



# Digitizing “Chinese Englishmen”

*Archival Silences and Creating a Nineteenth-Century “Postcolonial” Archive*

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*Adeline Koh, Ph.D. Duke U & Richard Stockton College. Twitter: @adelinekoh Website: [adelinekoh.org](http://adelinekoh.org)*



# Miriam Posner: Blog

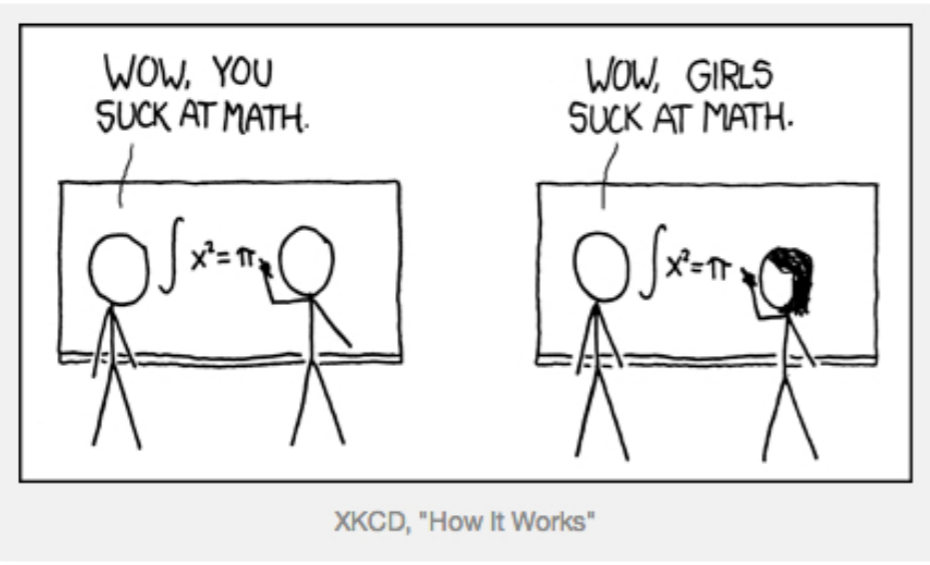
About Miriam CV Projects

← The wind in the trees: Regimes of attention

Things we share →

## Some things to think about before you exhort everyone to code

Posted on February 29, 2012 by Miriam



Oh, how I hate being the bearer of bad news. Yet I feel I have to tell you something about the frustration I'm hearing, in whispers and on the backchannel, from early-career women involved in digital humanities.

Here, there, and everywhere, we're being

told: [A DHer should code!](#) Don't know how? Learn! [The work that's getting noticed](#), one can't help but see, is code. As digital humanities winds its way into academic departments, it seems reasonable to predict that the work that will get people jobs — the work that marks a real digital humanist — will be work that shows that you can code.

[And that work is overwhelmingly by men.](#) There are some [important exceptions](#), but the pattern is pretty clear.

### About me

My name is Miriam Posner, and I coordinate and teach in the Digital Humanities program at the University of California, Los Angeles. You can read more about me [here](#). I am currently on maternity leave, so please note that it's difficult for me to respond to emails and comments.

 Search

### Archives

- [November 2012](#)
- [October 2012](#)
- [September 2012](#)
- [August 2012](#)
- [July 2012](#)
- [May 2012](#)
- [March 2012](#)
- [February 2012](#)
- [January 2012](#)
- [December 2011](#)

# Challenges to the Digital Humanities Community

- ❖ Overemphasis on coding? (“Culture of code”)
- ❖ Invisible privileging of middle-class white men?
- ❖ How does DH nurse unconscious biases in race, class, gender, disability?



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a blog post on the website miriamposner.com. The page title is "Some things to think about before you exhort everyone to code", posted on February 29, 2012. The post features a two-panel comic strip from XKCD titled "How It Works". In the first panel, a man says "WOW, YOU SUCK AT MATH." to a woman who is pointing at a whiteboard with the equation  $x^2 = \pi$ . In the second panel, the man says "WOW, GIRLS SUCK AT MATH." to a woman who is pointing at the same whiteboard. The text of the post discusses the frustration of hearing such comments and the difficulty of responding to them, particularly in the context of digital humanities. The page also includes navigation links for "About Miriam", "CV", and "Projects", and a sidebar with "About me" and "Archives" sections.

# DIGITAL HUMANITIES NOW

Discover the Best of Digital Humanities Scholarship

## EDITORS' CHOICE

### EDITORS' CHOICE: ARCHIVAL SILENCES ROUND-UP

By Ted Underwood, Katherine Harris, Adeline Koh, Roger Whitson, and Natalia Cecire | March 5, 2012

Ted Underwood, [Big but not distant](#), March 3, 2012

It's true that DH doesn't *have* to be identified with scale. But the fact remains that problems of scale constitute a huge blind spot for individual researchers, and also define a problem that we know computers can help us explore. And when you first go into an area that was a blind spot for earlier generations of scholars, you're almost guaranteed to find research opportunities — lying out on the ground like lumps of gold you don't have to mine.

