‘The Unnatural Life at the Writing-Desk’: Women’s Writing across the Long Eighteenth Century

In conjunction with the one-day interdisciplinary conference, ‘Women, Authorship, and Identity in the Long Eighteenth Century: New Methodologies’ (held on Saturday, 17th June, at the Taylor Institution and TORCH), the Taylorian hosted an exhibition entitled ‘The Unnatural Life at the Writing-Desk’: Women’s Writing across the Long Eighteenth Century. The exhibition was curated by Dr Kelsey Rubin-Detlev, Joanna Raisbeck and Ben Shears. The exhibition catalogue is available at this link.

The exhibition aims to display the contribution that women writers (broadly conceived) made to a variety of fields in the long eighteenth century, with sections, among others, on science, focussed on Emilie Du Châtelet; drama, with works by Hannah More and Charlotte von Stein; and letters. The aim is to move beyond entrenched or prescriptive ideas of the areas in which women could operate—including for example, translation—and to offer a nuanced perspective on the breadth and depth of women’s writing across Europe. The exhibition draws in the most part on volumes held in the special collections of the Taylor Institution Library, but also on the antiquarian collections of Somerville College, and showcases the work of, among others, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sophie Mereau, Fanny Burney, Françoise de Graffigny, and Catherine the Great.

Below are a few examples of some of the works exhibited, which have been chosen for how they differ from clichés of women’s writing in the eighteenth century, such as women primarily producing (epistolary) novels and translations. These include the German writer Benedikte Naubert was important for the development of the historical novel, Charlotte von Stein, who is better known for her relation to Goethe than her dramas, and an edition of Catherine the Great’s dramas. The volumes in themselves are intriguing historical and cultural artefacts:

Benedikte Naubert

Benedikte Naubert, Herman of Unna: a series of adventures of the fifteenth century, in which the proceedings of the secret tribunal under the emperors Wenceslaus and Sigismont are delineated, 2 vols (Dublin: William Porter, 1794) FIEDLER.J.3375.01

Jean-Nicholas-Étienne de Bock (tr.), Benedikte Naubert, Hermann d’Unna, ou aventures arrivées au commencement du quinzieme siecle, dans les temps où le Tribunal secret avait sa plus grande influence, 2 vols (Metz: Claude Lamort, 1794) FIEDLER.J.3375.02
Benedikte Naubert (1756-1819) was one of the first professional female authors in Germany. Although her work has been overlooked in literary history because of its ‘trivial’ associations — a pejorative term, particularly in German literary historiography — she influenced writers such as Ann Radcliffe and Friedrich Schiller by establishing the secret tribunal novel (*Vehmgerichtsroman*). *Hermann von Unna* (‘Hermann of Unna’, 1788) was the first of two such novels, with the second, *Alf von Dülmen*, following in 1791. Recently her *oeuvre* has been recognised for its importance in the development of the historical novel and fairy tale as literary genres, as well as preparing the ground for the genre of Gothic fiction.

*Hermann von Unna* was one of the first German Gothic novels to be translated into English in 1794 and was adapted for the stage at Covent Garden in 1795, and a French dramatization was published in 1791, *Le Tribunal Secret*. Naubert draws on the German *Vehmgericht* (Vehmic courts) of the Middle Ages to explore in an intricate, episodic plot, the fears ignited by the French Revolution of secret tribunals and conspiracy theories. Although the Taylorian does not hold any German editions of Naubert’s *Hermann von Unna*, it does have French and English translations, including copies of the first three editions of *Hermann von Unna* in English, which all stem from the same anonymously published translation. The English translation erroneously ascribes the novel to a so-called Professor Kramer, an ill-chosen pseudonym since it was linked to Karl Gottlob Cramer, a writer known for adventure novels.

**Charlotte von Stein**

Charlotte von Stein (1742-1827), a lady-in-waiting at the court of Weimar, has featured in literary history primarily in association with Goethe. She is variously considered his close friend, muse, and – in the more sensationalist readings – his lover. But she also wrote several dramas, only one of which, *Die Zwey Emilien* (The Two Emilies), was published during her lifetime. Of these dramas, the tragedy *Dido* has garnered critical attention because of its gently comic portrayal of Goethe.

The comedy *Neues Freiheitssystem oder die Verschwörung gegen die Liebe* (‘New System of Freedom or the Conspiracy Against Love’, 1798), which explores the social construction of gender, is an interesting example of editorial practices. It was first published by von Stein’s grandson Felix von Stein in 1867, but in an edited form that reduced the original five acts to four. The drama was re-published with further editorial amendments by Franz Ulbrich, who based his edition on the 1867 publication, rather than on the original text.

Charlotte von Stein’s dramas were re-published as part of the series *Frühe Frauenliteratur in Deutschland* (Early Women’s Writing in Germany) by the
Elite women wrote and performed in private theatricals all across eighteenth-century Europe, from Elizabeth, Countess Harcourt, in Oxfordshire to Marie Antoinette at Versailles. Catherine the Great in Russia did not perform herself, but she wrote extensively for the public and the private stage. In 1787-1788, she led her courtiers and some foreign diplomats in composing a series of theatrical works (largely proverb plays), which were then performed by a troupe of French actors in the recently-built Hermitage theatre in her palace in St Petersburg. She oversaw the first edition of the plays in 1788, distributing the very small print run only to those who had contributed to the collection. One of the participants, the then French ambassador Louis Philippe de Ségur, then republished the work after her death. This volume is the curious result of publishing a relic of ancien régime culture in Revolutionary France: a particularly inaccurate engraving of the Empress faces a title page using the Revolutionary calendar but prominently crediting an absolute monarch and outspoken opponent of the Revolution as the lead author.

Beyond showcasing the variety of women’s writing in print form in the eighteenth century, one unique and valuable item that was on display was a letter by Joséphine de Beauharnais to Napoleon Bonaparte.
There are few extant letters by Josephine known to exist, and this one in particular had been known to exist from an undated facsimile from the early nineteenth century. This original manuscript of the letter was discovered in the archives of Trinity College by the Fellow Archivist Bryan Ward-Perkins. Since the letter is rare, the manuscript was only exhibited for one day of the exhibition, replaced by a scanned paper copy for the remainder of the time. It was nonetheless quite the coup to be allowed to include the letter in the exhibition.

The exhibition ran in parallel with two conferences, originally ‘Women, Authorship, and Identity in the Long Eighteenth Century: New Methodologies’ and then extended to cover the Women in German Studies Open Conference on Reform and Revolt. The exhibition was not just of interest to university students and academics, however, since it was also shown to the school pupils on the UNIQ summer schools in German and French – in the hope of conveying to the next generation how exciting it can be to work with books and manuscripts as historical objects.

Joanna Raisbeck
Somerville College, University of Oxford

This entry was posted in Collections, Special Collections and tagged eighteenth century, exhibitions, women's writing on 15 September 2017 by ferrarij.
‘I was her first “reader”, and I would draw’, writes Hélène de Beauvoir (1910-2001) in *Souvenirs* (De Beauvoir, 1987, p.72), where she recalls how, in the early years, she came to choose the vocation of artist, whilst her elder sister, Simone (1908-1986), preferred to write.

Many years later, shortly after giving a speech on the subject of women and creativity during a visit to Japan in 1966 (Francis, Gontier and De Beauvoir, 1979, pp.458-474), the author of *Le deuxième sexe* (Gallimard, 1949) wrote to her younger sister with an invitation to create a series of engravings based on her new novel, *La femme rompue* (Gallimard, 1967). Although Gallimard initially hesitated to take on the project, over fears of it being a rather controversial piece of literature, the completed work, including its illustrations, was finally published in 1967 and also appeared in *Elle* magazine’s October-November issue of that year (Weber-Feve, 2010, p.82).

The novel is written in the form of an intimate diary and recounts the experience of a housewife who struggles to come to terms with the sudden discovery that her husband has another woman in his life. The main themes covered in the story are echoed in the individual memoirs of the Beauvoir sisters, with particular regard to their mother’s confined domestic life in their family home in the rue de Rennes, Paris, and Simone’s later experience as the second woman in her relationship with philosopher, novelist and political activist Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980). It is this more personal content in *La femme rompue*, which drew scathing remarks from (male) critics, who viewed the novel as too autobiographical and less interesting than some of the author’s previous work.

