

## AUBREY WILLIAMS TRAVEL AWARD PROGRESS STATEMENT

The purpose of my trip was to conduct research at several archives, libraries, and special collections in London, England from May 15 to June 21, 2016 for my dissertation, *Touchy Subjects: An Eighteenth-Century Anatomy of Haptic Sensation*. During my time in London, I photographed, transcribed, and touched primary source materials that pertain to the second and third chapters of my dissertation at the Wellcome Library, British Library, London Metropolitan Archive, Guildhall Library, National Archive, and Clothworkers' Centre for the Study and Conservation of Textiles and Fabric.

I spent two weeks conducting research at the Wellcome Library, focusing primarily on photographing the notes, correspondence, and manuscripts of Robert Whytt (1714-1766), a preeminent Scottish neurophysiologist and central figure in my second chapter. Whytt is a key thinker for my dissertation because his work bridges neural theory (the subject of my first chapter, "Nerves") and hypochondriac theory (the subject of my second chapter, "Skin"). During the course of my research, I discovered several of Whytt's case-notes interleaved with the manuscript copy of his *On Nervous, Hypochondriac, or Hysterical Diseases* (1764), a discovery that will help me to demonstrate links between eighteenth-century medical practice and the theory and form of hypochondriac narratives. I also photographed Whytt's correspondence and draft of *On Nervous, Hypochondriac, or Hysterical Diseases*; these manuscripts will provide insight into the development of Whytt's theory that hypochondria is a nervous disease.

At the Wellcome, I also found a small set of receipts, letters, and government documents that suggest an intriguing intersection between gloves (the subject of my third chapter, "Hands") and medicine during the eighteenth century. Although scholars of sensory history have long contended that eighteenth-century changes in manners, customs, and architecture resulted in a decline in tactile, skin-to-skin contact between people, neither the process of that change nor its effects have been carefully traced. Through close attention to the material, economic, and social history of gloves, "Hands" considers the tactile implications of the rise in glove wearing over the course of the period. To this end, I spent the remaining three weeks of my trip exploring archival materials pertaining to eighteenth-century gloves, especially women's gloves.

I dedicated two weeks of my trip to research at the British Library where I looked at rare eighteenth-century fashion plates, women's commonplace books, undigitized pamphlets, manuscripts documenting household glove purchases, and government records pertaining to the regulation of the glove trade. At the Guildhall Library I photographed the eighteenth-century records of the Worshipful Company of Glovers. While at the London Metropolitan Archive, I delved into the Sun Insurance Office records, an archive which will allow me to trace the value of the British glove trade during the latter half of the eighteenth century. During my time at the National Archive, I photographed undigitized legal documents pertaining to gloves. Perhaps the highlight of my trip was the afternoon I spent at the London Clothworkers' Centre where I was able to get close to eighteenth-century gloves and mittens from the V&A's collection.

The generosity of the Aubrey Williams Research Travel Fund Award was essential to enabling my research in the United Kingdom; without this support it is unlikely that I would've been able to afford the trip. Thanks to the Aubrey Williams Research Travel Fund Award, I should be able to produce complete drafts of my second and third chapters by May 2017, as well as an article version of my third chapter worthy of publication in a prestigious journal.