Katherine Harris, [Big Data, DH, Gender: Silence in the Archives?](#), March 3, 2012

Ted Underwood's tremendous undertaking, reading Miriam Posner's blog post, "[Some things to think about before you exhort everyone to code](#)," and reading the really interesting (and enormous) set of comments by the DH community on both posts, I was moved to tweet about a recent data set. *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* came out with its latest journal edition which includes an [interesting article about big data, aesthetics and the long 18th century in literature](#). (Yep, as a Romanticist, I too bristle that some fields persist in trying to subsume Romantic-era literature into the long 18th or 19th centuries...but that's another story about administrative politics in underfunded departments.)

Adeline Koh, [Addressing Archival Silence on 19th Century Colonialism – Part](#)

#### Search DHNow

 Search

#### News

- Job: Early Career Research Associate in Digital Sociology, Cambridge, deadline January 25, 2013
- Resource: Research Data Curation Bibliography, updated 1/14/2013
- Resource: Anthologize 0.7
- CFP: Electronic Literature Organization, 2013 Paris
- CFParticipation: IMLS WebWise Conference, March 2013, Baltimore
- CFParticipation: Global Outlook::Digital Humanities (GO::DH) Group
- Opportunity: 2013 Summer Internship Opportunities at Berkman Center, Harvard
- Opportunity: PhD in the Production of Literature Graduate Research Fellowships – Digital Humanities, Carleton U.
- Opportunity: Dodson Visiting Professor of Information Studies,



A PRESSFORWARD PUBLICATION

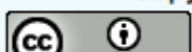
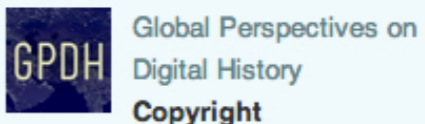


Digital Humanities Now showcases the scholarship and news of interest to the digital humanities community, through a process of aggregation, discovery, curation, and review. Learn more about our community-driven identification and evaluation system, which determines the content of the DHNow site and its quarterly journal, the Journal of Digital Humanities.

#### Follow DHNow



#### Other Publications



# Posner: “Silences” in DH

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Especially in terms of representation of women + minorities

