or community leaders) memorialized immediately after their passing?
    - What kinds of writing or media are created to memorialize these figures?
    - Who creates these memorials?
    - What role might poetry play in memorializing these figures?
- In doing so, students might mention:
    - Physical monuments and artistic memorials, news articles eulogizing a public figure, tributes on social media, etc.

- Types of figures memorialized, from presidents to Civil Rights leaders to recent victims of police brutality
- Obituaries published in newspapers, on Facebook, or on funeral homes' memorial pages
- Songs and elegies commemorating loss
- Students may reference more recent media depicting Irish culture, including *Belfast* and *Outlander* (including the "Skye Boat Song")

<u>Activity 2: Class Discussion</u>

- Invite students to share their responses to the freewriting prompts.
- Students might mention:
  - Physical monuments and artistic memorials, news articles eulogizing a public figure, tributes on social media, etc.
  - Types of figures memorialized, from presidents to Civil Rights leaders to recent victims of police brutality
  - Observe whether or not students discuss the gender of those involved in eulogizing public figures and any associations between gender and genre.

<u>Activity 3: Lecture</u>

- Using the slideshow and the contextual essay, explain the significance of Gaelic Irish bardic poets in early modern Irish society. Emphasize:
  - Their long-standing role in Irish courts
  - Their relative power in relation to the king
  - The rhetorical situations in which they composed their poems
  - The formal qualities of their poetry

    - The tradition of men serving as bards
- Explain the tradition of keening in Ireland. Emphasize
    - The traditional form and structure
    - The location in which it occurred
    - The communal nature of keening
    - The tradition of women practicing keening

Activity 4: Close Reading of Caitilín Dubh's Poetry/Group Discussion

- Introduce students to Caitilín Dubh, a woman who hybridized the bardic and keening traditions.
- Ask one student to volunteer to read one of the two poems included below.
- After the student finishes reading, ask students to work in groups to answer the questions for the chosen poem. You may opt to assign one question to each group to facilitate reporting back to the class.

On Donnchadh Ó Briain, Earl of Thomond (1624)

- How does Dubh portray Ó Briain?
- What kind of ethnic or national identity does Dubh emphasize?
- What effect does this create?

On Diarmaid Ó Briain

- What poetic persona does Dubh adopt in this poem? To what effect?
- How does Dubh describe Diarmaid Ó Briain in contrast?
- What benefit did Diarmaid Ó Briain bring to Ireland?

Activity 5: Reporting Back

- Invite students to report back their answers.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN, DISTRIBUTION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Project Illumine Website: https://projectillumine.wpcomstaging.com/ (including short videos)

Site Design

I created the Project Illumine website in 2022 in order to create an open-access site that would

- Teach educators about the experiences of early modern women (through contextual essays)
- Provide educators with a variety of classroom resources (contextual lecture materials, interactive PowerPoints, close reading exercises, secondary source-based research project) that would enable them to incorporate early modern women's histories easily into their classrooms
- Spark ideas for educators' future independent reading and research (through contextual essays, provision of primary sources, and recommendations for secondary source readings)
- Invite them to share their ideas for implementing these histories in their classrooms (through a collaborative space and reposting selected submissions)

I designed a WordPress site to house these materials: https://projectillumine.wpcomstaging.com/. In building this site, I focused on ensuring ease of navigation, creating consistent designs for the various content categories (using Canva), including images from the period that educators could bring into their own lessons, and designing with accessibility in mind.

Distribution

In the fall of 2022, I pitched a presentation on women's history and writing in early modern England and Ireland to UNC World View. UNC World View is an organization at UNC-Chapel Hill that focuses on developing global educators. The organization designs programs (in-person and virtual) that connect K-12 and community college educators, administrators, and curriculum specialists with UNC researchers and industry and community leaders. During these programs, educators may attend lectures, participate in workshops, and/or strategize how to implement the research presented into their classrooms, districts, or larger school communities. I began working part-time for UNC World View at the beginning of the 2021 academic year, after volunteering with them for their Global Education Leaders Program in 2019. I then accepted an expanded role as Program Coordinator in January 2022.

