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Coolahan, Marie-Louise. The Reception & Circulation of Early Modern Women's Writing, 1550–1700

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Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533): Faith, Antiquity, and the Witch Hunt

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) : Foi, Antiquité et chasse aux sorcières

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of Cavendish's poetry and its, at times, innovative and provocative weirdness. What would it mean for all change to derive from the kind of sexual processes depicted in "Motion Makes Atoms a Bawd for Figure"? Yet the meticulous textual notes included with this poem and all of the poems in the edition also allow readers to see the openness and instability—i.e., change—inherent in the texts themselves. The notes depict all substantial variants between the different editions, which allows readers to compare and contrast different versions of the poems, and sometimes these differences are quite meaningful, as in "Motion Makes Atoms" where the personified figures are referred to with different gendered pronouns in the 1653 and 1664 editions. Blake's choice of best-text editing accompanied by complete textual notes creates Cavendish's poems as, on the one hand, works of art, and, on the other, historically contingent material texts. Blake's choice, therefore, treats Cavendish's poetry in the same way that previous generations of editors treated the great English poets such as Donne, Shakespeare, or Milton. The best-text edition by Blake and her collaborators is important because it gives "Cavendish, as a woman writer, a chance to have the same *kind* of edition, namely a conflated edition, that her male contemporaries received in the centuries where her book sat largely ignored." How can we "un-edit" if we never edited? Blake's deliberately anachronistic choice reflects Cavendish's own sense that her writing might only find its audience in the future. This edition helps fulfill Cavendish's desire and prediction. We should, as Blake urges, "*Consider reading Margaret Cavendish's Poetry.*"

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The Reception & Circulation of Early Modern Women's Writing, 1550–1700. Database.

National University of Ireland, Galway, 2014–20. Accessed 23 September 2019. recirc.nuigalway.ie.

The Reception & Circulation of Early Modern Women's Writing, 1550–1700 (RECIRC) is an ongoing European Research Council-funded project based at the National University of Ireland, Galway. The project, which runs from

2014 to January 2020, brings together a team of ten researchers to investigate the impact of women writers and their works in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Three main research questions guide this pluridimensional study: Which female authors were read during the early modern period? How did texts by women circulate, mainly across Ireland and Britain? How did women build their reputations as writers? Thus far, RECIRC has connected a group of funded scholars with the aims of promoting research on early modern women's writings through a series of mixed-methods work packages and thematic case studies. The researchers make use of quantitative and qualitative analysis methods, and test out various digital tools in their individual case studies. As per the project website, the research goals include the study of women writers who were read in Ireland and Britain, and women who were born or resided in Anglophone countries.

The project is structured around a series of significant work packages designed to expand on various research angles. Five main categories were identified, and each broad theme has its own researcher or group of researchers: 1) "Transnational Religious Networks" with social historian Bronagh McShane and cultural historian Emilie K. M. Murphy; 2) "The International Republic of Letters" with early modernist Felicity Maxwell and literary historian Evan Bourke; 3) "The Manuscript Miscellany as Instrument of Circulation and Site of Reception" with literary historians Sajed Chowdhury and Erin A. McCarthy; 4) "Transmission Trails and Book Ownership" with cultural historian Mark Empey; and, finally, a work package on 5) "The Reception and Circulation of Irish Women's Writing, 1550–1800" with literary historian Wes Hamrick. Two additional researchers are listed on the website—Ioanna Kyvernitou, PhD student in English, and David Kelly, research Technologist. Both are located at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and have research backgrounds in digital humanities and information technology. The website contains detailed accounts of the project's deliverables, including a blog, the team members' conference presentations and publications, and the program and abstracts of the 2017 thematic conference.

The forthcoming digital components will be the project's most significant contribution to research in history and literary studies. The RECIRC open-access database will feature all the data collected by members of the research team pertaining to the reception and circulation of women's writing in the period. Users will be able to search according to four main pathways: People,

Receptions, Sources of Reception, and [female-authored] Works. There will be an option to view results as either a table or network graph, and to export results in format, such as .csv for tech-savvy users wishing to build their own datasets. All people and receptions will have an individual profile page, accessible via the relevant hyperlink on the results table. Advanced search will offer the filter options: Female Author; Receiver; Owner/Compiler/Scribe; Reception Type; Circulation Type; Reception Source Language; Reception Source Type; and Reference. Only the last is a free-text search; all the others have prepopulated taxonomies. The “People” advanced search will allow users to search for an individual name, nun, aristocratic title, sex, religious order, and religious house. Refinement filters for all sets of results will include dates-by-decade, as well as these taxonomies. The team is currently working on the Beta version, with the final product scheduled to go live in January 2020, in time for the project deadline. Updates and announcements regarding digital outputs and publications are announced via the project’s Twitter account @recirc_. The database will remain on the National University of Ireland, Galway servers, with principal investigator Marie-Louise Coolahan and main project programmer, David Kelly, staying on to ensure proper functioning.

