



Yale University

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Exchange Scholarship Year at Yale University

This year I was fortunate enough that my application to Yale University to be an exchange scholar at the English faculty there was approved and accepted. Royal Holloway has a number of exchange agreements with high-end research institutions all across the world, but Yale's reputation for academic excellence and its department of professors conducting research closely related to the subject matter of my own PhD made it an especially appealing choice. I was additionally honoured because whereas the usual exchange agreement between the two institutions usually covered a period of one academic term only, the English department at Yale had reviewed my application portfolio and had generously offered me the option to remain in the faculty there for a whole academic year, instead of the normal 80 days. This was extremely flattering but prompted some difficult decisions for me to make. Namely, although my funding from my Royal Holloway college scholarship could, if I was frugal, stretch far enough to cover the additional costs of flights to the US and foreign living costs for a single term, it would certainly not cover the costs for the extended period of a whole year.



It was in this context that I applied for the Royal Holloway Travel award. It is needless to say that the fact that my application was accepted was truly and quite literally a life-changing opportunity, without any exaggeration. The thought that my chance to embark on a mere 80

day research trip had suddenly transformed itself into the opportunity to undertake an entire scholarship year abroad at one of the world's most esteemed universities, was a honour that I was deeply sensible of, and one that I have never since lost my appreciation of.

It is for this reason that I cannot praise highly enough the opportunities that the Royal Holloway Travel fund enables. Since being awarded the travel grant, I have enrolled at Yale University for the whole year and submit this report from one of the reading rooms of the Sterling Memorial library, one of the research hubs at Yale University (see picture attached). Since being here, the classes I have taken on the relationship between literature and philosophy in eighteenth-century thought have already greatly enhanced the scope of my source-material and broader understanding for my own research on the emergence of the concepts of adolescence and sexual identity in British literature. The specificity of Yale's teaching style and the idiosyncracies of the wider academic culture here have also given me fresh insights into innovations and methodologies that I can build into in my own seminars teaching undergraduate students when I return to Royal Holloway. Moreover, the travel grant's facilitation of gaining such an additional amount of time here has meant that I have been able to invest time in making invaluable research connections and networking opportunities that would never have been possible in a more limited, time-constrained period. My time at Yale will be an invaluable asset for my prospects of a career in academia, and the opportunity to spend an entire year here is one that has truly enhanced and enriched both my thesis and the quality of my overall doctoral experience. I am a firm supporter of the aims of the travel grant and the opportunities it enables, and heartily encourage any other researchers in positions like mine to apply for the award – it is impossible to predict the amount of research and opportunities that it can produce.