I pitched UNC a program on women's history and writing in early modern England and Ireland during a spring 2022 program planning meeting. The team accepted my proposal and scheduled the program for March 8, 2022 to mark International Women's Day. Based on the research I would be presenting, the team and I decided to open the program to K-12 educators, community college instructors, and administrators. The program, titled "Write-Minded Women: The Philosophical, Poetic, and Scientific Writing of Women in Renaissance England," was advertised via email through UNC World View listservs, through the organization's monthly newsletter, through Facebook posts, and via emails to educators I initially contacted to invite to participate in the IRB study. The virtual program took place via Zoom on March 8, 2022 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The program was virtual in keeping with the organization's current mode of programming (with a return to select in-person programs taking place later in the spring 2022 semester).

Further in keeping with the organization's program design, "Write-Minded Women," offered K-12 and community college educators the opportunity to earn 0.5 CEU or 5 PDCH. In order to earn those credits, UNC World View requires that educators both attend and participate in the program as well as complete a study guide designed to engage participants in thinking more deeply about the research presented and reflecting on their own pedagogy. I designed the study guide for "Write-Minded Women" with guidance from the K-12 Associate Director, Julie Kinnaird. The study guide includes readings from the National Women's History Museum site on the underrepresentation of women in history curricula ("Where Are the Women? A Report on the Status of Women in the United States Social Studies Standards"); Project Illumine's contextual essay on Irish early modern women's writing; Caitilín Dubh's poem, "On Diarmaid O'Briain," Project Illumine's contextual essay on early modern women's scientific life writing; and selections from Rebeckah Winche's receipt book. The selections were chosen to engage educators in thinking about women's multiple literacies, pointing to the previously overlooked scientific knowledge found in recipe books, and cultures underrepresented in courses addressing English literature and history, pointing to Ireland's colonial history and unique poetic traditions.

Impact of Program with UNC World View

Twenty-four educators registered for the program, and 19 attended. These educators represented 15 schools across North Carolina and included K-12 teachers, community college instructors, NC Blended Learning educators, instructional leaders, curriculum designers, and a media specialist. The program appealed to both new and more experienced educators. Of the ten educators who responded to a post-workshop anonymous Qualtrics survey conducted by UNC World View, one educator had one-three years of experience, three had four-five years of experience, four had six-ten years of experience, and two had ten or more years of experience.

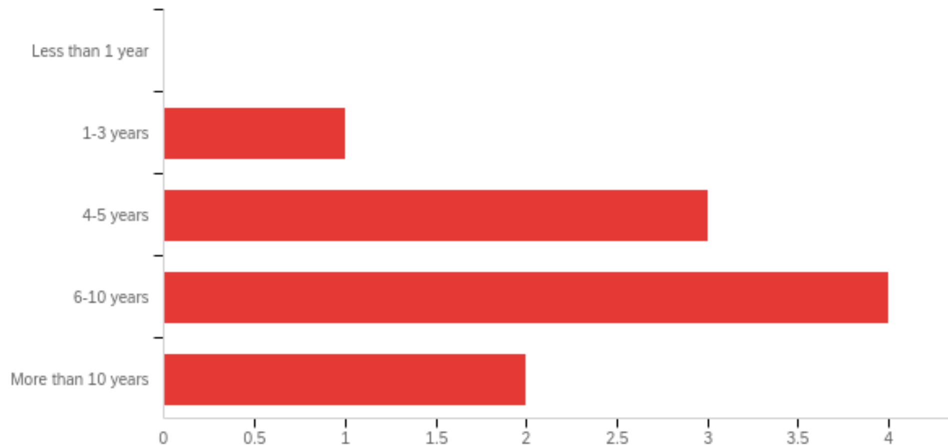

Figure 3

These ten survey respondents also indicated that they reach between 1,965 and 2,240 students.

Roughly how many students do you reach each year?
180
120
Not sure-75-150 at [Name of School]. Adj elsewhere
Sixty
160-180
120-250
200+
600
300
150-200

Figure 4

The program consisted of three sessions. During the first, forty-five-minute session, I held an interactive presentation that highlighted key ideas and examples from Project Illumine and invited educators to share their knowledge of Renaissance women's history and assumptions which students may have about the subject. Following the lecture and a brief break, I introduced Project Illumine to the educators, and they were placed in breakout rooms according to their grade level and role. There, they discussed Project Illumine and shared ideas for incorporating early women's history and writing into their courses. Educators were invited to post their ideas to

a shared Google Jamboard, which was to facilitate sharing of ideas among program participants. While some posted to the Google Jamboard site, others preferred discussion and did not record their ideas. During the final session, a representative from each group reported the group's ideas to program participants.