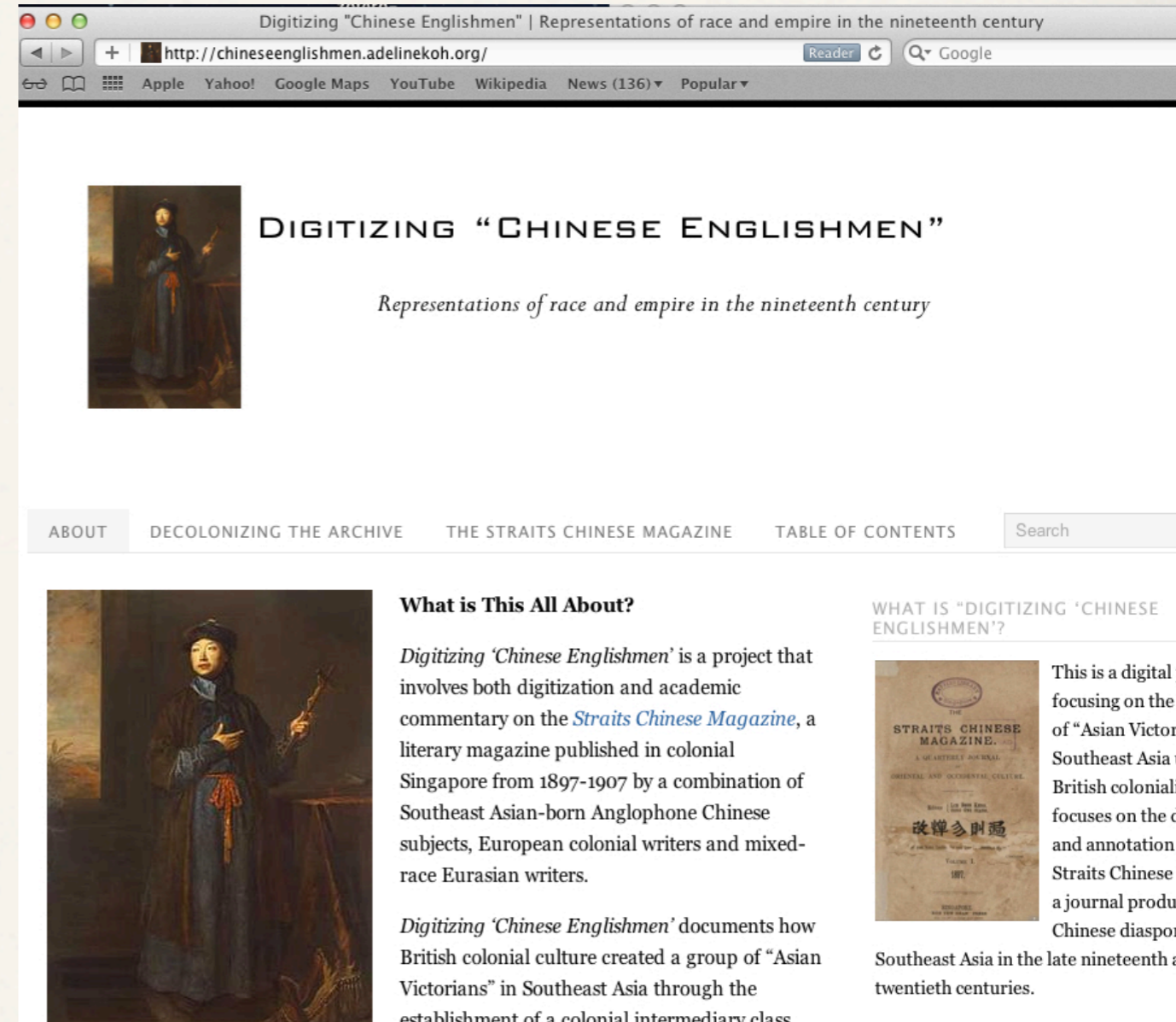
# Today: probe a *specific* silence

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silence on *race and colonialism* in the nineteenth century archive

# Today's presentation

- ❖ Silence towards race & colonialism in 19th century digital archive
- ❖ Existing 19th century digital archive tends towards presentation & documentation of white European & American writers
- ❖ Existing projects obscure connections of England to Empire
- ❖ Discuss *Digitizing Chinese Englishmen*:  
<http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org>
  - ❖ Project on Anglophone writing in SE Asia
  - ❖ Project attempts to address bias in *content* and *form*
- ❖ Project is “postcolonial” in the ways it attempts to examine and question imperialist ideology through way the archive is structured, and by the representation of work by people of color



Digitizing "Chinese Englishmen" | Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century

<http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/>

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## DIGITIZING "CHINESE ENGLISHMEN"

*Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century*


ABOUT DECOLONIZING THE ARCHIVE THE STRAITS CHINESE MAGAZINE TABLE OF CONTENTS Search

### What is This All About?

*Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'* is a project that involves both digitization and academic commentary on the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, a literary magazine published in colonial Singapore from 1897-1907 by a combination of Southeast Asian-born Anglophone Chinese subjects, European colonial writers and mixed-race Eurasian writers.

*Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'* documents how British colonial culture created a group of "Asian Victorians" in Southeast Asia through the establishment of a colonial intermediary class

### WHAT IS "DIGITIZING 'CHINESE ENGLISHMEN'?"



This is a digital project focusing on the collection of "Asian Victorians" in Southeast Asia under British colonialism. The project focuses on the digitization and annotation of the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, a journal produced by the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/arnold/

Read It Later | scribe Toolbar | Import to Mendeley | Reload in MLibrary | Pin It | Storify this | Arti

swinburnearchive.indiana.edu/swinburne/www/swinburne/

Read It Later | scribe Toolbar | Import to Mendeley | Reload in MLibrary | Pin It | Storify this | ArticlesPlus Quick S | The W3C Markup Val | Other Bookmarks

# The Letters of Matthew Arnold *A Digital Edition*

Edited by Cecil Y. Lang

Home | Introduction | Contents | Search | Index | Login


## Welcome

Matthew Arnold was the preeminent poet/critic of the second half of the nineteenth century. Including nearly 4,000 letters, *The Letters of Matthew Arnold* represents the most comprehensive and assiduously annotated collection of his correspondence available. This digital edition is fully **searchable** and includes both a **linked index** and a **complete chronological listing** of the letters.

## Dedication

You are not currently logged on. Your IP address is 68.84.109.212. [Click here](#) to log on.

The Letters of Matthew Arnold  
**The University of Virginia Press**  
 ©2006 by the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia  
[Copyright statement](#) · [Privacy policy](#) · [Feedback and Support](#)  
 ISBN: 978-0-8139-2567-7  
*Rotunda editions were established by generous grants from the Andrew W. Mellon and the President's Office of the University of Virginia*




## The Swinburne Project

A digital archive of the life and works of Algernon Charles Swinburne  
 John A. Walsh, Editor

home | browse | search | about | reference

The Swinburne Project is a digital collection, or virtual archive, devoted to the life and work of Victorian poet Algernon Charles Swinburne. When complete the project will provide students and scholars with access to all available original works by Swinburne and selected contextual materials, including contemporary critical reactions, biographical works, and images of artwork about which Swinburne wrote.

