

**Charles Phelps Taft Research Center
at the University of Cincinnati
Faculty Release Fellowship Application**

Each section (I-V) should be placed at the start of a new page. All required materials must be included in a single document, uploaded to the electronic submissions system, no later than 5PM on the published day of the deadline. This program requires a letter of support from the department head and an evaluator external to UC. Applicants should submit their application with enough time for the letters to be uploaded to the submissions system prior to the close of the deadline. Taft does not accept an obligation to review applications that have not received the required documents by the close of the deadline.

I. General Information

- a. Name: *xx XXXXX*
- b. M#: *XXXXX*
- c. Department: *XXXXXX*
- d. Position: *XXXXXX XXXXXX*
- e. Project title: *Inscription, Transcription, and Digital Interactivity in Romantic-Era Britain*
- f. Brief Summary of Requested Support: *Supplemental semester of academic leave to enable completion of second monograph*
- g. Probable Results of a Grant (such as external funding, publications, and presentations): *Publication of book; speaking engagements; organization of a special issue on disability, media, and poetics for Romanticism on the Net, an online journal of which I am co-editor.*
- h. Other Funding Applied For or Received for This Project (list source and amounts requested and awarded):

I have received six Taft conference travel grants to present conference papers on portions of several chapters described in the proposal. Additionally, in Spring 2014, I was awarded a Taft Faculty Release Fellowship to *begin* international archival research on this project. Here is the schedule for Spring 2014 that I submitted:

		Locations
January-February	research ch. 2: embossed sign systems and literature for the blind draft chapter 2	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; St. Bride Print Library, London; British Library; Valentin Haüy Museum and Library, Paris.
March-April	research ch. 4: relief, pocket, educational maps and globes research ch. 1: additional resources on teaching prosody and rise of English draft book proposal	British Library, Map Division; The John Rylands Library (University of Manchester); Bodleian Library (Oxford); Cambridge University Library

I completed these tasks, but the book proposal was premature. In the past five years, I have made several trips to further this heavily archival research on tactile maps and books. The fruits of this 5-year process (not the only work I have published in this period) are represented in a short article in *European Romantic Review* and in two chapters forthcoming 2020 (one in a book I am co-editing):

- “‘With gentle hand / Touch——’: The ‘Horrid Blank of Nature’ and the New Feel of Reading,” *European Romantic Review*, vol. 28, no.3, 2017, pp. 279-88.
- “A Carto-Tactual Subject: Picturing the Education of the Blind in Romantic-era France and Britain,” *Romantic Cartographies: Literature, Culture, Mapping, 1789-1832*, edited by Sally Bushell, Julia S. Carlson, and Damian Walford Davies (forthcoming, Cambridge University Press, 2020)
- “Tangible Burns,” *The Unfinished Book*, edited by Alexandra Gillespie and Deidre Lynch (forthcoming, Oxford University Press, 2020)

II. Project Proposal

A second monograph, *Inscription, Transcription, and Digital Interactivity in Romantic-Era Britain*, would ensure my application for promotion, enabling me to become the second female full professor in the Literature and Cultural Studies Track in English. This work in media studies, digital culture, disability theory, and poetics would secure my reputation as a scholar doing cutting-edge work in Historical Poetics and enable me to integrate contemporary concerns into my teaching. It would foster my collaborations with others and empower our promotion of the Humanities during this era of crisis.

Long before touch screens and hyperlinks enabled today’s manual “interactivity,” print culture underwent a digital transformation. New reading practices, writing technologies, and print media aimed to put knowledge at the fingertips of the lower middle classes, women, children, and the blind. Discussing several of these inscriptional and transcriptional systems, I address the politics and poetics of print, literacy, and knowledge production that characterized the process of nation formation in eighteenth and nineteenth Britain, when marginalized people were newly encouraged to read and write themselves as part of an “imagined community” of feeling, sensitive, and civilized Britons. As my final chapters on the inauguration of literacy and educations for the blind underscore, our contemporary media revolution, and conceptualizations of disability and accessibility, have roots in the technological and aesthetic transformations of the past, including new forms of spatio-temporal pattern making and reception.

