



Blanca Fernández Soriano

## International Women's Day at D9AY

Following last year's PhD initiative, we'd like to celebrate a new Women's Day 2025 making our research team, its empathies and concerns, a bit more visible. If you —Phd student or supervisor— want to join the initiative, just think of a short essay, a poem, a picture, any kind of document you may contribute to this panel. The resulting poster will be shared with other members of the UCM community and offered as part of the PhD in English Linguistics 2025 activities on our webpage.

# Sex and gender in the lives of girls and women



## Sex and gender in the lives of past girls and women<sup>1</sup>.

Sex and gender still matter, as we all know, and keep illuminating studies in a range of disciplinary perspectives, spanning science and popular culture. Though sex and, more especially, gender have been increasingly explored by literary researchers focussed on female life writing, **linguistic** approaches to these issues seem to have been more restricted.

In this by-side product of our research project on English female childhoods across dictionaries of national biography<sup>2</sup> we explored to what extent sex and gender represented a **thematic line** in the narratives of past female lives contained in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (DIB).

For this purpose, a quick totalling of sex\* and gender words occurring in 4,545 male and 649 female biographies contained in the DIB for the period 1750-1900 was carried out.<sup>3</sup> Initially dividing the narratives into male and female, according to the subject being biographed, results were tabulated per 50-year period. Sex and sex-derived words (such as *sexual* or *sexually*), were scored, side by side occurrences of the term *gender*. Wishing to take account of meaning in text, a list of node words as occurring in their short and expanded co-texts was also managed. This allowed not only the creation of word-clouds, but also a more refined interpretation of findings.

Our preliminary analysis shows that occurrences of either term are very scarce both in male and female narratives, but significantly less so in female stories. Whereas in female narratives there seems to be an occurrence of sex\* words once in every four biographies, in male narratives sex\* words

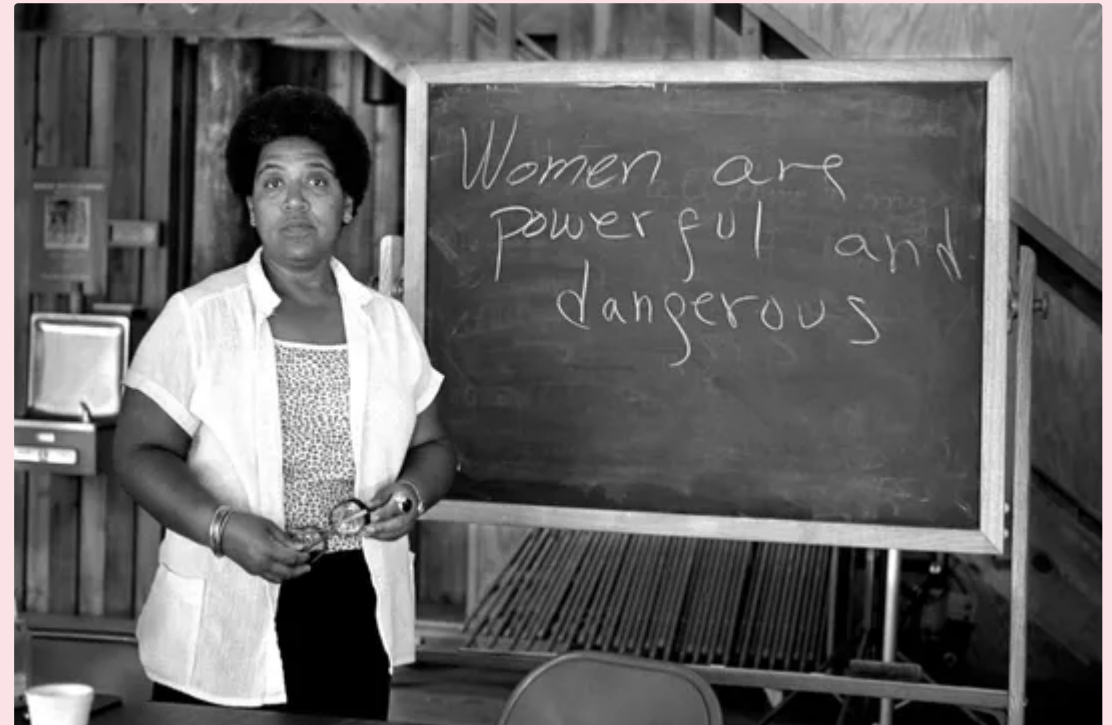
<sup>1</sup> Paraphrasing Alice Munro's 1971 book title.