News

**Major Update to Swinburne Project**  
 In April 2006, the Swinburne Project was re-released with new content and a new software system based on the [eXtensible Text Framework \(XTF\)](#) from the [California Digital Library](#). Additions include four complete volumes of poetry (*Atalanta in Calydon*, *Songs Before Sunrise*, *Songs of the Springtides*, and *A Tale of Balen*) and a few poems from *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series. The prose selections have been temporarily removed while they are re-edited and encoded for the new system. The prose works remain available at the old site: <http://www.letrs.indiana.edu/swinburne/contents.html>.

## British Women Romantic Poets, 1789 - 1832

An electronic collection of texts from the University of California, Davis

The British Women Romantic Poets Project is a digital initiative of the UC Davis General Library.

### British Women Romantic Poets Project at UC Davis

- Browse Electronic Texts
- Project Description
- Project Participants
- Project Updates
- List of Women Romantic Poets in the Kohler Collection
- Access the UC Davis Kohler Collection
- Links to Related Web Resources
- Search British Women Romantic Poets and other electronic texts in the Online Archive of California
- Search using Collex through NINES (Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-century Electronic Scholarship)
- Search OAIster at Michigan's Digital Library
- TEI in Libraries: Guidelines for Best Encoding Practices



ABOVE: from *Original Poems by Mrs. Pilkington*  
 Cambridge, 1811

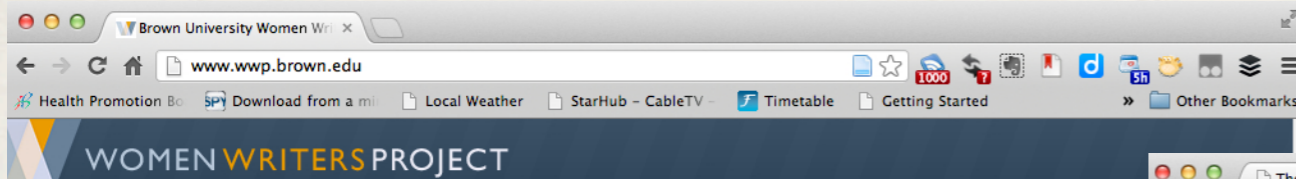
PEER REVIEWED BY  
**NINES**

Search NINES

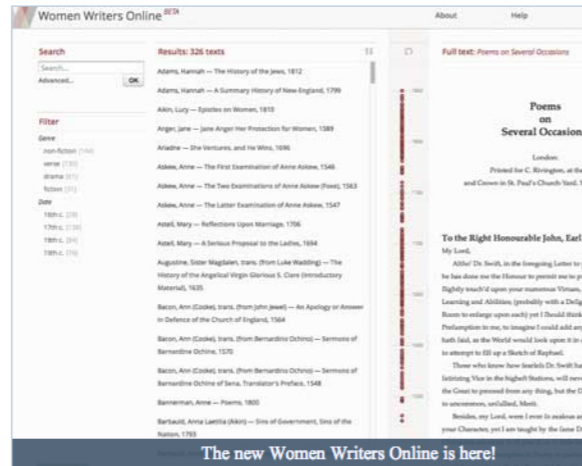
Contact the British Women Romantic Poets Project:  
 Charlotte Payne  
 Telephone: (530) 752-6040  
 Email: [clpayne@ucdavis.edu](mailto:clpayne@ucdavis.edu)

## Recent Proliferation of Nineteenth-Century Websites: A Digital Revolution?





**The Brown University Women Writers Project** is a long-term research project devoted to early modern women's writing and electronic text encoding. Our goal is to bring texts by pre-Victorian women writers out of the archive and make them accessible to a wide audience of teachers, students, scholars, and the general reader. We support research on women's writing, text encoding, and the role of electronic texts in teaching and scholarship.



#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- March 7, 2012  
New Women Writers Online interface announced »
- March 1, 2012  
Women's History Month: free WWO in March »
- July 27, 2011  
WWP receives two NEH grants »

#### FEATURED QUOTATION

Books are a kind of perpetual censors on men and manners; they judge without partiality, and reprove without fear or affection. There are times when the flame of virtue and liberty seems almost to be extinguished amongst the existing generation; but their animated pages are always at hand to rekindle it.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

No events are currently scheduled. Please check back later or contact us at [WWP@brown.edu](mailto:WWP@brown.edu) for details of future events.



Significant: digital recovery of European & American women's writing



IMPERIAL FEDERATION. MAP OF THE WORLD SHOWING THE EXTENT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1886.  
 STATISTICAL INFORMATION FURNISHED BY CAPTAIN J. C. R. COLVILLE, R.F. FORMERLY R.M.A. — BRITISH TERRITORIES COLOURED RED.

But: Where Are the Digital Projects on 19th C Britain + Imperialism?