Hélène readily accepted the invitation to create illustrations for her sister’s novel and strongly defended the text against the harsh criticism it received. As an art form, the *livre d’artiste* (artist’s book) was already well-established by this time, with a long tradition of artists, authors, designers and printers collaborating to produce books that were highly sought after by private collectors and bibliophile societies.
Several publishers and art dealers had pioneered the genre in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, notably the French art dealer Ambroise Vollard (1866–1939), who, in 1900, published *Parallèlement* by the French poet Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), with lithographs by the artist Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947). These set themselves apart from earlier pictorial illustrations because of the way in which they explored the broader mood and themes of the poems instead of focusing mainly on the actions or situations described in the text (Castleman, 1994, pp.27-28). Similarly, Hélène de Beauvoir’s engravings for *La femme rompue* the different emotional states of the main character through figures that are either enclosed in small boxes or caught in a chaotic spiral of jumbled, jagged lines, thus powerfully conveying the way in which the narrator’s life is torn apart and tipped upside down by sudden and unexpected revelations.

In her own memoirs, Hélène expressed a certain fondness for working in black and white and mentions her admiration for classic French tales by La Comtesse de Ségur (1799-1874) and Charles Perrault (1628-1703), who respectively authored *Les Malheurs de Sophie* (1858) and *Histoire ou Contes du temps passé* (1697), citing in particular the illustrations by Gustave Doré (1832-1883) for Perrault’s *Contes* as an early source of inspiration.
Simone was supportive of her sister’s artistic career, and frequently helped pay for her studio in the rue Santeuil, Paris, in her formative years. However, her feelings about Hélène’s capabilities as an artist — and about women artists in general — were rather mixed, as is revealed through one of her letters to Sartre written in May 1954 (De Beauvoir, Sartre and Le Bon de Beauvoir, 1992, p.504) and in *Le deuxième sexe*, in a chapter titled “La Femme indépendante” where she laments the way in which women artists frequently see their work merely as a way to pass the time. (De Beauvoir and Parshley, 1953, pp.663-665). It wasn’t until 1966, on the occasion of the aforementioned speech in Japan, that Simone began to defend women artists and highlight the lack of support often faced by women who chose art as their vocation – a turning point that certainly encouraged a collaboration between the two siblings.

One hundred and forty-three copies were made of the illustrated edition of *La femme rompue*. Of the sixteen engravings produced by Hélène de Beauvoir for this publication, five form part of the Taylor Institution Library’s Strachan Collection of *livres d’artistes* extracts (now housed, for conservation reasons, at the Sackler Library). The collection was built by Walter Strachan (1903-1994) from the 1940s onwards and in it are a number of other works illustrated by women artists: Michèle Bardet, Micheline Catti (b.1926), Gisèle Celan-Lebrange (1927-1991), Sonia Delaunay (1885-1979), Denise Esteban (1924-1986), Léonor Fini (1908-1996), Carmen Martinez, Germaine Richier (1904-1959), Suzanne Roger (1898-1986), Brigitte Simon (1926-2009) and Ania Staritsky (1908-1981), all of whom are listed below along with the books’ authors.
Olivia Freuler, Graduate Library Trainee, Sackler Library, Bodleian Libraries

**Texts with illustrations by women artists in the Taylorian’s W.J. Strachan Collection**


I would like to thank Nick Hearn, French and Slavonic Subject Specialist, Taylor Institution Library, for his help in researching the Zdanevich title.


**Online**


**Further reading**

350th anniversary of the Raid of the Medway

My primary school in the Netherlands was excellent, especially with regard to history lessons. So I was taught, like most Dutch school children were and are, about the heroic deeds of Admiral Michiel Adriaensz. De Ruyter. Michiel de Ruyter led the Dutch fleet up the Thames, I learned, breaking the chain that the English had placed across the river, thereby defeating the English and winning the second Anglo-Dutch sea-war in 1667.

This feat is commemorated this year, so I decided to investigate the events in a little more detail by reading some contemporary accounts. To my surprise the chain was not placed across the Thames but across the Medway; and, of course, the Dutch did not sail up it to London, but to Rochester (see modern map below). Last but not least: from our sources it appears that the chain was not broken, but ‘sailed over’, perhaps because it was far enough below water level. Other sources, not discussed here, may contradict this sequence of events, but the English were defeated in the second Anglo-Dutch war; that is a historical fact.

My primary school teacher clearly had not read these contemporary accounts of the achievements of the Dutch fleet. If he (not she!) had done so, he would have been able to tell us that Dutch narrators of the period were not very familiar with English river names, and mainly referred to the Thames as ‘river by London’ and the Medway as ‘river by Rochester’ thus confusing Dutch school children 300 years later.

Our teacher would have told us that since De Ruyter was the Admiral of the Dutch fleet, he did not cut through the chain himself, but that it was the brave captain Brakel who ‘sailed over’ the chain and managed to negotiate his way between the ships, deliberately sunk by the English to close off the Medway, and sail all the way to Rochester. Brakel and the Dutch fleet then captured and set fire to various royal ships, including the Royal Charles, and captured Upnor Castle, all of this depicted in this etching from Het leven en bedryf van den Heere Michiel de Ruiter….beschreeven door Gerard Brandt (1687).
A couple of other sources (below) have helped me to get a slightly more realistic picture of what happened in June 1667. These are accounts of the lives of Cornelis (and Johan) de Witt. The States of Holland (the Government) sent Cornelis de Witt with Michiel de Ruyter to England to report back on any achievements of the fleet in the war against England. Some of De Witt’s letters to the States of Holland are published in both volumes and can be regarded as ‘eye witness reports’. All three of my sources report on the River Medway’s chain; here is one example from Leeven en Dood der doorlustige heeren gebroeders Cornelis de Witt en Johan de Witt (Life and death of the eminent brothers Cornelis de Witt and Johan de Witt). The (in)famous chain, intended to stop the Dutch, is mentioned on p.133:

‘s Woensdags zynde den 22 juny […] zylde de Capitein Brakel […] vooraf, ende over de ketting, die de Engelsche op de Rivier met paalen ter weder zyden vast gemaakt, en gespannen hadden’

(On Wednesday 22nd June […] Captain Brakel sailed […] in front over the chain which the English had put across the river, attached to poles either side)
My school teacher was right to portray De Ruyter as a hero since he was regarded as such at the time: Both De Ruyter and De Witt were bestowed with specially engraved golden cups in recognition of their achievements in the Anglo-Dutch war, as reported in *Historisch Verhael en politique bedenckingen aengaende de bestieringe van Staat- en Oorloghs-Saken: voor-gevallen onder de bedieningen van de Heeren Cornelis en Johan de Witt* (1677). The States had given orders for the fleet to set sail for the ‘River of London’ (p.365). On p.394-395 the ‘Goude Koppen’ (golden cups) are mentioned.

This part of the second Anglo-Dutch war, well-known in the Netherlands, is being commemorated this summer with a programme of events in Chatham and London. This includes the exhibition ‘Breaking the Chain’ at the Historic Dockyard Chatham, which vividly brings to life the story of the Battle of Medway with collections from The Royal Museum Greenwich, Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Dutch National Maritime Museum, the Michiel de Ruyter Foundation and the British Library.

Dr Johanneke Sytsema, Subject Consultant for Linguistics, Dutch and Frisian

[1] I have limited my investigations to materials available in the Taylor Institution Library.

References

Taylor Institution Library 122.E.18

Taylor Institution Library 167.A.13
Royals, Writers and Musicians: Highlights of the Peyton-Harding Collection

Readers who use the Taylorian’s German collections might have come across rare books and manuscripts whose shelfmarks begin with ‘Fiedler’. Considering the incredible breadth and value of the Fiedler Collection for the study of German literature from the last five hundred years or so, it is hardly surprising to learn that the donor was a distinguished Professor of German. Hermann Georg Fiedler served as Chair of Oxford’s German department from 1907 until 1937, leading the department through the challenges of the First World War and supervising the construction of the extension, along St. Giles’, of the Taylorian’s Teaching Collection (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004). Today he is commemorated with a large bust.