This RECIRC project is meant to be inclusive of various languages, though few of the research outputs actually focus on works in languages other than English. The scholarship produced has nevertheless covered a myriad of research angles pertaining to women writers and the circulation of their works, particularly in Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. Emilie Murphy’s research on English convents in exile notably addresses matters of linguistic barriers and cultural interference. Coolahan has presented an impressive number of keynotes and papers at international conferences on umbrella topics such as networks of women writers, methodological issues for the study of early modern women, and considerations on book ownership with regard to circulation of women’s writings. Her publications address timely issues in early modern studies, notably networks of women in early modern history and transnational cultural exchanges between Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales.¹ One of the strongest contributions of the project is the methodological discussion surrounding the use of quantitative methodologies for the study of

1. Marie-Louise Coolahan, “Whither the Archipelago? Stops, Starts, and Hurdles on the Four Nations Front,” *Literature Compass* 15 (2018), doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12501.

the reception of early modern women's writings.² With the database of research materials collected by the RECIRC team now being made available in open access, one can hope the early modern and gender studies communities will make use of the collated information to expand on their own projects and case studies.

The project has significant ramifications for global networks of dissemination across several research centres, with the most significant work on languages other than English being produced by the scholarly community at large. The 2017 project conference on Reception, Reputation and Circulation in the Early Modern World, 1500–1800, held at the National University of Ireland, Galway, yielded productive discussions on the larger topic of early modern women's writing. The conference program included papers on a variety of topics pertaining to a considerable range of linguistic and geographical locations, for instance the study of Italian author Vittoria Colonna (Jessica Maratsos, American University of Paris); the French reception of works by Spanish author María de Zayas (Jessie Labadie, Randolph-Macon College); matters of translation and reception in connection with Teresa de Avila (Danielle Clarke, University College Dublin); self-representation of female Dutch authors (Nina Geerdink, Utrecht); and receptions of Comtesse de la Suze's writings in early modern France, England, and Russia (Violetta Trofimova, St. Petersburg State University). Beyond the rigour and variety of publications produced by the research team, what is perhaps most interesting here is how the project served as a springboard for the revitalization of research on early modern women, not only as figures of history but as strong, active, and networked agents of intellectual, cultural, and ideological change. Most of the conference papers are cleverly disseminated on the project website in open-access podcast format, thus increasing the accessibility of the research.

The project does not restrict itself to research on authors who wrote in English, which may be of particular interest to scholars of the multilingual English Renaissance. The website "About" page shows that "The focus includes writers who were read in Ireland and Britain as well as women born and resident in Anglophone countries; the subject of study is not limited to authors

2. See, for instance, Coolahan's chapter titled "'One of the Finest Poems of that Nature I ever Read': Quantitative Methodologies and the Reception of Early Modern Women's Writing," in *Material Cultures of Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 174–93.

who wrote in English" (RECIRC). Though the site announces a study of "all" female writers who were read in Ireland and Britain, there is a clear propensity to examine mainly Irish/British authors and their written productions in English; the project could expand into further branches to include works in English by European female authors, or look into works translated into English by women in Ireland and the British Isles. As a translation history scholar, I would love to see further discussion and case studies on multilingual works and translated works. Scholars interested in the study of early modern women, English literature, and reception studies will be looking to the RECIRC website for explorations into the database which holds the corpus collected over the years.

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The editorial project Private Libraries in Renaissance England (PLRE) represents a collection and catalogue of Tudor and early Stuart book-lists. So far, nine volumes have been published in the Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (MRTS) series. Volume 1 was printed in 1992, and Volume 10 is planned for 2020. The editorial project exists not only in traditional printed form, but also in digital format, as the collaboration of the editors of the project with the Folger Shakespeare Library led to the appearance of the online database *PLRE.Folger*. The present review focuses on the online database, and provides minimal information regarding the printed volumes.

The contributors to the project have set ambitious goals, one of which is mentioned in the section “Purpose and Design” on the PLRE website, and states that the project strives to “provide scholars with data to help anchor generalizations about print culture within the history of particular books and