<sup>2</sup> PID2020-1179730B-I00 *Female childhood across borders. A Cultural Linguistics approach to the English-based conceptualization and perception of female childhood. Evidence from biographical discourse 1750-1900.*

<sup>3</sup> The chronological boundaries 1750 and 1900 correspond to birth dates.

## "A Woman Speaks" by Audre Lorde (1997)

Moon marked and touched by sun  
my magic is unwritten  
but when the sea turns back  
it will leave my shape behind.  
I seek no favor  
untouched by blood  
unrelenting as the curse of love  
permanent as my errors  
or my pride  
I do not mix  
love with pity



## "WE SHOULD ALL BE FEMINISTS", by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014)

We teach girls shame. Close your legs. Cover yourself. We make them feel as though by being born female, they are already guilty of something.

~

But what matters even more is our attitude, our mindset. What if, in raising children, we focus on ability instead of gender? What if we focus on interest instead of gender?



## Handprints of feminist minds: the personal touch

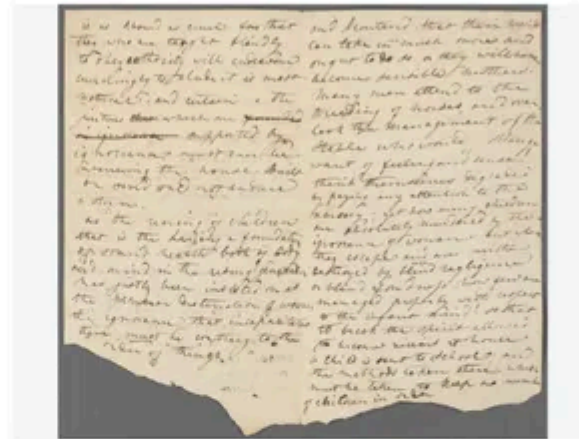
### Manuscript draft fragment of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

In this text, Mary Wollstonecraft bases her demands for women's equality on what they have in common with men: a moral duty to strive to be the best they can. "The end, the grand end of [women's] exertions should be to unfold their own faculties and acquire the dignity of conscious virtue," she writes. In the draft fragment in her hand shown here, the only one known to survive, she takes to task both the women who indulge in extravagant fashions and the men who mock them: "To laugh at them, then, or satirize the follies of a being who is never to be allowed to act freely from the light of her own reason, is as absurd as cruel..." Wollstonecraft would no doubt feel that the redemptive political work of her *Vindication* is not yet finished.

**Holding Division:** [The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle](#)

**Catalog Record:** [View record](#)

📍 Not currently on view



**Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797)**  
**Manuscript draft fragment of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman***  
 ca. 1791  
 The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle

The New York Public Library believes that this item is in the public domain under the laws of the United States, but did not make a determination as to its copyright status under the copyright laws of other countries. This item may not be in the public domain under the laws of other countries. Though not required, if you want to credit us as the source, please use the following statement: "from the New York Public Library," and provide a link back to the item on our Digital Collections site. Doing so helps us track how our collection is used and helps justify freely releasing even more content in the future.

<https://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/galleries/beginnings/item/3554>

## HOPE

“*Hope is a radical act.*”  
—Jaha Dukureh



# Stitching the world: Embroidered Maps and Women's Geographical Education

From the late eighteenth century until about 1840, schoolgirls in the British Isles and the United States created embroidered map samplers and even silk globes. Hundreds of British maps were made and although American examples are more rare, they form a significant collection of artefacts. Descriptions of these samplers stated that they were designed to teach needlework and geography. The



## Matrimonial Advertisements in the 19th Century

"The following matrimonial advertisement was placed in an 1811 issue of London's *Morning Post* ... Notice that the lady advertising does not mention her appearance, her age, or whether or not she is a widow or a spinster." Mimi Matthews

<https://www.mimimatthews.com/2016/01/04/alternative-courtship-matrimonial-advertisements-in-the-19th-century/>

**M**ATRIMONY.—A Lady of the greatest respectability is solicitous to meet with an agreeable respectable PARTNER for life. She does not wish for fortune, as she has an easy independency of her own. The Lady flatters herself she has many accomplishments, and is calculated to make any man happy, should she be fortunate enough to meet with one who wishes for domestic happiness.—Letters post paid, addressed to H. L. to be left at No. 4, Snow-hill, will meet with immediate attention.