Less well-known than Fiedler’s Germanic acquisitions and less publicly apparent than the bust, however, is the stunning collection of autographs assembled by his family during the nineteenth century. After their donation to the Taylorian by Fiedler’s daughter, Herma, during the 1960s (Sutherland, 1970: i), these manuscripts had lain relatively quietly in our Rare Books Room, until an email enquiry from a Danish academic caused them to be taken out and re-examined in 2017. Many library staff had not encountered the manuscripts before, so there was great excitement at the discovery of just how many household names had given samples of their handwriting to fill the pages.

The manuscripts are stored in five boxes (shelfmarks MS.8o.E.17-MS.8o.E.21) and are referred to as the Peyton-Harding Collection, in recognition of Herma Fiedler’s relatives, who collected most of the autographs. Fiedler had met his wife, Ethel Harding, when she was a pupil of his at the University of Birmingham in the late nineteenth century (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004). Ethel’s father, Charles Harding, was a highly influential solicitor and philanthropist who funded many initiatives including scholarships at the University and served regularly on organising committees for the Birmingham Music Festival (Carley, 2006: 226). Charles Harding’s younger daughter, Emily, was married to a wealthy businessman named Richard Peyton (Harding Family Tree (Detailed), 2017). As a passionate music aficionado, Peyton chaired the Birmingham Festival and financed the University’s Chair of Music position (on condition that his friend, Sir Edward Elgar, took on the role) (Moore, 1999: 446). With their widespread musical, academic and social connections, the Peyton, Harding and Fiedler families were well situated to build an autograph collection showcasing some of the most illustrious names of their time.

This blog post is necessarily limited to covering just a few of the highlights of the collection, but any registered reader interested by what follows can ask to see the boxes by filling in a request slip at the Taylorian Enquiry Desk.
Queen Victoria's Poignant Thanks (MS.8o.E.17, p.1)

The collection begins in spectacular fashion: the first letter you see when opening the first box was written by Queen Victoria. On Windsor Castle headed notepaper, it addresses an open message of thanks to the women of the United Kingdom for funding a statue in memory of the late Prince Albert. As the date of the letter is 22nd June 1887, the day chosen for Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee celebrations, it would seem that the statue referred to is the equestrian statue of Albert in Windsor Great Park (Roberts, 1997: 379).

The statue of Prince Albert funded by UK women to commemorate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee (1887) © Copyright Alan Hunt and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence

Women across the UK had been given a leaflet inviting them to contribute between a penny and a pound to a Jubilee gift of the Queen’s choice, ‘in token of loyalty, affection, and reverence towards the only female sovereign who, for fifty years, [had] borne the toils and troubles of public life, known the sorrows that fall to all women, and as a wife, mother, widow, and ruler, [had] held up a bright and spotless example to her own and all other nations’ (Boucherett et al. (eds.), 1979: 82). It is poignant to think that the same Queen who had been too grief-stricken by her husband’s death to celebrate her Silver Jubilee, and had kept a strict regime of mourning for many years, chose to mark one of the few public occasions of her later life through a statue of Albert.

Hans Christian Andersen’s African Reverie (MS.8o.E.18, p.64)

A highlight of the second box in the collection is undoubtedly Hans Christian Andersen’s meticulously presented extract from his 1864 travelogue In Spain (translated into English by Mrs Anna S. Bushby). Andersen is of course best known for his fairy tales, which include The Ugly Duckling, The Little Mermaid and The Snow Queen. However, he was also an enthusiastic writer of plays, poetry and non-fiction. In Spain is his diary of an extended tour of the Iberian country, punctuated by few days’ stay in Tangier, Morocco, with his friends the Drummond Hay family, representatives of the English and Danish governments (Andersen, 1864: 189).

Despite accounting for only one chapter of the book, Andersen’s time in Africa is an emotional high-point of his journey. Before the extract acquired for the Peyton-Harding collection, he writes ‘Delightful, never to be forgotten days did I pass [in Tangier], forming a new and rich leaf in the story of my life’ (Andersen, 1864: 183). After a varied programme of exploration, he concludes the chapter by asserting that ‘Our sojourn on the African coast had been the most interesting part of our travels hitherto’ (Andersen, 1864: 205).

The Peyton-Harding handwritten extract (which corresponds with parts of pp.87-88 in the 1864 printed version) depicts a rare, sombre moment on the balcony of the Drummond Hays’ villa. Andersen lights a cigar and finds his thoughts being led towards some of the darker aspects of Africa’s past. He imagines a girl picking tobacco in Cuba, ‘a kings [sic] daughter from hot Africa, now a slave in a larg [sic] West India island.’ In his mind’s eye, the girl sheds a tear in remembrance of her African childhood, which soaks into the tobacco leaf she is holding, and remains embedded there as the leaf is transformed into Andersen’s own cigar. From the lit cigar, the tear ‘freed itself’ in the smoke, ‘it raised itself in its fatherland, and flew over the Atlas Mountains to the unknown inner region. The soul in the tear was at liberty in thoughts [sic] homeland.’ This poetic expression of the cruelty and
unfairness of the slave trade reflects a concern which Andersen had already explored in his 1840 play *The Mulatto*, and which evidently still haunted him (Zipes, 2005: 21).

The Andersen manuscript and accompanying printed portrait of Andersen (Taylorian MS.8o.E.18, p.64)

Jenny Lind’s Glamorous Lifestyle (MS.8o.E.17, pp.44-45)

A note in the first box from the highly successful Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind is not only an evocative piece of memorabilia in its own right, but also makes an interesting point of comparison with the Andersen manuscript. After meeting Lind in the early 1840s and corresponding with her, Andersen developed a level of adoration for her that has led his biographers to agree unanimously that she was his ‘great, unrequited love’ and ‘a loyal and recurring figure’ in the fantasy worlds he portrayed through his writing (Andersen, 2005: 312). She never reciprocated his feelings, but he continued to think of her and kept a bust of her in his home until his death (Andersen, 2005: 312).

The letter in the Peyton-Harding collection seems illustrative of how widespread such admiration for Lind was among her audiences. Dated 4th December 1850, when Lind was touring the USA under the management of famous showman PT Barnum (Rosenberg, 1851), it is addressed to an unspecified ‘Sir’ but its purpose is to pass on thanks to a ‘Mr Peacock’ for ‘two dresses…of beautiful manufacture’ that he had given her. She promises gratefully that she will wear them on stage ‘in kind remembrance of the Donor.’

An eyewitness account of the US tour describes how Lind was inundated with similar gifts, as well as messages and visits from fans. They arrived at the rate of literally ‘one every other minute’, to the point that Lind felt at times as if she were being ‘torn to pieces’ by the clamour of attention (Rosenberg, 1851: 72-73). For her US audiences, she was clearly one of the most exciting celebrities of the time.
Professor Fiedler’s German Travels with the Future Edward VIII (MS.8o.E.19, pp.42-45)

The third box of autographs holds some memories more personal to the Peyton and Harding families, as Professor Fiedler’s letters home from a very important trip to Germany are preserved in this box. Between 1912 and 1914, Fiedler was German tutor to Edward, Prince of Wales (1894-1972), an undergraduate at Magdalen College, who would be crowned as King Edward VIII, abdicating eleven months later in order to be able to marry divorcee Wallis Simpson. The young Prince had the opportunity to improve his language skills by visiting Germany in spring and summer 1913, and Fiedler went with him (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004).

Fiedler’s letters, which are addressed to his sister-in-law Mrs Peyton, demonstrate both a great fondness for the Prince and a reverence for the glamorous world of royalty. On 28th March 1913, he refers to Edward affectionately as ‘our Prince’, and claims that ‘He is such a dear fellow’, who often confides in Fiedler privately. The two in fact remained in contact long after the tuition arrangement was over (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004). Mixed with the feelings of warm friendship, however, one can also sense Fiedler’s awe at the regal lifestyle. In his letter of 28th March, he relates how Edward ‘wore his [ceremonial] Garter at dinner and looked splendid’. In an earlier letter (23rd March 1913), he eagerly lists all the German dignitaries the pair have met or are due to meet, and excitedly concludes by saying that he ‘must hurry back’ to their party. In hindsight, there is a very poignant side to the Easter festivities Edward enjoyed with his German counterparts, as the two countries went to war with each other only a year later.