Feedback Shared During Program

Educators were enthusiastic about Project Illumine and shared their eagerness to discuss early women's history with their students. The comments shared during report back session focused primarily on where in their courses they could incorporate this history and the ease of integration that stemmed from Project Illumine's ready-to-implement classroom resources. Educators expressed desire to:

- Bring Margaret Cavendish's text *The Blazing World* into a middle school literature course that includes utopian and dystopian literature
- Pair existing texts with Caitilín Dubh's poetry and discuss the Irish keening tradition
- Incorporate early modern women's scientific life writing into their family and consumer sciences course
- "Debunk myths" by using "the lessons on scientific debates and life writing"
- "Swap out Dante" and "switch in Caitilín Dubh"

Instructors indicated that

- "A lot of these lessons would be an easy fit"
- They were "very excited by the close reading assignments"

Based on the post-program survey, most educators indicated a high level of readiness and enthusiasm for bringing these histories into their classrooms. Their survey responses can be found in the Figures 4-13- below:

Q5 - Did this program deepen your knowledge of early modern women's writing and history in England?

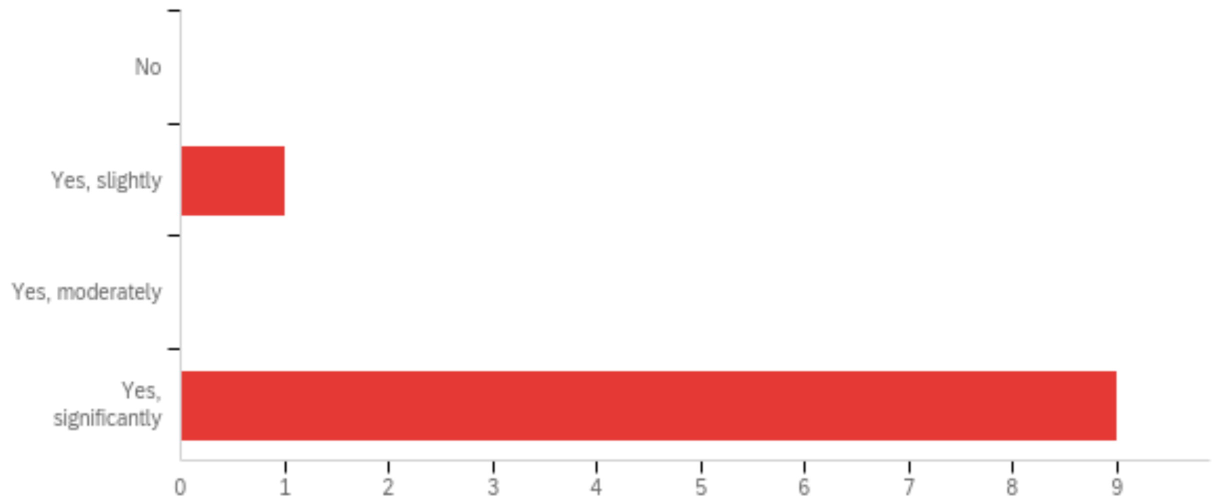

Figure 5

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Did this program deepen your knowledge of early modern women's writing and history in England?	2.00	4.00	3.80	0.60	0.36	10

Figure 6

#	Answer	%	Count
1	No	0.00%	0
2	Yes, slightly	10.00%	1
3	Yes, moderately	0.00%	0
4	Yes, significantly	90.00%	9
	Total	100%	10

Figure 7

Q6 - Did this program give you new resources, tools or strategies to integrate lessons on early modern women in England?