## Mary Leapor (1722-1746) - 'An Essay on Woman'

*Woman, a pleasing but a short-lived flower,  
Too soft for business and too weak for power:  
A wife in bondage, or neglected maid;  
Despised, if ugly; if she's fair, betrayed.*

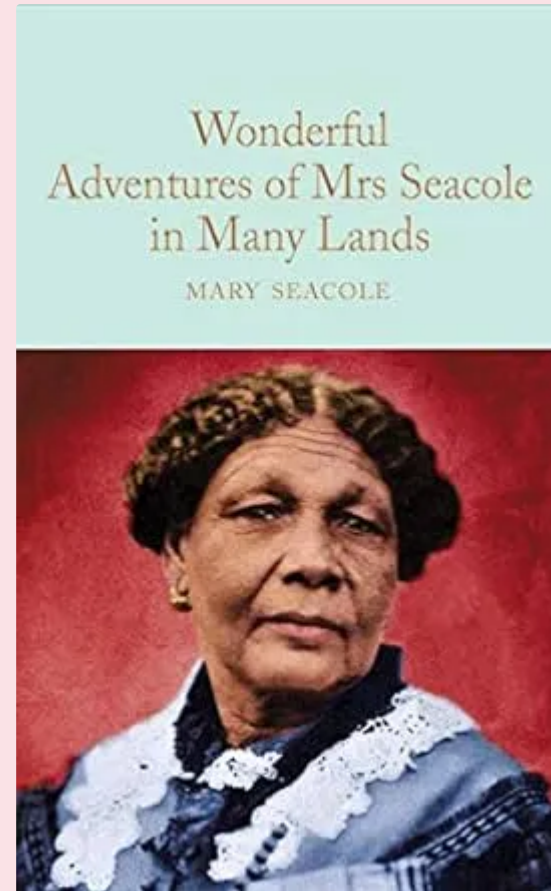
"Obliged to work as a kitchen maid during her teenage years, Leapor was keenly aware of the restrictions she faced because of both her gender and her class. Fortunately for us, she did not let this stop her from writing poetry, and when she later returned home to keep house



## Mary Seacole (1805-1881)

Her autobiography (1857) was the first published by a black woman in England. It provides evidence of her dedication to her profession as a nurse, as well as the racial prejudice she faced.

This autobiography demonstrates Mary Seacole's keen sense of hypocrisy and her fondness for sarcasm. She frequently stands up happily to criticize the false restrictions placed on her because she is a black woman. She comes through in her writings as a unique person with a very un-Victorian desire for freedom, travel, and adventure. (<https://www.amazon.es/Wonderful-Adventures-Seacole-Lands-English-ebook/dp/B0BWWR7FXH>)



# Women were at the centre of social networks in Iron Age Britain

*Press release issued: 16 January 2025*

Women were at the centre of social networks in Iron Age British Celtic communities, research in this week's Nature suggests. The analysis of 2,000-year-old DNA reveals evidence for matrilineal Celtic societies, in which married women stayed in their ancestral communities.

The research, led by Trinity College Dublin working with archaeologists from the University of Bournemouth, was supported by researchers at the University of Bristol.



## GATA CATTANA - Ana Isabel García Llorente

Buscando una luz, buscando una luz  
Yo os invoco hijas de Eva  
Desde que Prometeo les mostró el truco del fuego  
Sometieron nuestro ego desde Atenas a Estambul  
Tú y cuántos como tú contra estas dos titánides  
Corre ve y dile a aquel que no vamos a ser tan dóciles  
Imbéciles se creen que son la élite caerán  
Por su propio peso cuando rescate a Eurídice  
Lapídame, humíllame, si quieres ponme un burka  
Arráncame la voz y el clítoris pa' ser más pulcra  
Escóndeme, táname bien ese escote impuro