Perhaps the most exclusive souvenir of the trip, however, is a short note to Professor Fiedler written by the Prince himself to demonstrate his (somewhat novice) German language skills (see transcription and English translation below).
Für Professor Fiedler

Würden Sie gern um 8 Uhr einen Spaziergang machen bis 9 Uhr? Nur wenn es nicht zu früh ist. Ich habe das Frühstück um 9 Uhr bestellt für drei.

E

To Professor Fiedler

Would you like to go for a walk from 8 o'clock until 9? Only if it isn't too early. I have ordered breakfast for three at 9 o'clock.

E

Misunderstandings with George Bernard Shaw and Algernon Charles Swinburne (MS.8o.E.21/B)

The fifth and final box is organised differently from the others: the manuscripts do not have individual page numbers, but instead are grouped into categories according to the occupations of their writers. Group B ('English Writers') contains two somewhat amusing examples of mishaps in Professor Fiedler's academic career.

In 1928, George Bernard Shaw was already a Nobel Prize laureate who had written some of the most renowned plays of his time – including, arguably, his most enduring work, Pygmalion, which is still frequently performed today and was the inspiration for the musical My Fair Lady (Frenz (ed.), 1969: 229). Unfortunately, he did not feel that his abilities extended so far as to allow him to comment on writers from abroad. His note to the Taylorian, dated 15th May 1928, states in a rather alarmed and curt manner that it is not his job to give a lecture at the Taylorian, because he does not speak a word of Norwegian. Presumably he had been invited to speak on Ibsen.

In 1901, meanwhile, it seems that Professor Fiedler was misled by the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne. As an adult, Swinburne became associated with passionate and erotic poetry (Poetry Foundation, 2017), but he reveals in the letter below that his youthful intellectual interests were focused elsewhere. Dated 12th February 1901, it reads, 'Dear Sir, I am quite sorry you have had so much trouble about Maistre Gaget. I must confess that he & his book, as well as the legend of the leper, were pure inventions of my own at a rather early age, when I was fond of trying my hand at imitations of mediaeval French prose & Latin verse. Yours apologetically, A C Swinburne.'
As mentioned above, this post covers only a small selection from a large and wide-ranging collection. The Peyton, Harding and Fiedler families managed to collect many more fascinating items that cannot be included here, such as handwritten staves of music by Sir Edward Elgar, Edvard Grieg, Antonín Dvořák, Franz Liszt and Sir Arthur Sullivan; the signatures of Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Rudyard Kipling; and various notes and calling cards from political and military luminaries of the time. The collection is well worth exploring further and the Taylorian is certainly fortunate to be its owner.

Jessica Woodward
Formerly Graduate Trainee at the Taylorian, now Assistant Librarian at Mansfield College.

References

Primary Source

Peyton, Harding and Fiedler families (19th C.) Peyton-Harding Autograph Collection. Donated to the library by Herma Fiedler. [Taylorian MS.8o.E.17-21]

Secondary Sources

Andersen, H. C. (1864) *In Spain, tr. by Mrs. Bushby.* London: [publisher unknown]. [Bodleian (OC) 203 c.261]


Identities in Transit: Portuguese Women Artists since 1950

The Taylor Institution Library has mounted an exhibition (10-24 March 2017, subsequently extended to 31 March) to accompany the conference Transnational Portuguese Women Artists (Wadham College, 16-18 March 2017). The exhibition is curated by Dr Maria Luisa Coelho, Joanne Ferrari and Jessica Woodward. The exhibition catalogue is available here.

The purpose of the exhibition is to highlight the significant contribution of Portuguese women artists to Portuguese culture and beyond, from the perspective of their experiences, works, contacts and, ultimately, their impact within the transnational context. It focuses on a group of women who, from the 1950s, have created a wide-ranging body of work whilst living for extended periods outside Portugal. During their time abroad, these women established relationships and collaborations not only with other expatriate Portuguese artists but also with a wider European artistic community. The Taylorian’s exhibition displays publications primarily held by the Taylor Institution Library, showing the artistic production of Lourdes Castro, Menez, Paula Rego, Maria Velho da Costa and Ana Hatherly. The material on view highlights the tension between the terms roots and routes while also suggesting the connections between different moments and places, and the creation of identities in transit.

Snapshot of one exhibition case showing works by Paula Rego and Maria Velho da Costa.

Lourdes Castro
Born in Madeira, in 1930, Lourdes Castro moved to Lisbon in 1950 and, following her expulsion (for “non-conformity”) from the Escola Superior de Belas Artes, she relocated to Munich in 1957 and then Paris in 1958. There, Castro was in close contact with the celebrated couple Maria Helena Vieira da Silva and Árpád Szénes. It was in Paris, where she lived for twenty-five years, that she co-founded the experimental group KWY with her husband René Bertholo and a number of other artists. (The letters K, W and Y were considered ‘foreign’ to Portuguese by the spelling reforms of 1943.) During this period, the artist often visited London and met other Portuguese expatriates.

Lourdes Castro has developed a considerable body of work focusing on the shadow, through which she reassesses the relationship between the aesthetic object and its surrounding world. In 1962 she began working on her ‘projected shadow’ works. Beginning with collaged objects these developed into paintings of Castro’s and her friends’ projected shadows. From 1966 onwards – and in collaboration with Manuel Zimbro – Castro also formed the Teatro Ambulante de Sombras (Travelling Theatre of Shadows). Despite her development of this performative art form outside of Portugal Castro’s interest in radical experimentation is clearly rooted in the Portuguese avant-garde. Another avenue of exploration of the shadow was the ‘inventory’, for example O Grande Herbário de Sombras (1972), (“The Great Herbarium of Shadows”, a collection of shadows of botanical specimens). This herbarium reveals Castro’s profound interest in nature, a major influencing factor in her decision to return to Madeira in 1983.

Menez

Menez (1926-1995) had an exceptionally cosmopolitan existence. Although she did not undertake any formal artistic training, her travels and privileged background (which she shared, to a certain extent, with the other artists featured in this exhibition) allowed her to pursue an artistic career and overcome many of the constraints imposed on Portuguese women by the dictatorial regime of Oliveira Salazar.

The artist’s first exhibition was held at Galeria de Março, Lisbon, in 1954, and showed a collection of Menez’s gouaches selected by the poet Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen. Menez remained a close friend of Sophia and other major Portuguese writers and artists such as Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Júlio Pomar, Mário Cesariny and António Ramos Rosa.

Despite the influence of the Paris School in her early work and her debt to Vieira da Silva, Menez chose to use a grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation (1964-65 and 1969) to move to London. There, she was in contact with other cultural and aesthetic trends, and also became a central and often admired figure in the Portuguese expatriate milieu: she formed long-lasting friendships with the writers Alberto de Lacerda and Helder Macedo and the artists Victor Willing and Paula Rego. As a whole, her body of work is defined by a continuous process of change.
Paula Rego

Dame Paula Rego (1935-) was born in Lisbon. In 1951 she moved to London to study at the Slade School of Fine Art and became immersed in a lively artistic community attuned to creative activities around the world. She formed strong and close relationships with other Portuguese artists and writers living in London while never losing touch with developments back in Portugal. Rego returned to Portugal in 1957, where she lived intermittently with her husband, the British painter Victor Willing (1928-1988), and their three children. Partly prompted by the Portuguese revolution in 1974, the family returned permanently to London in 1976.

Rego’s transcultural position is reflected in her work, clearly evidenced through the influence of her Portuguese heritage as well as the impact of her life in London. Through this patchwork of references, Rego addresses the recurrent themes of asymmetric power relations and gendered experiences, as she revisits the national, religious and sexual politics of the country she left behind. She is not only one of the most respected artists working in Britain today, but also a household name in Portugal. In 2009, a museum dedicated to her work – Casa das Histórias – opened in Cascais. She continues to exhibit regularly both in Portugal and in Britain.
Maria Velho da Costa

Maria Velho da Costa (1938- ) is one of Portugal’s most experimental contemporary writers, perhaps best known to an international readership as one of the authors of New Portuguese Letters (Novas cartas portuguesas, Lisbon: Estúdios Cor, 1972). Her work is imbued with a spirit of de-centering and de-territorialisation through the creation of diverse characters, worlds, realities and dimensions that nevertheless coexist or intersect. Through continually pushing the boundaries of literary genres, she explores the possibilities of language in dialogue with other artistic media such as music and the visual arts. This de-centering process is also a reflection of the locations she has chosen to spend time in: she was briefly in Guinea-Bissau in 1973; in 1980 she moved to London, where she worked for about six years as Portuguese leitora at King’s College; after that she was appointed cultural attaché in Cape Verde (1988-89).