# Victorian Literature & Empire

- ❖ Traditional Victorian Studies: characterized by J.R. Seeley: “the British Empire was acquired in a fit of absence of mind”
- ❖ Impact of work of postcolonial scholars: Said, Spivak, McClintock
- ❖ Erin O’Connor: *Victorian Studies*: ‘postcolonialism’ reductive for Victorian Studies?



# Role of colonies in the Victorian world?

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- ❖ Resistance towards integration of the colonies into understanding the Victorian period
- ❖ E.g. *British Women Romantic Poets*
- ❖ Given that Victorian period=period of greatest English imperial expansion, this gap in digital scholarship needs to be addressed.

# Archive: Making knowledge legible

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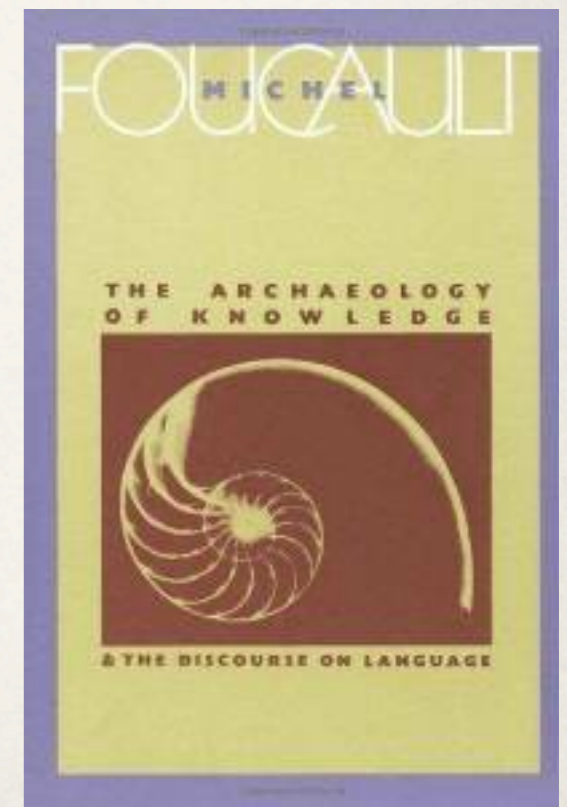
- ❖ Anjali Arondeka, Michel Trouillot, Ann Stoler, Subaltern Studies Collective: archives are not about 'retrieving knowledge' but about **knowledge production**
- ❖ Trouillot: "Silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*), the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*) the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)."



# The Archive & Power

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- ❖ Archives as forms by which knowledge is made visible/knowable
- ❖ Foucault: *Archaeology of Knowledge*
  - ❖ rules: limit possibility of knowledge
- ❖ Derrida: *Archive Fever*
  - ❖ “achronic power”



# “Rules” of the 19th Century Digital Archive

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- ❖ Through the ways these archives present knowledge, they call “realities” into being
- ❖ Digital archives constitute new *archaeology* of scholarly and public knowledge
- ❖ Future: digital archives become replacements for physical ones?



# Issues w existing 19th century digital archive

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- ❖ Existing 19-C archive has several problems in terms of race & ethnicity
- ❖ Lack of easily accessible digital projects on/by people of color
- ❖ Amy Earhart's work on North American canon
- ❖ Earhart: notes that DH areas such as tool building & visualization have neglected examining canonical texts by writers of color



# 19th Century Archival “Rules”

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- ❖ Empire as separate from Britain
- ❖ 2 methods: 1) lack of digital projects about Britain and Empire, 2) elision of colonialism from existing 19th century digital projects
- ❖ Especially so for prominent 19th century websites e.g. NINES federation, William Blake Archive, Dante Rossetti Archive etc.



# Obscuring Connections To Empire

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- ❖ While digital projects already contain refs and objects about colonialism, navigation to this content is tricky
- ❖ e.g. Matthew Arnold's impact on India
- ❖ Important: to make race and colonialism a legible lens to contextualize the work of 19th century British writers

# E.g. 1: NINES website-- Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth Century Scholarship

www.nines.org

Read It Later | scribble Toolbar | Import to Mendeley | Reload in MLibrary P | Pin It | Other Bookmarks

LOG

## NINES

*Nineteenth-century Scholarship Online*

My9s | Search | Publications | Community | Classroom | News

LOG IN | Create new account | What is NINES? | Peer Review

**Search NINES:**

Search

Searching 978,992 peer-reviewed digital objects from 113 federated sites | [Advanced Search](#)

