

## Exercise: Advanced Search

This 10-minute exercise asks you to query the same writer in 4 different library catalogs and compare the experience and the results of each search. Your goal is to take notes on how these catalogs differ, how your search results differ, and what this teaches us about the information we acquire, implicit bias while cataloging, and how to begin to challenge how libraries organize collections. It is okay if you don't find what you're looking for as long as you learn from the search.

### Your search terms:

- Frances Burney
- Lord Byron
- Amelia Opie
- Werther

### Your library catalogs or databases:

- Francis Stainforth's library catalog: <http://Stainforth.scu.edu>
- Ann Yearsley's library catalog:  
[https://stainforth.scu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Yearsley\\_Ann\\_Catalogue\\_of\\_Library\\_1793.pdf](https://stainforth.scu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Yearsley_Ann_Catalogue_of_Library_1793.pdf)
- The New York Public Library Catalog: <https://catalog.nypl.org/>
- Google [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

### Directions: Do these steps and make notes below them.

1. Pick a search term from the list that you will stick with for the rest of the questions.
2. Query that search term in Francis Stainforth's library catalog (1866):  
<http://stainforth.scu.edu>. Record (a) how you searched for the term and (b) what you found in the catalog relating to the term.
3. Query the same search term in [Ann Yearsley's library catalog](#) (1793). Record (a) how you searched for the term and (b) what you found in the catalog relating to the term.

4. Query the very same term in The New York Public Library's catalog: <https://catalog.nypl.org/>. Record (a) how you searched for the term and (b) what you found in the catalog relating to the term.
  
5. Query the same term in Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)). Record (a) how you searched for the term and (b) what you found in the catalog relating to the term.
  
6. What does comparing your search experiences and results reveal?

**Closing “big picture” questions:**

1. Comparing library catalog entries seems far afield from traditional literary studies and ventures into Digital Humanities and book history. Where does this exercise fit within a (Romantic) literature course? What do students gain from this exercise and from thinking about knowledge infrastructures in relation to Romanticism?
2. In addition to collaborating with the library, how else might we break down artificial disciplinary boundaries that limit our teaching and our research?
3. What are the benefits and challenges of (hypothetically) requiring English majors to take a course in literary recovery or non-canonical writers and texts?