During her time in England Velho da Costa wrote and published the novel Lúcialima (1983) whose cover was illustrated by Paula Rego; and the compilation O Mapa Cor de Rosa: Cartas de Londres (1984), about life in London in the early 1980s. More recent works, such as Madame (2000) and Myra (2008) continue to display physical or psychological accounts marked by an interest in otherness and the intersecting of different worlds, realities and languages; they also show her collaborations with visual artists.
Ana Hatherly

Ana Hatherly (1929-2015) was born in Porto, moving to Lisbon at an early age. After undertaking formal musical training in Portugal, France and Germany, she took a degree in Modern Languages at the University of Lisbon. She then enrolled at the London International Film School (1971-74) and subsequently moved to the United States where she completed a doctorate in Golden Age Hispanic Literature at the University of California, Berkeley.

A clear focus of Hatherly’s oeuvre is the relationship between word and image, already evident in her early works, produced while living in London. Her output from this period also exhibits the influence of Pop Art, a strong connection with the concrete-experimental movement, and her adoption of the collage technique. The artist’s visual exploration of text evolved into her visual poems, informed by her academic research on baroque poetry. In 1959 she began experimenting with concrete poetry. She soon became one of the leading figures in the Portuguese Experimental Poetry group, regularly contributing to avant-garde journals, edited collections and group exhibitions in Portugal and abroad.

Dr Maria Luísa Coelho
FCT Postdoctoral Fellow
University of Oxford/Universidade do Minho

You can also see two videos of Maria Luísa and Luis Amorim de Sousa introducing and discussing the exhibition (links below, courtesy of Prof. Henrike Laehnemann).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39j-y_IxNL0&feature=youtu.be
https://twitter.com/OxfordModLangs/status/842791976588330657
Gysbert Japicx and the Junius collection

2016 marked the 350th anniversary of the death of the Frisian poet Gysbert Japicx (1603 – 1666). Seventeenth-century Frisia’s principal poet, Gysbert Japicx was crucial in preserving Frisian as a written language and in developing a Frisian spelling standard. His language is usually referred to as Middle Frisian (17th-18th century) although one could also call it Early Modern Frisian.

The earliest and most important items for the study of Gysbert Japicx’s oeuvre are held in the Junius Collection in the Bodleian Library. This unique collection includes the only known manuscript of his work, the poem Wobbelke and two extremely rare and fragile copies of ‘De Friessche Tjerne, ofte bortlijcke rijmerye’: all three items are in Japicx’s own hand and were published anonymously in 1640.

Life and work

Gysbert Japicx was a school teacher and a poet in Boalsert, Fryslân (a province in the north of the Netherlands). His first publication was the Friessche Tjerne, a rhyming text written for the entertainment of guests at a wedding. This type of publication was probably not meant to last, which may explain the poor quality of the paper and the fragile state of extant copies. His main work Friesche Rymlerye, published posthumously in 1668, contains mainly poetry and rhyming prose and also a few psalms. The oldest printed copy in Oxford is the 1821 edition held by the Taylorian.
Franciscus Junius. Close-up images of these manuscripts can be seen in one of Omrop Fryslân’s (Frisian Television) documentaries on Gysbert Japicx. I had the honour to comment on camera. (The programme can be viewed at http://www.npo.nl/fryslan-dok/19-11-2016/POW_02993273.) The manuscripts are shown approximately five minutes into the programme. The manuscript poems in the Bodleian Library were edited and provided with an English commentary by Alistair Campbell, (Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Pembroke College, 1963-1974) who bequeathed his Frisian collection to the Taylor Institution Library.

Gysbert Japicx has been hugely influential for the development of Frisian as a written language. He began writing in Frisian after a nearly one hundred year gap in which hardly any Frisian was written – the last charter in Old Frisian was written around 1550 – so head to invent a new spelling system as there was no previous one he could build on. The process of designing a new orthography was a gradual one. His earliest publication, De Friessche Tjerne, represents the first phase of development of a spelling standard of 17th century Frisian. The next phase is found in Junius’ handwritten copies of Japicx’s work, which in turn differs from the spelling used in the final publication of poems Rymlerye in 1668. The orthography developed by Japicx has been of great importance to the Frisian writing tradition and it was followed until the early 19th century.

**Gysbert Japicx (1603-1666) and Franciscus Junius (1591-1677)**

It is generally assumed that Junius visited Japicx to learn Frisian. This assumption is supported by the Japicx manuscripts, where we find both Japicx’s and Junius’ handwriting together.

The Japicx material consists of two manuscripts in the Junius collection, MS. Junius 115a and MS. Junius 122. MS. 115a is Junius’ glossary of Old Germanic. At the end of MS. 115a, after the glossary, some smaller pages are bound into the manuscript which contain poems by Gysbert Japicx in Junius’ hand. The big surprise is the inserted folio which has Japicx’s most well known poem Wobbelke. This piece of paper holds an early handwritten version of the poem with corrections by the author.
On the front of this page (f.527r), both Japicx's and Junius' hands are found, an indication that Junius did indeed visit Japicx to learn Frisian. Japicx has written the days of the week in Frisian with Dutch translation, presumably for Junius' benefit. Junius has written numerals in Frisian, perhaps dictated by Japicx, as might be expected of a Frisian language learner. His next task was copying Japicx's poems. It is fortunate that he did so, since Junius' copies are the only handwritten copies of those poems that survive.
The other manuscript is MS. Junius 122, containing two rare copies of his *De Friessche Tjerne*, glued into the manuscript above each other. Both versions were printed in 1640. On the second of these the publication details (in Dutch!) are accompanied by a translation into Frisian in Gysbert Japicx’s hand.
How did these manuscripts end up in the Junius collection in Oxford rather than in a Frisian Library? This has everything to do with Junius’ interest in Germanic languages. Born in Heidelberg, Junius was raised in the Netherlands and spent major parts of his adult life in England. He studied Frisian as a Germanic language before concentrating on Gothic and Old High German. He began his Germanic studies by learning Frisian during his stay in Fryslan between 1646 and 1648, where he visited Gysbert Japicx. Looking for a Frisian tutor, there seemed to be only one choice: in the mid 1640s Japicx appeared to be the only one who was able to write Frisian. Copying texts, such as Japicx’s poems, seemed to be Junius’ method of learning a language. He took his copies with him when he returned to England, and spent the last two years of his life in Oxford. Junius knew Bodley’s Librarian, and before his death in November 1677 he gave his collection to the Bodleian Library. So the Junius collection is a donation rather than a bequest, as shown from the ‘deed of gift’ in the Bodleian archives.
Junius’ deed of gift, witnessed by Tho(mas) Marshall and Obad(iah) Walker. Library Records c. 1158, fol. 3r (detail), with thanks to Theodora Boorman, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

Dr Johanneke Sytsema, Subject Consultant for Linguistics, Dutch and Frisian

Bibliography


Taylor Institution Library PF1413 HAN 2001


Taylor Institution Library DUTCH.146905.A.1


Taylor Institution Library FRIS.4.D.JAP.7

Japicx, Gysbert. 1821. *Friesche rijmerye, yn trije delen forskaet* : d’earste binne: Ljeafd en bortlike mingeldeutjes; ’t oarde sinte: Gemeine ef Husmannepetaeer en oare kalterije; ’t efterste is Himelsk Harplud; dat is to sizzen utylike fen Davids Psalmen.

Taylor Institution Library VET.FRIS.6


Taylor Institution Library FRIS.SER.1/11


Taylor Institution Library FRIS.SER.1/11
‘Von der Muttersprache zur Sprachmutter’: Yoko Tawada’s Creative Multilingualism

The Taylorian is delighted to be hosting an exhibition celebrating the work of Yoko Tawada, DAAD Writer in Residence at St Edmund Hall for two weeks from 19th February 2017. The exhibition has been curated by Masters student Sheela Mahadevan (MSt Modern Languages), with the help of DAAD-Lektor Christoph Held and Professor Henrike Lähnemann, and will run for the duration of Tawada’s visit. It is open to holders of a Bodleian Reader Card. This blog post is an abbreviated version of the exhibition catalogue prepared by Sheela Mahadevan.

