

I am an Assistant professor of Critical Thinking and First-Year Studies in the School of General Studies. I am writing to request R&PD funding which would provide resources for a necessary trip to a rare book library—the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin—a student research assistant, and a stipend for my time. I will be conducting textual scholarship to support my ongoing editorial project for volume 6 of the *Cambridge Complete Works of Aphra Behn* (Cambridge University Press 2022).

#### Aims and objectives

My project consists of editing a modern edition of Aphra Behn's 1684-7 novel, *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*. I am taking the 1680s texts (base-texts) and creating an up-to-date modern text (hereafter referred to as the Cambridge text). This project requires full copyediting and annotation of the text, as well as the creation of a head note (10,000 words), which outlines key information on *Love-Letters'* sources.

*Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* was printed in three volumes (1684, 1685, and 1687) and has been considered the first British novel. This prose work fictionalizes two historical events: the 1682 trial of Ford, Lord of Werk for seducing and abducting his sister-in-law Henrietta Berkeley; and the Monmouth (or West Country) Rebellion of 1685, when Charles II's illegitimate son tried to steal the throne from his uncle James II. Published anonymously and widely read and reprinted, it is one of the most important 17th-century texts in the British canon. I have been solicited by the head editors of *The Complete Works* to be the sole editor of this text, which demonstrates my recognized world-wide expertise as an Aphra Behn scholar. Professors from the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Canada, and the United States are all working on this project. Accurate work is central to my continued international reputation.

The Harry Ransom Center, located at the University of Texas at Austin, is an internationally-renowned humanities research library and museum. The collection would allow me to access over 7 editions of *Love-Letters*, including the *only* edition in the US that was published in Behn's life time. This is a vital text to examine because the Cambridge edition is using lifetime editions for its base-texts. This text also seems to be a significantly altered first edition, which greatly influences the final modern edition. These books are not available for circulation; the electronic counterpart I have (from the online archives, Early English Books Online) is a very different text from the Texas base-text; I need to address 200+ textual discrepancies between the online editions and the Cambridge text. The original books will clarify any inconsistencies, including checking for stop-press corrections (when the printer noticed an error such as an upside down "a," stopped the press and fixed it) and any other inconsistencies (missing and reversed page numbers, pages bound in an incorrect order). These findings will be used to correct and stabilize the Cambridge text.

Though I applied to the Ransom Center for funding as a library fellow, I have not been successful in that application. It is my hope that by visiting the Center and further clarifying my research goals and objectives to more closely align with their institutional objectives, I will be able to successfully apply for a Ransom Visiting Fellowship in the 2020-21 AY.

#### Background work accomplished

I have been working on this project since 2018, when I began in-depth background research on Behn's life and work, 17<sup>th</sup>-century publication methods and history, and historical events. Last year, I completed the first draft of all footnotes of the first 230 pages, drafted 3,000 words of the headnotes, and received extensive notes for revision from my editor.

For instance, I have done extensive archival research on the Trial of Lord Grey, both in the British National Archives online and at Yale University libraries. I have found both historical records of the incident (such as snippets in the daily press) and a transcript of the actual court trial. I have conducted research on topics such as 17<sup>th</sup>-century publishers and printing practices, the rituals of dueling, and French history (in order to avoid prosecution by the censors, Behn claims that *Love-Letters* is a translation of events of the Fronde, a civil war in France between 1648 – 1653).

Footnotes include explaining any textual choices (that is, textual emendations) when the base-texts differ. For instance, a note might explain that though the base-text reads “pistol” (a gun) really what is meant is “pistolet” (money), because it is unlikely a character received 1000 guns to pay for her gown; this word is chosen for the Cambridge text and annotated. Additionally, I offer up-to-date definitions of words. For example, “wit” in the 1680s referred to mental capacity and intelligence; now it means a natural aptitude for quick verbal humor. “She was intelligent” means something different than “She made pithy jokes.”

Statement of the Procedures/Methodology.

