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### Dancing in the Kitchens of History

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## Dancing in the Kitchens of History: Eileen Power (1889-1940)

Rozemarijn van de Wal

- 1 Gaining academic recognition is never about scientific excellence alone, it is also about crafting and presenting a credible, trustworthy identity. As a result, how scholars perform themselves in the classroom or in the office, is just as important as what scholars do at home or in their kitchens.
- 2 Because science and academia are essentially performative and thus theatrical, we need to give students examples of various repertoires to teach them how to present themselves and how to shape their identities as (aspiring) historians.
- 3 Writing about a woman's beauty, appearance and love of fashion as opposed to her intellectual capacities is sexist and gendered, but in the case of Eileen Power, more is at stake. Her use of dress was strategic and should be considered an integral part of her scholarly identity. The concept of persona allows us to research (or in the case of Power, re-evaluate) the role of fashion in quite literally 'fashioning' authority.
- 4 Instead of teaching students to strive for objectivity by becoming invisible as authors, we need to learn students how to reflect on and address their inherent subjectivity.
- 5 The traditional division between 'public' and 'private' materials is artificial and disregards the complex nature of performances.
- 6 Historians still focus on written sources too exclusively. We need to learn students how to work with a broader range of (visual) sources and objects and teach them how to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to their materials.
- 7 The dominance of white men in academia is detrimental to the production of knowledge. Quality comes with diversity.
- 8 Gender is ALWAYS a useful category of historical analysis and all history students need to learn about the uses and meanings of gender.
- 9 As academia continues to be an environment where discrimination, sexism and racism occur on a regular basis, we should all learn how to be a feminist killjoy at work or at the very least be more open and accepting of those of our colleagues who already are. Sarah Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Duke University Press, 2010).
- 10 Fascinating and important as Aletta Jacobs is for the University of Groningen, too often she is turned into a symbol for all women, thereby inevitably obscuring the many other stories and experiences of women in science and academia.