Featured Object	Browse Recent Tags	Recent News
<p><b><u>Buds and blossoms</u></b> Date: 1889 Site: <a href="#">Baldwin Library of Children's Literature</a></p> <p><a href="#">Click to browse more objects like Buds and blossoms</a></p>	<p>charles_kingsley • garden • february • native-americans • dickens • weather • lincoln • steamship • alva_belmont • suffrage • london • portrait • hawthorne • charles_eliot_norton • astor • egypt • naturalist • christmas • john_muir • besant • theosophy • bookcase • interior_design • binding • mercator • maps • endpaper • art • morality • niagara • line-drawing • classicism • goddess • greek • mythology • homer • browning • trilby • music • dumaurier</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Image of the Week</li><li>• on sequences, noise and Juxta.</li><li>• Image of the Week: The Mall, Central Park</li><li>• Digital Scholarship and Humanities Reform</li><li>• Image of the Week: Valentine's Day Delight and Vexation</li><li>• MORE</li></ul>

# NINES: What happens if you click on "Egypt"

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [www.nines.org/tag/results?tag=egypt&view=tag](http://www.nines.org/tag/results?tag=egypt&view=tag). The browser's address bar and toolbar are visible at the top. Below the browser, the NINES logo and name "NINETEENTH-CENTURY SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE" are displayed. A navigation menu includes "My9s", "Search", "Publications", "Community", "Classroom", "News", and "HOME". The "Community" tab is active, and the page shows "LOG IN | Create new account" and "What is NINES? | Peer Review" links. The breadcrumb trail is "Community > Tags > egypt". The main content area displays "5 objects tagged as 'egypt'." with a "Sort by: Title" and "Ascending" dropdown menu. Below this, there is a link "[Expand All Entries]". Three search results are visible, each with a thumbnail image, a title, source information, artist, tags, site, and a "[more...]" link. Each result also has "Collect" and "Discuss" buttons.

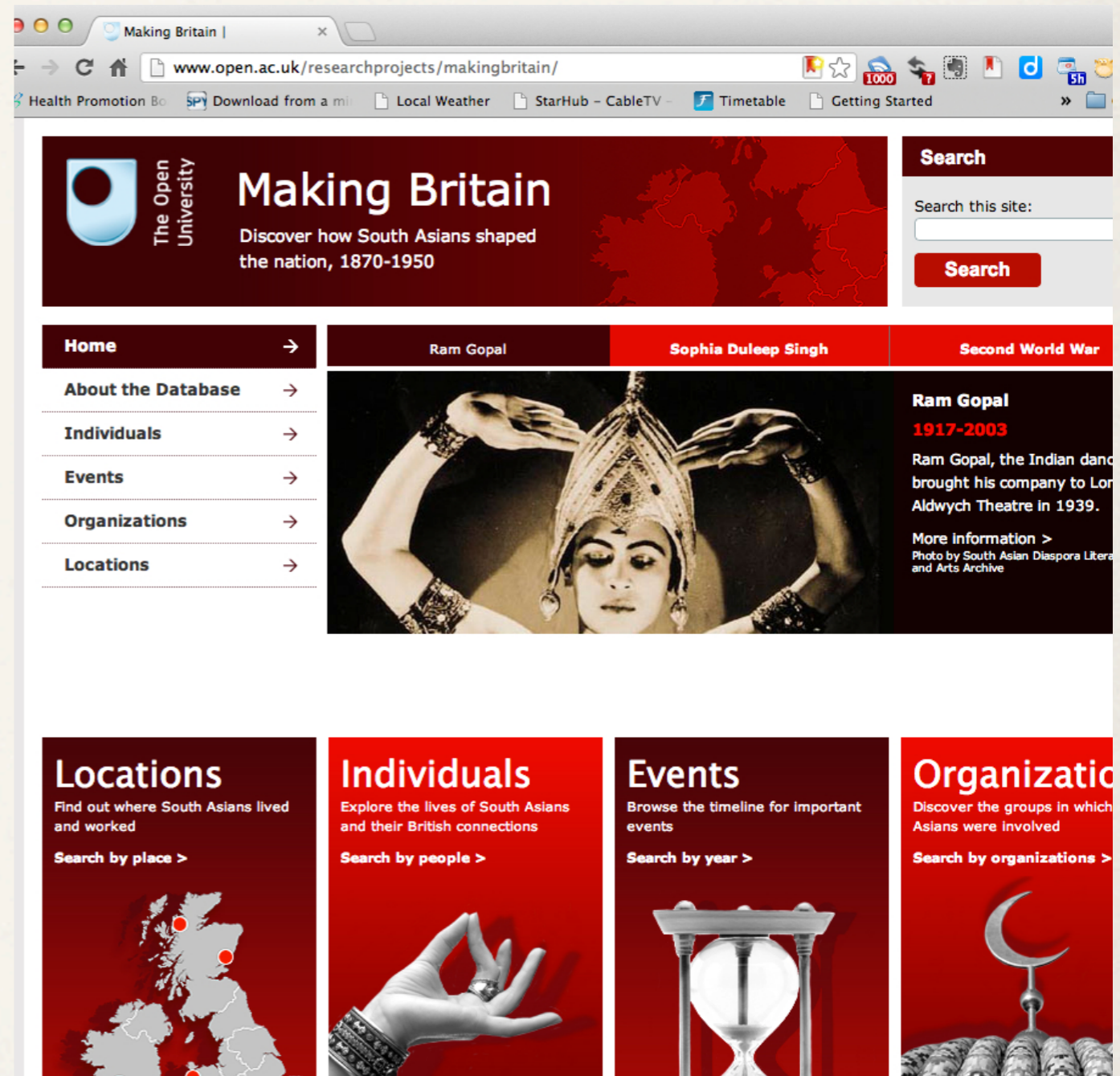
**A Mameluke of Cairo in Egypt.**  
Source: A Geographical Present: Being Descriptions of the Several Countries of Africa.  
Artist: Unknown  
Tags: [egypt](#) [LOG IN to add tags]  
Site: [NYPL Digital Gallery](#)  
[more...]