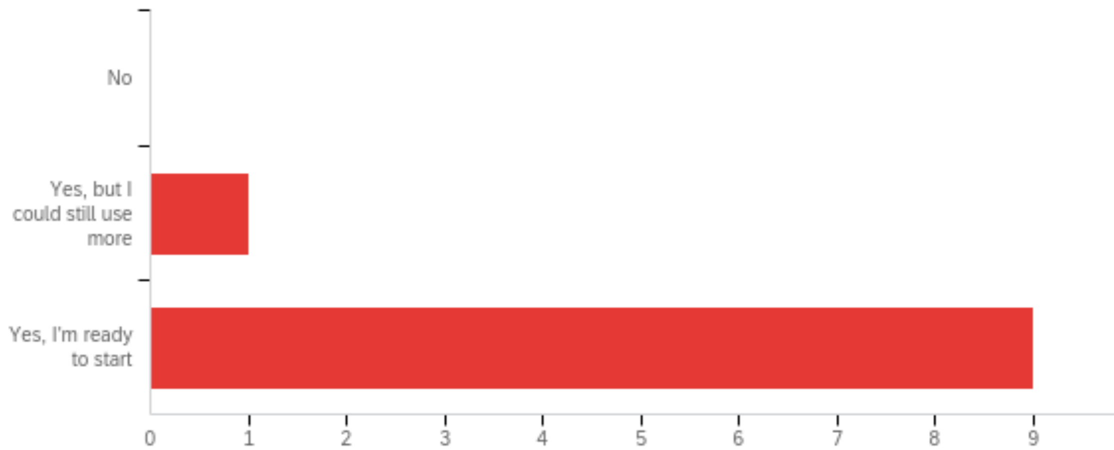

Figure 8

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Did this program give you new resources, tools or strategies to integrate lessons on early modern women in England?	2.00	3.00	2.90	0.30	0.09	10

Figure 9

#	Answer	%	Count
1	No	0.00%	0
2	Yes, but I could still use more	10.00%	1
3	Yes, I'm ready to start	90.00%	9
	Total	100%	10

Figure 10

Q7 - How likely are you to discuss this history in your classroom?

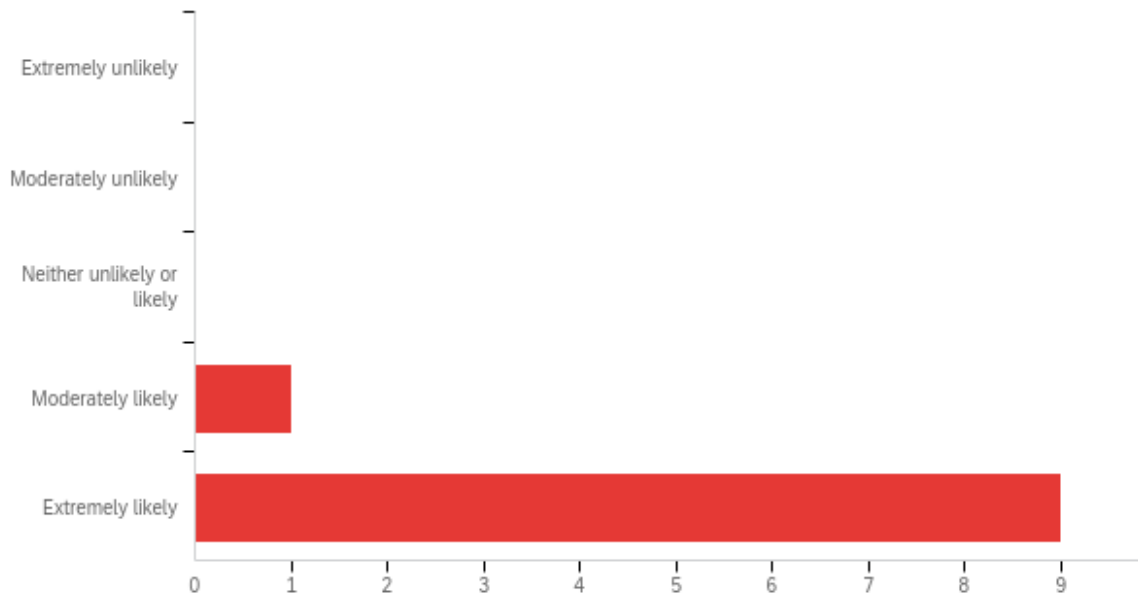

Figure 11

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How likely are you to discuss this history in your classroom?	5.00	6.00	5.90	0.30	0.09	10

Figure 12

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Extremely unlikely	0.00%	0
2	Moderately unlikely	0.00%	0
3	Neither unlikely or likely	0.00%	0
5	Moderately likely	10.00%	1
6	Extremely likely	90.00%	9
	Total	100%	10

Figure 13

Q8 - Please rate your level of engagement with the session led by Susan O'Rourke.