Yoko Tawada was born in 1960 in Tokyo, Japan. From 1982, she did an MA in German literature at Hamburg University, followed by a PhD at Zurich University. Germany is now her home: after living in Hamburg for 22 years, Tawada moved to Berlin in 2006, where she still lives. She writes in both German and Japanese, with the nature of her bilingualism a prominent feature in her work.

Tawada works intensively with German dictionaries when she writes. These are two of those she uses most:
Tawada has won numerous prizes for her work, such as the Adelbert von Chamisso Prize (1996), the Förderpreis für Literatur der Stadt Hamburg (1990), the Lessingförderpreis (1994), as well as numerous Japanese prizes. She was winner of the prestigious Kleist Prize in 2016 (see this extract of the Laudatio by Günter Blamberger given on this occasion).

Tawada writes in a variety of genres and media: novels, poetry, essay collections, plays, and even audio texts. Some of her works are written in Japanese, and then translated into German. Other works are written in German. She rarely translates one language into the other herself, but sometimes writes the same text in both Japanese and German.

Some examples of Tawada's work.


Of course Tawada is not alone in making use of multilingualism in her writing. Other multilingual writers writing in German whose works contain the presence of one or more additional languages, include Paul Celan, Franco Biondi, Franz Kafka, Elias Canetti, Galsan Tschinag, Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Tzvetan Todorov.

Other multilingual works by authors writing in German:
When making deliberate use of several different languages, the way the languages are presented to the reader is a very important consideration. Layout, choice of typeface and clarity of presentation can all influence how the reader perceives the language and culture in relation to others. The Taylorian has examples of bilingual books over several centuries.
The materiality of the book is a vital aspect of Tawada’s works. She experiments with different forms of paper and other materials in her books. Although paper made from plant-based products has been available since the end of the Middle Ages, Tawada chose to have the book cover of Ein Gedicht für ein Buch made from fish skin, since fish and water are important in her works.

“When a book is translated into other languages, you can’t control the translation.”

(Yoko Tawada, Jaipur Literary Festival 2016)

Translating Tawada is undoubtedly a challenge; it often requires a knowledge of both Japanese and German. It poses many ‘problems’: how do we translate neologisms into any language? How do we translate so as to recreate the reading experience of a specific book? For example, in a book that is in German and Japanese, where both languages are to be read in different directions, how is this effect rendered in an English translation? How do we translate into English a German and a Japanese version of the same text?

In this text, Chantal Wright outlines the problems and demonstrates potential solutions when translating Tawada’s work.
Tawada’s works make us reconsider our own relationship with language, creating the feeling that no-one can be comfortable in any language, even our mother tongue. Is it possible to free oneself from language?

We end this post with a variety of comments by Yoko Tawada regarding language and translation, taken from Koiran, Linda, Schreiben in Fremder Sprache - Yoko Tawada und Galsan Tschinag (Munich: Iudicum Verlag, 2009) pp. 257-358:
If you know another language, then the distance between yourself and the mother tongue can be sensed. You aren’t quite so much under the spell of the language. You are released, and only then can you become bold.

If I jump from one language to another while thinking, I sense for a moment that there are quite dark areas without language…if you have fallen into this abyss once, then the mother tongue is quite foreign, I then find Japanese very strange, and German too. This feeling for me is very important: to free oneself from language.

Literary language is in any case never the mother tongue. The way I write in Japanese never equates to the Japanese which I speak, or the Japanese language which I learnt as a child. When one has separated from the language of daily use, this is the moment at which literary language arises, and this is in any case a foreign language.

For a video introduction to the exhibition, please see the links below:

Introduction: On Yoko Tawada  [https://youtu.be/gVxWauXK4fE](https://youtu.be/gVxWauXK4fE)

Exhibition Case 2: Bilingual Layout in Yoko Tawada  [https://youtu.be/rU5Zv36k2iY](https://youtu.be/rU5Zv36k2iY)

Exhibition Case 3: Exophonic Writing in German  [https://youtu.be/I6dd2wPT0HY](https://youtu.be/I6dd2wPT0HY)

Exhibition Case 4: Bilingual Layout  [https://youtu.be/M0z8HMzXqSU](https://youtu.be/M0z8HMzXqSU)

Exhibition Case 5: Bilingual Layout 2  [https://youtu.be/CguyiGUvoc](https://youtu.be/CguyiGUvoc)

Exhibition catalogue by Sheela Mahadevan, MSt student, Oriel College

Text abbreviated for online publication by Emma Huber, German Subject Librarian

This entry was posted in Collections and tagged bilingualism, exhibitions, German, japanese, translation, Yoko Tawada on 15 February 2017 by ferrari.
At the start of the 15th Century, Spain entered its Siglo de Oro, or Golden Age. The country had not only been recently united with the fall of Granada in 1490, but had also grown spectacularly wealthy after Columbus’ voyage to the New World and the subsequent founding of the first transatlantic European colonial empire. This new economic and political power led to increasing patronage of the arts and masterpieces were therefore produced in several areas. Throughout this Golden Age, El Greco helped create a uniquely Spanish style of painting, composers such as Tomás Luis de Victoria and Cristóbal de Morales helped to shape Renaissance music, Miguel de Cervantes wrote the world’s first modern novel with *Don Quijote*, and on the stage Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca perfected a new form of play in the *comedia*, writing several hundred plays between them.

This period of intense artistic and literary creativity in Spain is, naturally, well documented in the collections of the Taylor Institution Library. Students of the Spanish Golden Age, however, may not know that the library is fortunate enough to possess not only a large amount of scholarship on this period of history, but also several early editions of works by the most celebrated authors and playwrights of the era. This blog post aims to highlight the richness of the Taylorian’s holdings from this period and also to provide a brief introduction to one book: *El parte veynte de las comedias de Lope de Vega Carpio* (Shelfmark 270.G.20).

This book, published in 1630, contains a collection of plays written by perhaps the most famous Spanish playwright, Lope Félix de Vega Carpio. Born in 1562 and described by his contemporary Cervantes as ‘un…ingenio de estos reinos’ [a genius of these kingdoms] (Thacker, 2007: 26), Lope de Vega certainly led an extraordinary life. As Ignacio Arellano and Carlos Mata (2011) point out, he married twice and had several long standing extra-marital affairs before ending his life as a priest. Despite this religious conversion, however, his final years were not to be happy. After several personal tragedies and the loss of his favourite son and second wife in childbirth, one of the greatest Spanish authors of the period died in what Arellano and Mata (2011: 158) aptly describe as ‘cansancio y…soledad’ [fatigue and loneliness] in 1612.

Lope, however, was not only extraordinary in terms of his life experiences, but also in terms of his literary innovation. The playwright essentially revolutionised theatre in Spain, creating and defining the *comedia nueva* in his artistic manifesto *El Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* (1609). This new form of play was, as Thacker (2002: 7) points out, ‘a hybrid form of popular theatre’ that was defined by a mixture of tragedy and comedy. Normally consisting of three equal length acts, the genre proved to be extremely popular in Spain and scholars now attribute 600-800 individual works to Lope de Vega alone.

This twentieth part of the *comedias* may only contain 12 plays from this impressive number attributed to the playwright, but they nevertheless demonstrate the range of the genre. This can be emphasised by a short analysis of just one of the *comedias* in this collection, *Arauco Domado* (1625). In this play, Lope de Vega dramatizes the conflict between the Spanish settlers and the Mapuche people in the territory that is now Chile, depicting an expanding Spanish-speaking world.
The work begins with the arrival of García Hurtado de Mendoza to Chile, the viceroy of Peru from 1590-96, and describes the subsequent conflict between him and Caupolicán, the military leader of the Mapuches. Interestingly, the narrative shows a native perspective of the conflict, with Lope describing in detail the relationship between Caupolicán and his wife Fresia. After several battles between the two leaders, Caupolicán is captured by the Spanish and sentenced to death. As his capture dishonours him, his wife Fresia ends the play by throwing their baby son at his feet and killing him. In this play, Lope therefore takes the classic comedia theme of honour, but transfers it to the New World, introducing a native voice in the process.

