



## Global Matricultures Research Network

### Call for Round Table Participants

CASCA / AAA Conference, 15-19 November 2023

Toronto, Ontario

Round Table title: **Changing Women: women, matrilineal societies, and liminality**

Modality: In person

Chairs: Marie-Françoise Guédon (Canada)

### Deadline for Submission: 17 March 20223

Where is power? In bridging, in transitions, in liminality? Liminality is a source of power as well as a source of danger, and therefore, the state of liminality may be either protected or guarded against. In Judaism, when you come to a door, the door is protected by a prayer and you step over the threshold quickly, entering or exiting as expeditiously as possible. In Japanese houses, as you approach the house, the space before the door is left empty. When you go through the door, you are physically stopped from proceeding (with a vase or flowers); it is a mark of respect to provide that stoppage, because in that space where you are neither in nor out, you can be yourself. *Changing Women: women and liminality* seeks to explore the concept of transition by focusing on the consequences of liminality.

If women are liminal, we are dangerous – and we are powerful; which perspective predominates depends on our cultural worldview. This may be Mary Douglas 101, but the questions which arise remain pertinent and concepts of space as an organizing metaphor are helpful for addressing them. What happens to liminality when it is women who are 'normal' or the 'in-group', and men are liminal? When women are 'human' and men are the dangerous ones? One answer was provided by Ruth Landis, who explored the concept of liminality among the Anishnaabeg: she came to understand that, while women often found solid identities among their motherlines, it was men who generally were required to build their social identity – and the challenges in achieving full masculinity may have fostered two-spirit identities. Among many Athapaskan language group speakers, there are not beginning and endings to ceremonies; people drift in and drift away, without the sharp delineations of time beloved by Westerners.

There are many ways of talking about transition – moving from one state to another - but one way in which we are limited is by the Indo-European definition of space and its delimitations: we are either In or Out. What other ways may there be of understanding the necessary liminality of transition? Where are the cultures where the regular changes which women experience are normative? Are there linguistic or cognitive approaches to space which normalize the passage through liminality, thereby easily permitting other transitions? How is liminality conceived and managed in different matricultural systems? There are many moments of liminality as we process through life, from those as simple as entering or exiting a doorway to rich rites of passage and the ultimate liminality we face at death's

door. *Changing Women: women, matrilineal societies, and liminality* seeks to find other ways of looking at the concept of transition, which, as western scholars, we may take for granted.

**For further information** about the conference, here is the AAA/CASCA 2023 webpage (<https://annualmeeting.americananthro.org/>); note that some pages of the website are currently under construction.

Please note: AAA/CASCA membership or conference registration is not required at time of submission. However, all participants must have or create profiles in the AAA Community Hub (AAA's membership and registration database: <https://my.americananthro.org/>) in order to be listed on submissions. All individuals accepted onto the program will be required to become a member of either CASCA or AAA (or secure a waiver) and pay registration by Friday, September 8 by 11:59 PM Eastern.

**To submit a proposal:** To join this virtual Round Table, forward an expression of interest and an abstract of 50 - 250 words to coordinator Marie-Françoise Guédon at [mguedon@uottawa.ca](mailto:mguedon@uottawa.ca). Submission of the session as a whole will be made by the coordinators (there is no need for individual submissions).

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#### **About the Global Matricultures Research Network (MatNet)**

The Global Matricultures Research Network (MatNet) is a project of the International Network for Training, Education, and Research in Culture (Network on Culture) and, specifically, is an international network for research based on Marie-Françoise Guédon's concept of matriculture. That is, as a cultural system in the classical Geertzian sense within which the experiences and expressions of women are primary.

Similar to other cultural systems such as art, religion, or mathematics, employing the heuristic of matriculture allows for, among other things: cross-cultural comparisons; fresh insights into the social roles of women, men, children, and the entire community of humans, animals, and the environment; or renewed understandings of historically mis-labelled cultures. With Guédon's work in mind, then, and based on Geertzian principles, the concept of matriculture is both a model of reality by rendering the structure of matricultures apprehensible and a model for reality, where psychological relationships are organized under its guidance. MatNet encourages and supports research which explores, evaluates, re-evaluates, and interprets global cultures from this perspective.

For more information about MatNet, visit our webpage at <https://www.networkonculture.ca/activities>.