**A Thousand Miles Up the Nile**  
Source: DT54 .E26 1891  
By: Edwards, Amelia Ann Blanford, 1831-1892  
Tags: [egypt](#) [LOG IN to add tags]  
Site: [A Celebration of Women Writers](#)  
[more...]

**Egypte. Pyramid of Cheops.**  
Source: Excursions daguerriennes : vues et monuments les plus remarquables du globe.

# NINES

- No full websites emerge, despite:
- Websites such as *Making Britain: South Asian Visions of Home and Abroad 1870-1950* being in existence



# Problems

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- ❖ Two dynamics:
  - ❖ 1) Lack of digital projects on Britain and its Empire
  - ❖ 2) Elision of empire from existing projects
    - ❖ --> creates an 'archaeology of 19th century knowledge' that erases impact and role of colonialism
- ❖ Also, static nature of these digital archives--no comments allowed--> make forms of knowledge authoritarian

# Why is this a problem?

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- ❖ Many 19th century digital archives are open access
- ❖ Encourages public access--> forms public knowledge about the 19th century
- ❖ Not behind paywalls as are most peer reviewed publications
- ❖ Digital archives have the “achronic power” of making impact of colonialism real or imagined



# Need for 19th century digital projects to:

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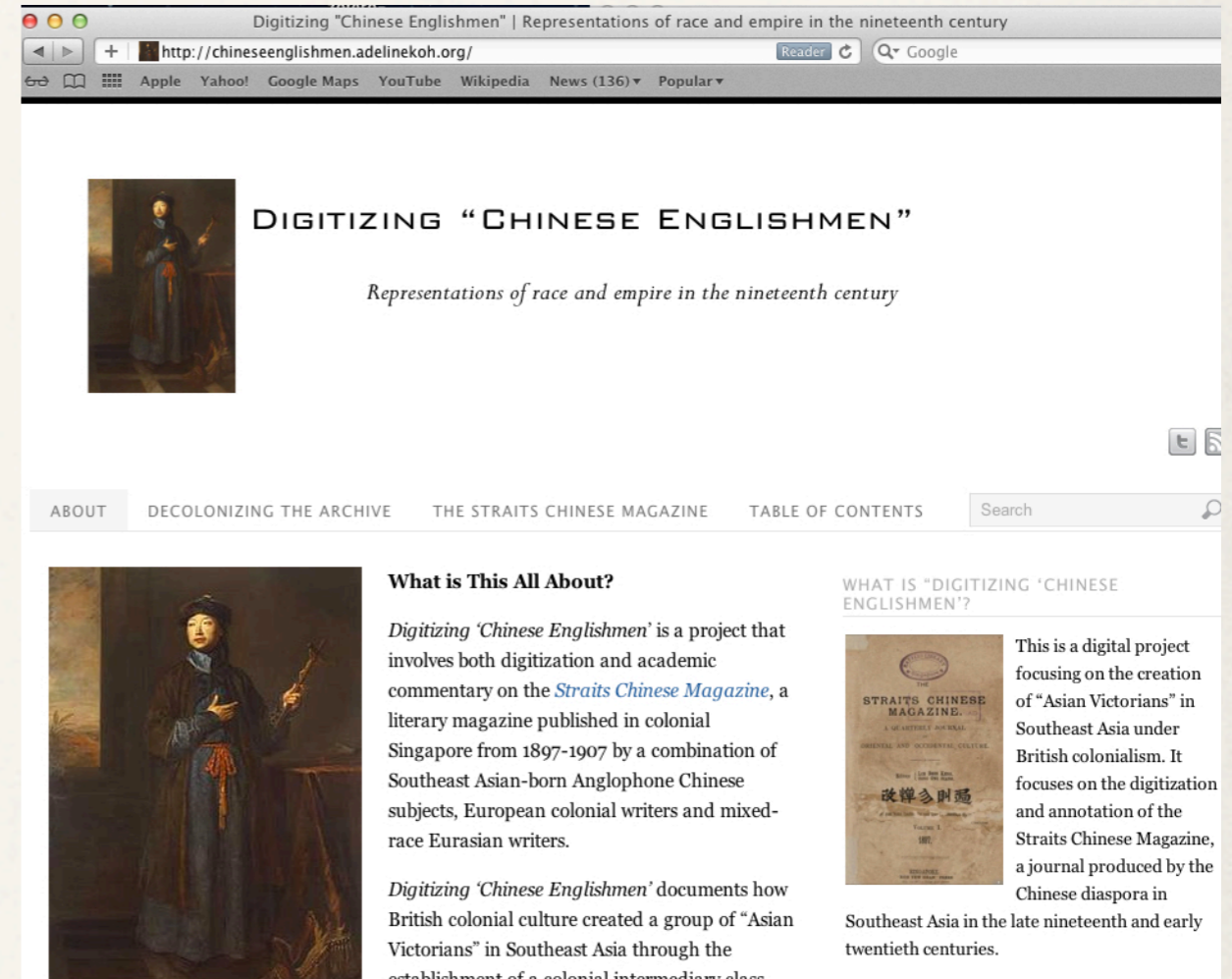
- ❖ Engage with work by postcolonial scholars (Said, Spivak, McClintock, Gikandi, Mohanty...)
- ❖ Goal with *Digitizing Chinese Englishmen*: to apply postcolonial theorists to digital archive
- ❖ Creating more archival practices that encourage a fluid representation of global connection between Britain, India, the Caribbean and Southeast Asia