This study of media technologies, manual practices, and poetics has significant scholarly value. Recent histories of Romantic poetic production and circulation have exposed the myth of inspired mental conception and solitary genius but have neglected the influence of the non-literary, diagrammatic, and technological (chs. 1, 2, 5); nor have they addressed the manual labor of women copyists and embossers, at the stages of production (ch. 3) and reception (ch. 4). How Romantic poetry was revised in light of new conceptions of tactility and blindness (ch. 4), and how it was circulated to blind readers only at the turn of the twentieth century (ch. 4) has also been neglected. Further, my study radically revises the traditionalist field of Book History and brings salutary historical inquiry to the contemporary discipline of Media Studies. By revealing the pre-history of braille—embossed letters—I contribute to contemporary understandings of the decline in braille literacy and development of book size, tactile, digital e-reader displays.

Chapter 1, “Marking Time,” explores the development of the popular print form known as the timeline, which revolutionized the appearance of history. Rather than showing a chronological sequence of singular events, the timeline combined cartography’s measured line and scaled graphical space to emphasize “historical time as such”: a uniform medium of periodically structured durations within which aggregates of event, or none, occurred. Offering “at a glance” access to complex historical relations in a way impossible in prose narrative, timelines democratized knowledge; they invited active inscription by consumers, who thus became writers of history by marking additional information on the large-format printed sheets and interpreting the visual data.

Timelines by Joseph Priestley (1760s) popularized the representation of time as space and familiarized the new spatial symbol of the temporal line, which was also put to use in related literacy and aesthetic projects. In chapter 2, “Scanning the Vernacular: the Rise of English as an Educational Medium,” I show how elocutionists deployed Priestley’s representational and hermeneutic strategies to demonstrate that English had a periodic, accentual structure and to teach people how to speak, interpret, and recite it fluently. I explore the education of children in prosodic interpretation—counting on the fingers and marking on the page—as a means of forging common standards for reading (it being argued that recitation would bind readers as participants in a shared national literary heritage in which civilized values were transmitted). I also argue that the new

diagrammatic literacy and training in pattern visualization familiarized unrhymed verse forms and heralded free verse.

Chapter 3, “Women’s Work? Transcription as Co-Production,” revalues the copying of poetry from manuscript and print—a widespread practice often ignored by critics of eighteenth and nineteenth-century poetry or viewed as an unimportant part of women’s domestic labor or leisure. For example, discussing the female “scriptorium” of transcribers who produced the poetic texts of Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge, I challenge the idea of transcription as mere reproduction, viewing it as a systematic marking-up that was vital for the poetry to take textual form. Dorothy Wordsworth, Edith Southey and Sara Hutchinson, by inscribing, storing and retrieving their male relatives’ oral verse as text—and by rescuing decaying manuscripts—became not only its most sensitive and expert readers but also its co-producers.

Chapter 4, “Embossing the Vernacular: the Rise of Sign Systems for the Blind,” shows how the printing of the first tactile book in 1786 inaugurated formal education for the blind in France and enabled the development, by student Louis Braille, of a more effective, point-based tactile code—the world’s first binary-encoded writing system. Investigating the codes of Scottish printers and educators, I argue that the British remodeling of the French project entailed tactual and hermeneutic discipline, a Protestant program of manual and moral improvement that sought to assimilate the blind to a spiritually oriented Anglophone culture by means of the embossed Roman letter. I address the passing of this restrictive regime by way of the first embossings of Robert Burns’ poems a full one hundred years after his landmark *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786) in the newly endorsed, more tangible braille code. Whereas the embossed letter had sponsored spiritual intercourse with the God of the King James Bible and communion with the spirit of *Englishness*, the braille Burns supported the feeling of Scottishness and forging of community through silent reading and collective oral performance. It disrupted the print creation of a “homogeneous British community” of the blind and linked the Scottish blind with their seeing “brothers” and sisters, the manual copyists of braille in this era.

Chapter 5, “Touching Maps,” considers the development of cartographic literacy in Britain, exploring the invention and use of pocket maps, star charts, and geographic board games, and the use of relief maps and globes to teach national geography both to sighted and unsighted children. I also show how tactile maps and tactile print

cooperated to integrate the blind into the public sphere. The relief-printed relief map, Gall argued, awakened the mind’s dormant relation to the hand and put the embodied subject in touch with nature and other humans by fostering tangible reading and writing.

Chapter 6, “Charting the Character: Physiognomy and Phrenology,” relates tactile technologies to the nineteenth-century charting of passion, character, and deviance, examining the rise of efforts to construct common, diagrammatic codes that could inscribe in print the relief-patterns of the face and the skull—patterns “read” with the hands and eyes and that claimed to correlate with character types and revealed personality. I address how this practice both marginalized “deviants” and supported blind education, as the examples of James Gall (Edinburgh School for Blind Children) and Samuel Gridley Howe (Perkins Schools for the Blind) illustrate.