This play, however, is significant not only for its content, but also for its publication history as it demonstrates increasing communication, and conflict, among Spanish Golden Age writers. This is because Lope’s Arauco Domado is actually a dramatic version of an epic poem of the same name written by Pedro de Oña. Considered the first poet of Chile, de Oña wrote his version of Arauco Domado in 1596 for its protagonist, García Hurtado de Mendoza. As de Oña was commissioned by Hurtado de Mendoza, it naturally presents him in a positive light and, as reflected in Lope’s later work, his adversary Caupolicán negatively. Written completely in Spanish and avoiding any reference to native terminology, this work is therefore a deliberate attempt to defend Hurtado de Mendoza’s reputation: one that had been seriously damaged following the publication of another important Golden Age work, La Araucana, written by Alonso de Ercilla and published in three parts between 1569 and 1589. As Ercilla was condemned to death by Hurtado de Mendoza in 1558, La Araucana naturally presents this conflict in a completely different way to de Oña and Lope de Vega. Hurtado de Mendoza is, instead, vilified and the Mapuche are portrayed as a noble people defending their homeland against foreign aggression, an idea encapsulated in the portrayal of Caupolicán not as a coward, but as a brave chieftain compared to classical heroes.

This comedia, therefore, is a useful resource not only because of the way it portrays Spain and the New World, but also because it shows increasing communication among Spanish Golden Age writers and their differing representations of the same historical events.

Also of note in this volume are the three aprobaciones [endorsements] that appear at the start. As the Inquisition wanted to impede the spread of heretical ideas in Early Modern Spain, books had to be endorsed by both secular and religious authorities, and this volume is no exception. Juana de José Prades (1971: 114) points out that Lope de Vega may have emphasised the importance of ‘libertad absoluta para el dramaturgo en la elección de temas’ [absolute freedom for the playwright in the choice of topic] in his Arte Nuevo de Hacer Comedias en este tiempo, but the inclusion of these three aprobaciones demonstrates that this freedom was constrained by both the Church and the monarchy.
In the first aprobación, for example, the plays are declared to support ‘la piedad de la Fé’ [the piety of the faith]; in the second, the approval of the ‘Real Consejo’ [Regal Council] is emphasized; and, in the final one, the fact that the book ‘no contiene cosa contra nuestra Santa Fe’ [does not contain anything against our holy faith] is equally highlighted. Arauco Domado and the history behind it may reveal both communication and disagreement among writers of this period, but the three aprobaciones at the start of the volume reveal that freedom of expression certainly had its limitations.

Although this volume may not contain the best-known of Lope de Vega’s comedias, it is not only interesting for the content of the plays included, but also as an object in itself, revealing much about the Spanish-speaking world and the political nature of book publishing throughout the Spanish Golden Age. This blog post has provided only a brief introduction to the collections available at the library, but Taylorian readers interested in the Spanish Golden Age can consult a variety of early works from the period. These range from other early works by Lope de Vega such as the Segunda parte de las comedias de Lope de Vega Carpio (Shelfmark: ARCH.8o.SP.1611) to early editions of Don Quijote by Cervantes from 1672-3 (Shelfmarks: BUTLER.CLARKE.O.4 and BUTLER.CLARKE.O.5) and an early volume of comedias by Lope’s successor, Pedro Calderón de la Barca from 1687 (Shelfmark: VET.SPA.N.I.B.104 (v.3)).

William Shire, Graduate Library Trainee
Taylor Institution Library

Bibliography:

Primary Text:

De Vega, Lope (1630), El parte veynte de las comedias de Lope de Vega, Barcelona: Esteuan Liberos.
[This volume contains the following 12 comedias, published between 1625 and 1630: La Discreta Vengança; Lo Cierto por lo Dudoso; Pobreza no es Vileza; Arauco Domado; La Ventura sin buscalla; El Valiente Cespedes; El Hombre por su Palabra; Roma Abrasada; Virtud, Pobreza y Muger; El Rey sin Reyno; El mejor Moço en España and El Marido más Firme.]

Sources:


Thacker, Jonathan (2002), Role-Play and the World as Stage in the Comedia, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
The Pring-Mill Collection: Nicaragua — Part III

The Testimonio (Testimonial Literature)

Part I of this series of blog posts introduced the Robert Pring-Mill collection at the Taylor Institution Library and explored Nicaraguan poetry. The second part focused on serial publications, pamphlets and grey literature. Last but not least, Part III discusses the genre known as testimonial literature.

The Pring-Mill collection includes some very interesting books documenting the trajectory of the revolution from its early beginnings. A recurring form found in Latin American literature of that time, the testimonio flourished in Nicaragua during the course of the revolution and was developed, according to Beverley and Zimmermann (1990), by the American feminist and academic Margaret Randall in her various publications. Randall lived for many years in Nicaragua and published her well-known book Sandino’s Daughters, the story of the women who fought in the revolution, in 1981. Also in the Pring-Mill collection is her book Risking a Somersault in the Air: Conversations with Nicaraguan Writers (1984), comprising 12 interviews with some of Nicaragua’s most important writers/revolutionaries. Randall also wrote the introduction and transcribed the story of Doris Tijerino in Doris Tijerino: Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution (1978), which tells the story of one woman’s life, shaped by the country’s struggle, as an illustration of women’s experiences everywhere in times of tyranny and war. Cristianos en la Revolución (1983) comprises Randall’s interviews with some of the most important figures in the new revolutionary government, some of whom were also integrating liberation theology with the Nicaraguan movement: Ernesto Cardenal, the then Minister of Culture; Uriel Molina, director of the religious centre Antonio Valdivieso; and Luis Carrión, Commander of the Revolution and Deputy Minister of the Interior.
Barricada: Corresponsales de Guerra (1983) was a newspaper launched during the insurgency period as a means to counter the government-owned media and it became the official organ of the FSLN. It is a journalistic account of five war testimonials of events between March and June 1983 by a group of war correspondents who take up arms. It includes photographs in black and white of the involvement of these war correspondents in their first experience of war and how they bonded with other Sandinista militias while following them into combat.
In the tradition of Bartolome de las Casas’ *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies, 1552), priest Teófilo Cabestrero published *Nicaragua: Crónica de una sangre inocente* (1985), an account of 60 civilian testimonials as victims of atrocities and crimes in Nicaragua at that time. It describes how the peasant population of Latin America was the primary victim of the violent social, economic and political struggles.

Published by the new revolutionary publisher Nueva Nicaragua, *Sandino: Enfrenta al imperialismo* (1981) is a large, beautiful collection of black and white photographs drawn from Nicaraguan citizens’ photographs taken during the revolutionary struggle led by Augusto Sandino (1927-1933). This book was published for the 47th anniversary of the death of Augusto Sandino (1934) by the Junta de Gobierno de Reconstrucción Nacional. Divided into nine parts, it documents the main players of the time and their movements, including Sandino’s travels through Mexico.
Another large book of black and white photographs is *Nicaragua: A Decade of Revolution* (1991) with an introduction by Eduardo Galeano and edited by Lou Dematteis with Chris Vail. It is a chronology of snapshots of Nicaragua from 1979, the year of the overthrow of dictator Anastasio Somoza, until 1990, the year of the election victory of Violeta Chamorro. These photographs offer a brutal but realistic documentation of the triumphs and tragedies of these years.

The Pring-Mill collection contains other publications documenting, through photography, Nicaragua during different periods and through different lenses, as well as many other books, magazines, journals and grey literature — too many to describe here but which are definitely worth further investigation. One of my favourites is the book *Carlos Para Todos* (1987). A biography of Carlos Fonseca and history of Nicaragua from 1936 onwards, it is illustrated, in comic-book style, by the illustrator and political cartoonist Eduardo del Rio, known by his pen name Rius.
Readers may know him as the author of the very popular book *Marx For Beginners* which started the *For Beginners* series. Employing his characteristic style and satire he gives a short and simple narrative of Nicaragua from 1936, the year in which the Nicaraguan teacher and librarian Carlos Fonseca, founder of the FSLN, was born. The book tells Fonseca’s story with help of comic-book illustrations, photographs, and articles in an anarchic and accessible style.

I am very grateful to Joanne Edwards and Frank Egerton for giving me the possibility to freely explore this collection and learn so much about a country that is seldom in the mainstream media and yet whose influence on Latin American literature and identity, in terms of its committed poetry and also its liberation theology, has been so powerful.