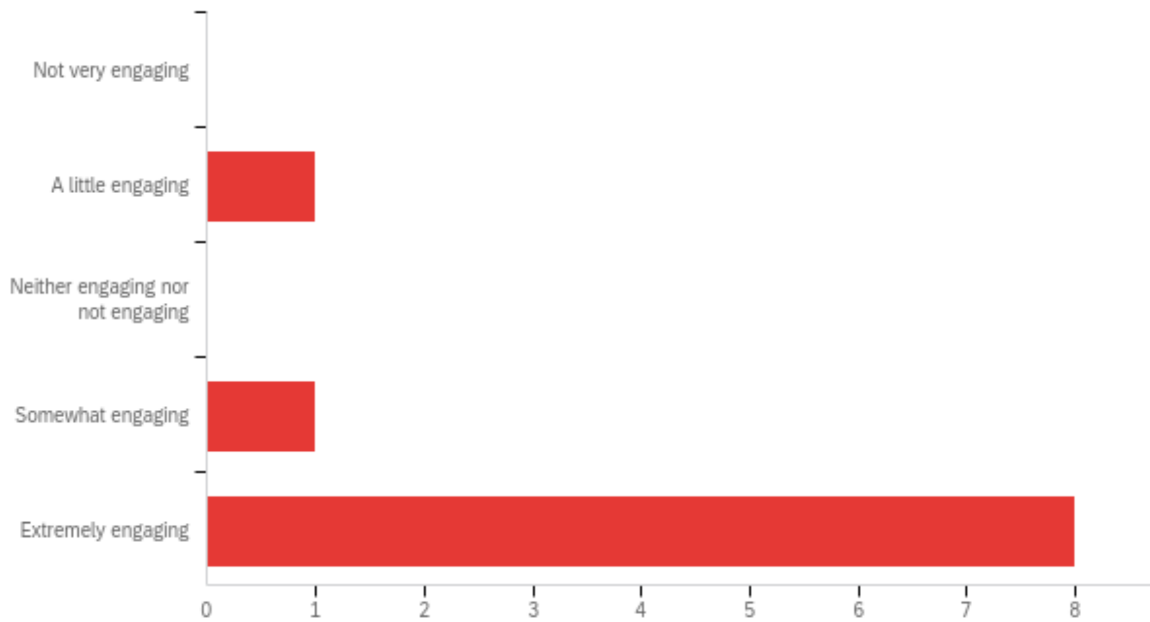

Figure 14

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Please rate your level of engagement with the session led by Susan O'Rourke.	2.00	6.00	5.50	1.20	1.45	10

Figure 15

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Not very engaging	0.00%	0
2	A little engaging	10.00%	1
4	Neither engaging nor not engaging	0.00%	0
5	Somewhat engaging	10.00%	1
6	Extremely engaging	80.00%	8
	Total	100%	10

Figure 16

Q10 - Please comment on any of the above questions or share additional thoughts you have about the program.

We have the opportunity to revise our poetry unit for Blended English 4. I suggested one of the women poets. :)
I wish there would have been more time in the breakout rooms as it was a great discussion.
This was fun. I regret I did not have as much time to prep as I had hoped. I am motivated to read the resources and specifically to learn more about Cavendish, Caitlin Dubh etc. Always Fun
I'm very interested in using Cavendish's science fiction story.
We have the chance to swap out poetry of Dante with another poet, so I will propose the female Irish poet. :)
I am so appreciative of Project Illumine!
Thanks so much! I, too, second the motion for Susan to publish!
Great presentation!!
Wonderful job! Would love for the resource from today's session sent so I can use them in my course.

Figure 17

Distribution through UNC World View

Following the presentation, Charlé LaMonica, the director of UNC World View, offered to include Project Illumine on UNC World View's "Resources" page. This placement will make Project Illumine visible to the educators who go to UNC World View for additional educational resources.

Conclusions

The success of the "Write-Minded Women" program and the distribution of Project Illumine by UNC World View affirms the critical role Project Illumine plays in filling the gender gap in history and literature classrooms. It models accessible, research-driven scholarly outreach work that combats gender disparities in teaching materials, supports educators invested in

curbing that imbalance, and provides avenues for further collaboration and growth of the site's materials.

Project Illumine further provides evidence of the value of public humanities dissertation projects. Educators value Project Illumine because it is a university-born site that reflects deep scholarly research and adds complexity to narratives surrounding early modern history. If we, as scholars, value the social and cultural impact of the histories we recover, we must also work to bring that research into spaces outside of academia. We must illuminate multiple, accessible paths forward so that diverse women's histories can walk out of the archives and into more classrooms.

APPENDIX A: IRB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Susan O'Rourke

Middle and High School Teacher Interview Questions

So, to give you a bit of background:

I'm a graduate student at UNC in the English Department studying Renaissance British literature with a particular focus on women's writing and history. For my dissertation, I'm developing a series of units that teachers could use if they'd like to teach early British women's history and writing.