Project schedule Spring 2021

January-February	Finish drafting ch. 6	Research to be completed Fall 2020 (proposed Academic Leave).
March-April	Complete through-writing of book and introduction.	media theory and disability studies reading to be completed Fall 2020.

III. Budget

Requested Research Supplement: N/A

IV. Taft Grant History:

Please list your grant history with Taft for the last 5 years, in reverse chronological order. Please list project title, the name, date, and amount of award, as well as development of the project subsequent to the grant, e.g. publication.

1) Domestic Travel Grant, “Elements”: North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Conference (NASSR 2019), University of Chicago, August 8-11, 2019

Title: “The Tactful Republic of Bees and the Blind Romantic Traveler”
 Amount: \$1,171.06

Resulting Publication: This paper is enfolded in my forthcoming book chapter, "Tangible Burns," in the collection *The Unfinished Book*, ed. Deidre Lynch and Alexandra Gillespie (Oxford University Press, 2020)

2) International Conference Travel Grant, "Fact and Fantasy": British Association for Romantic Studies (BARS 2019), University of Nottingham, July 25-28, 2019

Title: "The Fantasy of Exquisite Touch"
Amount: \$2,153.22

Resulting Publication:
This paper is enfolded in my forthcoming book chapter, "Tangible Burns," in the collection *The Unfinished Book*, ed. Deidre Lynch and Alexandra Gillespie (Oxford University Press, 2020)

3) Domestic Travel Grant, "Romantic Assembly": International Conference on Romanticism (ICR 2018), Greenville, SC, October 24-28, 2018

Title: "'A Species of Monsters': Priestley's *Chart of Biography* and the New Climate for Blank Odes"
Amount: \$1,200

Resulting Publication:
This paper enfolded into the forthcoming "Chartopoetics and Historiographs: Visualizing Historical Poetics in the late Eighteenth Century," *Metrical Movements: A Romantic Circles Praxis Issue* (forthcoming, 2020)

4) Domestic Conference Travel Grant, "Open": North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR 2018), Brown University, Providence, June 22-5, 2018

Title: "Romantic Copying: the Wordsworth Scriptorium and the Encoding of Poetic Production in the Dream of the Arab"
Amount: \$872.14

Resulting Publication: Toward next book project: *Inscription, Transcription, and Digital Interactivity*.

5) Collections Purchase Award, November 2017

Title: *Romanticism: Life, Literature, and Landscape, Sources from the Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage and East India Company, Module 1: Trade, Governance and Empire, 1600-194*
Amount: \$35,000, in collaboration with Willard Sutherland, History

6) Domestic Conference Travel Grant, North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Conference (NASSR 2016), Berkeley, CA, from August 11, 2016 to August 14, 2016.

Reading”
Amount: \$1,200

Resulting Publications and Presentations: Title: “‘With gentle hand / Touch,—— ’: The ‘Horrid Blank’ of Nature and New Feel of *European Romantic Review* 28.3 (May 2017): 279-288.

7) International Conference Travel Grant, The 44 the Annual Wordsworth Summer Conference. Rydal, Cumbria, UK, August 3–8, 2015

Title: “Tangible Print and Wordsworthian Tact”
Amount: \$1,426.00

Resulting Publications and Presentations:
Book chapter: Paper enfolded in “A Carto-Tactual Subject: Educating the Blind in Romantic-era France and Britain,” *Romantic Cartographies: Maps, Literature, Culture, 1789-1832*. Ed. Sally Bushell, Julia S. Carlson, Damian Walford Davies (Forthcoming, Cambridge University Press, 2020)

8) International Conference Travel Grant, the Bi-Annual International Coleridge Conference, Cannington College, Somerset (UK), July 28-August 1, 2014

Title: “The *Biographia Literaria* and *The Excursion*: John Thelwall Marks the English Rhythmus.” Amount: \$648.71

Resulting Publications and Presentations:
Published in revised form in chapter 7 of *Romantic Marks and Measures: Wordsworth’s Poetry in Fields of Print* (Penn Press, 2016), winner of the British Association for Romantic Studies First Book Prize 2017.

V. Curriculum Vitae

Please include here a current (updated within the last month) curriculum vitae of no more than two pages. *See next page.*

