

My exchange collaboration with the University of Missouri was from the 24th of April to the 15th of May. My objectives for this exchange were to obtain access to unpublished texts, letters or diaries written by English women who travelled to and emigrated in the 19thC to America. I particularly hoped to find an unpublished short story or two by Catherine Hubback, Jane Austen's niece, who emigrated to Oakland, California in 1871 and about whom I hoped to continue to publish as part of the output of the PhD. In addition, I hoped to establish a research collaboration with Prof Chang in the English Department on a project that could produce one or two articles, and to present a paper titled "Transatlantic Observations and Lived Experience in Catherine Hubback's Letters (1871-1877)" at a departmental seminar, as well as to participate in the Victorian Women Writer's series facilitated by Prof Chang to postgrads from the 25th of April, concluding the 4th of May. I also wanted to research at Ellis Library as well as do archival research at the State Historical Society as part of my aim to access unpublished English women's 19th C immigrant writings.

I experienced some important research successes in connection with all of my objectives delineated above, in addition to ones I never expected. I joined the State Historical Society of Missouri and on my first day in the archive, I came across a collection of letters and photographs of an English governess, Gladys Finlayson, who resided in China and had written to her ex-pupil, Mariska Pugsley back in America, Kansas City. The collection comprises twenty folios of correspondence spanning the early 1900's up until the 1960s, including detailed description of the socio-political environment in Peking just before the second Sino-Japanese War erupted in 1937. Rare insight from an English woman's point of view of the war is encapsulated by Finlayson's imprisonment in a Japanese War Camp from which she obtains her liberty in 1945. She returns to England, where she begins to lose her sight, and eventually the letters manifest her complete decline in the child-like wavering script which becomes smaller and smaller until her last letter, which she dictates to her nurse. These letters are crucial not only for my continuous research in transatlantic exchanges within the domestic space between Britain and the Chinese (begun with my exploration of Hubback's letters which reveal her lived experience with her Chinese servants in her Californian home), but also for my relatively new research avenue of women's 19thC travel writing, and how their domestic spaces house and makes visible their social and political lived experiences through their writings, which serve as counter histories. There are other possibilities which I am still thinking through.

The photographs in themselves are rich in a narrative of their own, as they detail the relationship of an English woman in a foreign domestic space, cultivating an "Englishness", to use Robert Young's word, in planting English gardens not only as her way of ordering these spaces into a definition of Victorian identity but perpetuating its class and social ideology even as she assimilates, which the many photographs of her gardens as she moves from house to house convey. The letters hold further possibilities for publication- for one, Finlayson's interaction with her Chinese servants as a comparison with Hubback's interaction is interesting, as they are quite opposite as Victorian English women in their opinions and treatment of the Chinese within their homes. I have already shared some of this with the State

Historical Society, who are interested in me transcribing and publishing on the letters as besides Finlayson's collection, her connection to Pugsley is of equal striking interest (I mention why this is so, later). After I presented my paper on Hubback's letters to the department (I received wonderful feedback and some students spoke with me afterward and told me it was a great paper-I was also stopped in the street by one student who said it was an excellent. Made my day!), Prof Chang told me she thought it was publishable as is, and that a Chinese Journal on the subject of Chinese diaspora would be interested in it. Furthermore, Prof Chang and I have decided on editing a collection of travel writing from lesser-known Victorian women as our collaboration project, and Finlayson's letters are fitting for this project, as well as for contributing to the ever-growing interest in the domestic archive in literary studies.

In my last week, I came across Pugsley's collection of 40 folios, which had been lying in another archive in Kansas. It was with much regret that I did not come across them sooner, as it takes a week for the material to arrive from another archive. The collection encompasses not only her answering correspondence to Finlayson, which would assist greatly in filling in the gaps in Finlayson's narrative, but also contains Pugsley's diaries, short stories, poetry, photographs as well as Chinese textiles, leather craft and bits of artwork which Finlayson sent as gifts to her but also which Pugsley's family acquired during their stay in China when she was a child. I could not access the collection as my time there was drawing to a close. This second collection is a promising research project which I hope I can return to and work on if given the opportunity.

As part of the networking opportunity of this collaboration, I also made an invaluable connection with Anne Barker, Research Librarian for Languages & Literatures and Head of Research Services at Ellis Library. She was inexhaustible in her assistance of finding letters, diaries, journals and travel writings of British women immigrants and American women, and continued to email me links and granted me access to American online journals I would otherwise have not been able to access in South Africa. She is also connected to sixty other libraries across Missouri. We continue to correspond.

I initially faced administrative challenges which were complicated at the beginning but were soon solved. It was unclear at first how I could gain full library access (Prof Chang phoned around quite a bit and we were sent from one person to another) but after the administrator in the English Department provided me with an introductory letter, I could obtain a visiting scholar ID, and my Mizzou paw print, which enabled access to Ellis Library, as well as the archives. The only persistent challenge was that I could not print from the library catalogue, which impeded at first my secondary reading preparation for Prof Chang's seminar series, as I then could only read from my laptop, and I could not refer to the articles in the seminar because there were no outlets in the seminar room and my laptop battery depleted quite quickly. I only realised later that I could have printed the articles from Prof Chang's office.

The research collaboration between our department and MU is an exciting opportunity for ongoing joint research and publications which could benefit both departments, as it facilitates a space for shared resources, ideas, and ongoing conversations not just between Prof Chang and myself regarding our project, but also between myself and other colleagues there who work in the 18thC as well (another research interest of mine) and also between other

colleagues in our departments and our students, and between their students and ours. For example of the latter, Prof Johann Kramer at MU teaches comic books and manga, a research area very much in its nascent stages, but which has not been considered as one yet in our department. There are students in our department who are interested in this as the focus for their MA's so there is the possibility of joint supervision, not only in this but in other research areas. In addition, as Prof Uphoff pointed to in our discussion before my departure, there is a great opportunity for shared teaching and learning between our departments, if we determine to teach a short course, for example, to a small HONS group such as the one I was privileged to participate in with Prof Chang. We could explore one novel over a few weeks via Skype? (not sure if this is the correct medium and how this would work yet but Prof Uphoff stated it has been successfully done in other faculties) and I would like this teaching exchange to be included in our course preparation for next year.

My time at MU has empowered me and altered my perception of my research and teaching interests and methods because it afforded me an opportunity to share my work and ideas with other Victorian scholars, as well as to gain deeper insight into my current research area which I have not been exposed to yet. Participating in the seminar series was exhilarating, enriching, as well as thought provoking. I could engage and interact with the students who have been markedly grounded in the Victorian period (the way the course is taught creates the space for extensive concentration on one novelist and attendant secondary theory). Furthermore, it exposed me as well to alternative teaching methods: for example, Prof Chang had a continuous conversation with her students in between classes via discussion posts which students contributed to, and from which she chose two students who presented upon a topic in the upcoming class, and who in turn posed questions to the class in relation to the week's focus on the novel. Seminars were invigorating in discussion and critical thought and I felt sharpened as an academic, teacher and researcher by this interaction.

My future goals include the above-mentioned aim of transcribing and publishing Finlayson's letters as a starting point, and to work with Prof Chang on editing a collection of unpublished women's 19thC travel writing. I would also like to work on the Pugsley collection as part of my research and publication aims in the domestic archive and women's travel writing.

I strongly recommend the continuation of this exchange programme because it is a noteworthy research and publication opportunity which one would otherwise have been unable to access. One of the many wonderful aspects of this programme is that one never knows what research treasure one may come across, and whom one might meet and form what will hopefully be lasting scholarly connections. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the UMSAEP for granting me this incredible experience.

With thanks,

Courtney