This talk focuses on writings by and about the Restoration scientist Robert Hooke to analyze how modern forms of technology and gender were mutually defined across the long eighteenth century. Hooke was known for his design and use of scientific instruments: in particular, the microscope, which he popularized with his bestselling collection of microscopical observations, *Micrographia* (1665). I show how Hooke’s theorization of these instruments in *Micrographia* articulates a new form of masculine ability premised on the interdependence of body and technology, a form for which his own body acted as a kind of public experiment. I then trace how the “Mechanick Genius” Hooke embodied proved a resilient model for English masculinities in the context of intensifying global exploration and colonial exploitation.

Reception with light refreshments to follow.