There are three levels of work I will conduct this summer. The first is a letter-by-letter comparison between the Cambridge text and the base texts. For this part of the project, a Stockton RA and I will be spelling out 300+ pages of the Cambridge text in order to compare them with those printed in the 1680s. We sit together and read a line of text in the following way: “capital el, oh, vee, ee, hyphen, capital ell, ee, tee, tee, ee, are, ess, new line...” My assistant then checks each letter in the base text and we note inconsistencies. This is a necessary task because each word must be transcribed correctly—in literary studies words are central to our work. The wrong word affects meaning and significance. We need to make sure that there are no typos in the Cambridge text, such as changing word order from “character Philander of” to “character of Philander.” Alternate spellings must be noted and updated (“cry” for “crie”) in order to assist the modern reader and then annotated, so that interested readers will know the base-text spelling. We also make note of 17<sup>th</sup>-century typos (as in the pistolet example above). This work is impossible to do alone, making a research assistant a crucial part of this task.

The second level of work addresses questions that arise from scanned copies. From the above exercise, we make a list of questions that cannot be reconciled by comparisons to the online text. For instance, when the electronic copy was scanned, the pins that held back the pages sometimes cover important words. Sometimes ink smears cover questionable words (is it “there” or “theatre” when both could make sense?). Only one edition is available online (a copy from the Bodleian Library at Oxford), but the Ransom Center has 7 editions that can be cross-checked for these kinds of questions. From there we can make emendations and, of course, annotate them.

The final level of work, is to read the text out loud to check it for logical reading sense. Through this process, I can make decisions about punctuation that will help the modern reader make sense of already difficult sentences. And, unsurprisingly, these changes must be annotated.

By September 2019, I will have finalized the emendations and notes for the first 450+ pages of this 600+-page work.

TIMELINE	textual emendations	footnotes written	headnote task
June	revision: p 1-229 notes for Texas base-text	draft of pages 230-420 notes for Texas base-text	revise “Lord Grey”

July	revision: p 1-229; make notes for Texas base-text	draft of pages 230-420 notes for Texas base-text	research and draft "Dedicatory Epistle"
August	comparisons Texas base-text; punctuation emendations	conduct research for footnotes	research and draft "Incest in the 17 <sup>th</sup> c"

### Importance/Value and Project Outcomes

Aphra Behn is one of the most important English writers of the Restoration period, and one of the most significant women writers in any country and any age. Few other writers match such levels of excellence across multiple genres, or have been so well connected within the diverse literary networks of their own time. Her importance within English women's literary history is well known, having been recognized at least since Virginia Woolf's declaration in 1929 that "All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn..., for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds." Over the past two decades, Behn's specific significance within Restoration literary and theatrical culture has been more fully revealed. She was a leading dramatist of the Restoration with relationships with writers like Rochester and Dryden. She was a pioneering author of fiction and her prose work is considered deeply influential to the rise of the novel.

This project will result in a scholarly publication at Cambridge University Press, one of the world's most prestigious publishers and its oldest running press. This edition will become the standard edition of Aphra Behn's works and appear in print (with a target-audience of university-library users), and online (subscription-only, so most universities and major public libraries). It will also be possible for people to order, through the CUP website, their own selection of texts, combined into a single volume. This edition will be the one of choice for scholars and students. The R&PD funding will ensure that I can deliver the first 400+ pages to my editors at Cambridge by September 1, 2019.

### Budget and Budget Justification

4-credit course release:	\$6100
Flight from Philly to Austin TX:	\$ 400 (approx. roundtrip in July-Aug)
Austin airport to accommodation:	\$ 55 (approx. roundtrip from airport to downtown)
Accommodations:	\$1080 (approx. 10 nights at \$180/night)
Student research assistant:	<u>\$1000</u> (\$10/hr 100 hours)
Total cost:	\$8635

I am requesting \$8635 to help offset these costs and financially support my research this summer.

### Supplementary materials

Cambridge Contract  
Flight estimate  
Transportation estimate  
Accommodation estimate