

## MMoR

## Call for Papers

## Race and the Early Modern: New Scholars, New Scholarship

MMoR &amp; the Centre for Early Modern Studies

King's College London, May 24, 2022

## Keynote speakers:

[Surekha Davies](#), author of *Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human*[Nicholas R. Jones](#), author of *Staging Habla de Negros: Radical Performances of the African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain*

The Centre for Early Modern Studies at King's College London invites proposals for 15-20 minute papers from early career scholars researching any aspect of early modern race, slavery or race-making across literature, languages, history, art-history, material culture, history of science, technology and medicine, religion and theology and other disciplines.

More than twenty-five years have passed since the near coincidence in print of Margo Hendricks' and Patricia Parker's edited volume, *Women, Race and Writing*, and Kim Hall's *Things of Darkness*, which together definitively established race as a Renaissance category. Whether reinventing racialized discourse, materializing racial hierarchies, or building scientific methodologies, the languages of blackness that arose within early modern Europe bequeathed new semantic meaning to the term race and attached to it a web of signifiers. Beyond text, the political violence of colonialism and slavery situated the process of racial subjugation as constitutive of European (early) modernity. The justifications for skin colour as a signifier, situate race as central to broader aspects of European culture, including religion, science, and medicine. Early modern race-making was neither linear, nor straightforward. Even as diasporic communities and individuals asserted identities and lived lives subverting historiographical fictions of homogeneity, race was crucial, and its contours and ramifications have yet to be fixed.

Taking stock of past scholarship and looking in new, interdisciplinary directions, this conference poses two main questions:

- How should we re-think the category of the “early modern” in light of the role of race-making to its central conceits
- Given the central role of the early modern to longer historical processes of racialization, how can we make better sense of its specificity – of the inconsistencies, ruptures and silences in which early modern race-making resided?

This is the opening conference of MMoR (Medicine and the Making of Race, 1440-1720), a four-year UKRI FLF-funded project exploring the role of medical practitioners in the early modern slave trade. In keeping with the project's aim to bring together historiographical approaches from literary studies, scholarship on the African diaspora and slavery, and the history of science, “Race and the Early Modern” aims to showcase new work featuring diverse methodological approaches, interrogating different geographical contexts and chronologies within the wider remit of the early modern.

The format for this event aims to provide a rich in-person experience, with a robust virtual participation. We anticipate that papers will be delivered in person and streamed online. **Flights and accommodation will be provided for all speakers.** Additional support to facilitate access may be provided if required. Race and the Early Modern encourages a “workshop” environment. We welcome first-time presenters and our aim is to create a warm, welcoming space for open engagement, supporting and encouraging the presentation of unfinished work.

Please submit a c.300-word abstract and title, together with a short cv/bio to [mmor@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:mmor@kcl.ac.uk). All queries and comments may be directed to this address. The deadline for submissions is Friday 7 January 2022 and we will be in touch with all applicants shortly thereafter.