During these interviews, I'm hoping to learn about what

- topics you cover in your classes
- how you develop lectures and assignments
- and if you use any online sources while prepping lectures or in class

Stage 1: Background

- What subjects and grade levels do you teach?
- How long have you been a teacher?
- What are some of your favorite historical periods or works of literature to teach?
- How do you approach relationships between historical periods and works of literature?
- What are your thoughts on works by women or women's history in the curricula you teach?

Stage 2: Learning about curriculum:

- What textbook(s) do you use?
- What do you like or dislike about the textbook?

- If you could add to the content covered in the textbook, what would you add? (What topics would you like to spend more time on?)

Stage 3: Learning about the tech in the classrooms:

- What kinds of technology does your school use? (i.e. projectors, smart boards/electronic whiteboards, desktop or laptop computers, PowerPoint, Google classroom)
- Are students in your class required to use particular programs or games?
- What do you feel are the most useful and most enriching tools/pieces of technology?
- What are your biggest challenges when it comes to integrating technology or online resources into your teaching?

Stage 4: Learning about the extent to which teachers supplement the textbook:

- Do you supplement the textbook with outside classroom resources? (for ex., videos, lesson plans, activities)
    - Follow-Up/ Open-ended question: What kinds of outside resources do you use?
    - Alternate Follow-Up/List question: Which of the following types of materials are you most likely to use?
        - Units complete with a series of lesson plans
        - Activity sheets/printouts
        - Videos
        - Primary Sources
        - Journal Articles
        - Virtual Trips
        - Sites with interactive posters, texts, links
- Where do you go to get those materials?

- Have you used any online sites or magazines to download extra materials (i.e. ReadWriteThink, Scholastic, PBS)?
- Have you used any of the following sites/platforms? (When applicable: What do you find appealing or not appealing about each?)
    - ReadWriteThink
    - Scholastic
    - Edsitement (NEH)
    - Museums resources for educators
        - NC Museum of History
        - National Women's History Museum
        - Smithsonian Museums
    - University-hosted sites
        - Carolina K-12
        - UNC World View
- **Stage 5: Final Thoughts:**
    - For my project, I'll be building a digital site where teachers can download materials to help teach early women's history and literature. What would make such a site most engaging or appealing, in your opinion?

APPENDIX B: STUDY GUIDE FOR UNC WORLD VIEW PROGRAM

WORLD VIEW 2022 VIRTUAL PROGRAM

STUDY GUIDE FOR CEU/PDCH

Write-Minded Women: The Scientific, Poetic, and Philosophical Writing of Women in Renaissance England

March 8, 2022

Name:	**Email:**
Position:	**School and City or County:**
Content area *(if applicable)*:	**Grade Level *(if applicable)*:**

Instructions: To receive **.5 CEU (or 5 PDCH)** credits you must attend the 1.5-hour virtual program on March 8th and turn in this study guide completed. Please return completed study guide by Friday, **March 29, 2022** to World View worldview@unc.edu.

Reading:

Elizabeth Maurer L. et al., "Where Are the Women? A Report on the Status of Women in the United States Social Studies Standards" (Alexandria, VA: National Women's History Museum, 2017), https://www.womenshistory.org/sites/default/files/museum-assets/document/2018-02/NWHM_Status-of-Women-in-State-Social-Studies-Standards_2-27-18.pdf, 1-19.

Susan O'Rourke, "Early Modern Irish Women's History and Writing," Project Illumine, 2022, https://projectillumine.wpcomstaging.com/. (accessible on the program site)

Susan O'Rourke, "Early Modern Women's Scientific Life Writing Receipt Book," Project Illumine, 2022, https://projectillumine.wpcomstaging.com/. (accessible on the program site)

A. PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BEFORE ATTENDING THE MARCH 8TH VIRTUAL PROGRAM.

1. According to the report "Where are the Women?" from the National Museum of Women's History, what are some trends in the ways standards address women's history (broadly defined)?

2. Why is it important to include women's diverse roles and accomplishments? What impact do you think that diverse history has on students?

3. Based on the selections from Rebeckah Winche's book, what did you observe about the type of recipes she included? What types of knowledge do her recipes reflect?

4. According to the readings on Caitilín Dubh, which traditions did she weave together in her poetry?

B. PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER ATTENDING THE VIRTUAL PROGRAM.

5. What new insights, knowledge, or strategies did you gain by participating in the March 8th program?

6. How might you incorporate women's history and writing into your classroom?

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