*Natalia Bermúdez Qvortrup*
*University College of Oslo and Akershus*
*Intern, Social Science Library, Bodleian Libraries*

**Further reading**


Want to Create an Impact? How the Taylorian can help

Introduction

The Faculty of Modern Languages has an established tradition of using original library materials (including early printed books, etc.) not only for research but also for teaching at all levels. In supporting this, the Taylor Institution Library has sought to acquire books of valuable academic content for use by academics and students alike, rather than focus on fine or pristine editions.

The Library recognises that its collections provide opportunities for valuable user engagement activities. This document highlights some of the ways the Library is able to support these activities, and the related procedures in place. There are opportunities for public engagement across the Bodleian Libraries.

Exhibitions

Bodleian Library/Weston Library

Short-term Displays
The Bodleian Library may be able to provide display cases in the Weston Library for small exhibitions to coincide with workshops and conferences. These displays are normally on view for a few days only. They are open to the public. Materials on display must be held by the Bodleian Library/Weston Library.

Larger Displays
Proposals are also welcomed for larger displays in the Weston Library or the Proscholium to the Old Library. Proposals should be submitted at least one year in advance. Displays usually last for up to eight weeks.

Major Exhibitions
Major, longer term exhibitions are held in the Weston Library’s temporary exhibition gallery. They are planned several years in advance. Examples include Shakespeare’s Dead (2016).

Your Subject Librarian can put you in touch with the relevant Bodleian/Weston staff member/s if you would like to discuss curating a display or exhibition in one of the above-mentioned spaces. If a physical...
display space is not available, then a virtual display may be another option, making use of the interactive screens in Blackwell Hall.

**Taylor Institution Library**

Exhibitions in the Taylor Institution Library are held in the Voltaire Room. They are designed to showcase the Taylorian’s collections. They are on view for approximately two weeks and are not open to the general public, but can be made more visible through blog posts, exhibition catalogues, accompanying events, and social media.

Academics and students are very welcome to curate such exhibitions, in liaison with the relevant Subject Librarian. Please be aware that many Subject Librarians work part-time only. Hence it is highly advisable to contact your Subject Librarian at least 2-3 months in advance to discuss an exhibition proposal.

**Conferences**

If you are organising a conference or other event and think an accompanying exhibition appropriate, this should be factored in at the very beginning of the planning process and discussed with your Subject Librarian at that time. Any accompanying exhibition catalogue or other publication should also be discussed at this stage.

**Temporary displays**

If you are organising an event that does not require a full exhibition (e.g. to accompany a research seminar/evening event), the Library may be able to help organise a temporary display. Display items are selected and shown in the appropriate seminar room for the duration of the event rather than in the Voltaire Room exhibition cases. Please contact your Subject Librarian at least 4 weeks in advance to discuss temporary displays.

**Conservation/Vulnerable Materials**

In order to preserve our collections for continued use by researchers, the Library reserves the right to withhold items from exhibitions if they are fragile or otherwise unsuitable for display.

**Library Staff Support**

- The Library is happy to assist with promoting the exhibition. Library staff will help produce and print posters, will circulate details to college libraries, and will promote the exhibition on appropriate mailing lists and the Library’s website, as well as through social media. Poster design must be finalised four weeks before the exhibition. It should include the phrase “Taylor Institution Library” and the Bodleian Libraries’ logo. If you require professional quality printing this must be arranged separately. The Library is not able to cover external printing costs.
- Captions, details of book openings and accompanying display text must be provided at least two weeks in advance, to allow for consistent formatting and laminating (which will be done by the Library). Text will be headed with the phrase “Taylor Institution Library” and the Bodleian Libraries’ logo.
- Library staff will install the exhibition on the date agreed. Given sufficient notice, library staff may be able to collaborate in presenting the exhibition.
- Exhibition catalogues: See Print on Demand Publications (below).
Exhibitions Policy, Procedures and Timescale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Action (academics/students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-3 months before (minimum)</td>
<td>Contact your Subject Librarian to discuss the feasibility of your exhibition proposal and whether to have accompanying catalogue. Verify the Voltaire (or alternative) Room’s availability for your proposed display dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks before</td>
<td>Provide a complete list of items required for the exhibition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 weeks before</td>
<td>Finalise poster design, in consultation with the Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks before</td>
<td>Provide captions, details of book openings and accompanying display text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Print on Demand Publications

The Library is able to publish short-run publications such as exhibition catalogues, translations and facsimiles of out-of-copyright texts. These publications must make use of the Library’s collections in some way. The published books are then available from online booksellers such as Blackwell’s, Waterstone’s and Amazon. The title page should include the phrase “Taylor Institution Library” and the Bodleian Libraries’ logo.

Please discuss your requirements with Emma Huber, Subject Librarian for German and the Library’s digital publications co-ordinator, at least 3 months before your desired publication date.

Approximately 40 copies must be sold in order for the library to break even on the publication costs. Conference organisers are advised to factor the price of the catalogue (usually about £3) into the conference fee and provide each delegate with a copy in order to ensure costs are covered. If Print on Demand is not suitable for your publication, please still discuss this with Emma Huber, as alternative solutions may be available.
print on demand policy, procedures and timescale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 weeks before</td>
<td>Contact Emma Huber (<a href="mailto:emma.huber@bodleian.ox.ac.uk">emma.huber@bodleian.ox.ac.uk</a>) to discuss your publication proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-6 weeks before</td>
<td>Submit formatted text, including typesetting, cover design, completion of relevant publisher information forms. Text should include the phrase “Taylor Institution Library” and the Bodleian Libraries’ logo on the title page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks before</td>
<td>Submit finished, proof-read copy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taylor Institution Library Blog

The Taylor Institution Library blog is curated by the staff of the Taylor Institution Library.

The aim of the blog is to highlight items of interest in the Library’s collections and contribute to bibliographical scholarship in modern languages and linguistics. Contributions focus on important new acquisitions, items in the Taylorian’s Special Collections, less well-known materials, unusual or alternative formats, and projects, events and research using the Library’s collections.

Guest posts on the Taylorian blog are very welcome. Posts are published on a two-weekly cycle (approximately). Please speak to your Subject Librarian at the beginning of the exhibition planning stages if you would like your post to coincide with a particular event. Posts must discuss the Library’s collections in some way, but do not have to relate to an exhibition or event.

Other library blogs which welcome guest posts include:

- The Conveyor: Research in Special Collections at the Bodleian Library
- Archives and Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library

Social Media

The library has Twitter and Facebook accounts, both with a large readership. The library usually retweets anything which makes reference to the library’s collections, which can help to raise the profile of researchers and their work. Remember to include [@TAYoxford](https://twitter.com/TAYoxford) in your tweets, and if posting images from our collections please remember to check they are out of copyright, and reference them properly with a shelf mark!

Library-related hash tags to which you might wish to contribute include:

- #marginaliamonday  
- #woodcutwednesday  
- #flyleaffriday

Library accounts to follow:

- Taylor Institution Library [@TAYoxford](https://twitter.com/TAYoxford)
- Bodleian Libraries [@bodleianlibs](https://twitter.com/bodleianlibs)
- Bodleian Libraries Special Collections [@bodleiancsb](https://twitter.com/bodleiancsb)
- Bodleian Conservation [@BodCons](https://twitter.com/BodCons)

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any more suggestions or would like more information about any of the topics covered in this blog.
This entry was posted in Collections and tagged book displays, exhibitions, impact, print on demand, public engagement, research, social media on 7 November 2016 by Dan Q.
Working from north to south, on the east side are the Lamb & Flag public house, St John's College, the Oxford Internet Institute, Balliol College, and Trinity College. The street is closed to traffic for two days each September for the traditional St Giles' Fair. Formerly, the University Parks was also closed to demonstrate that they are owned by the University of Oxford rather than formally being public. Exhibition launches today at the Taylor Institution Library: "Identities in Transit: Portuguese Women Artists since 1950." Focusing on Paula Rego, Lourdes de Castro, Menez, Maria Valho de Costa and Ana Hatherly. 10-24 March in the Voltaire Room - come and take a look! #transnational #women #artists See more. In Room 2, 5pm tonight, here @TAYOxford it's time for this term's @OxMedStud Seminar, this time, it's a 'Medieval Roadshow'.

© 2019 Bodleian Libraries | Accessibility | Privacy Policy | Terms of Use | Cookies