## Gloria Fuertes (1917-1998)

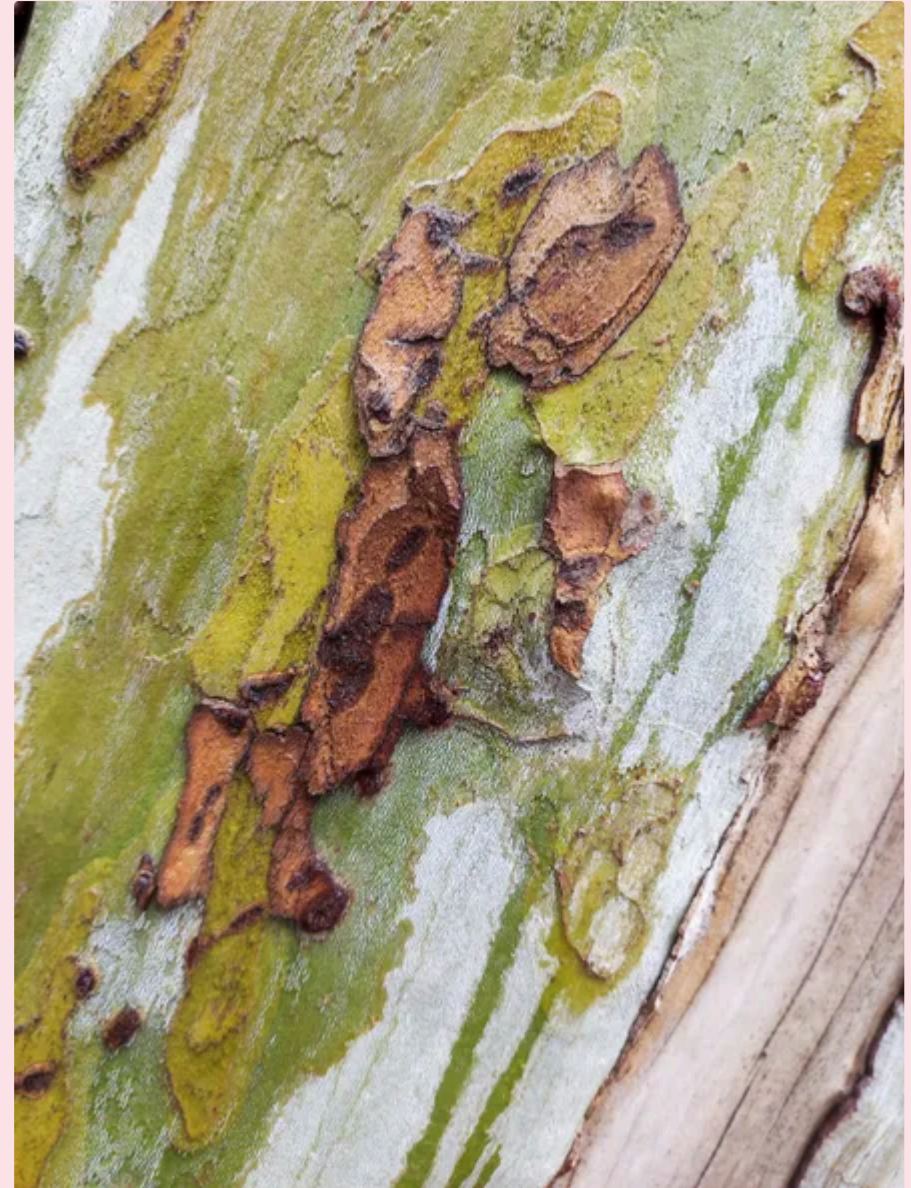
### Nací para poeta o para muerto

*Nací para poeta o para muerto,  
escogí lo difícil*

*-supervivo de todos los naufragios-,  
Y sigo con mis versos,  
vivita y coleando.*

*Nací para puta o payaso,  
escogí lo difícil*

*-hacer reír a los clientes desahuciados-,  
y sigo con mis trucos,*



# Stop Violence against Women

The International Women's Day inevitably reminds us that many women have been left behind on account of gender-based violence. Let us take a moment to not forget the survivors of (sexual) violence as well as those who couldn't make it.

The United Nations provides the following statistics on violence against women:

- An estimated 736 million women—almost one in three —have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life (30 per cent of women