# Victorian Values and the Straits Chinese Magazine

The *Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'* Project

❖ [chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org](http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org)



Digitizing "Chinese Englishmen" | Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century

http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/

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## DIGITIZING "CHINESE ENGLISHMEN"

*Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century*

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### WHAT IS "DIGITIZING 'CHINESE ENGLISHMEN'?"

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# Who are the ‘Chinese Englishmen’?

- ❖ Anglophone Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, specifically Singapore and Malaysia
- ❖ Torn between two Empires: Qing Chinese and British
- ❖ Privileged class of non-Europeans
- ❖ Bourgeois intermediaries



# Why “Chinese Englishmen”?

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- ❖ Intense relationship with the British Empire
- ❖ “Queen’s Chinese” / “King’s Chinese”
- ❖ Adhered to Victorian norms, values, modes of dress--> loyal British subjects



# “Hail Victoria!”

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- ❖ “All hail Victoria! / Hail to her Jubilee! / Well may all the nations conspire / To praise her Sovereignty!”
- ❖ Holden: “If we look for an anti-colonial consciousness, the *Straits Chinese Magazine* is frustrating”
- ❖ Straits Chinese cultural norms -> what Homi Bhabha has called mimicry / hybridity

Chinese Mohammedans get on very well with their countrymen of other faiths. Mohamedanism and its prototype, Christianity, arose from a common Jewish basis. They both inculcate the practice of virtue and benevolence, and proclaim salvation to believers. My advice to you is to stick to whatever is best in the religion of your ancestors and learn from all prevailing religions whatever they can teach you. Remove from your religious life all superstition, all senseless fear of the Unseen, and try to practise toleration towards those with whom you differ. If you are sorry that the teachers of other religions influence your children in favour of their own faiths to the detriment of your own, the blame should not be attached to the missionary but to yourselves. Religion is but an instinct and a sentiment?

When nothing in the shape of religious instruction is provided for your children, how can you be astonished if such children adopt those religious ideas with which they are first supplied? In this matter also, you see how your own god selves stand in the way of your emancipation from the thralldom of superstition. There can be no question that the best religion for the Chinese is pure Confucianism. Then let those who are afraid of their children losing the faith of their ancestors teach these children the words of wisdom in the Classics of Confucius. If they fail to do their duty, they ought rather to thank missionaries of other faiths for undertaking to make good their neglect. My last word to you is:—Abjure religious bigotry!

## HAIL VICTORIA!

(A tribute to Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria  
on the occasion of her Jubilee 1897.)

All hail Victoria!  
Hail to her Jubilee!  
Well may the nations all conspire  
To praise her Sovereignty!

Queen of the British Isles,—  
Empress of India,—  
And Greater Britain's greater ruler  
The Royal Governor!

Where on the scroll of fame,  
'Mongrel Kings and Princes great,  
Is found a Royal Sovereign  
Of equal royal state?

In sweep of Empire wide,  
In sway of ships and men —  
With able Captains at her side,  
Well-skilled in sword and pen.

In graciousness of mien  
When youthful Queen enthroned;  
And blent with dignity serene,  
When riper years are owned.

In kindness of heart,  
Lent to her people's cares;  
With country-side and busy mart  
Her sympathy she shares!

In times of doubtful peace,  
Her influence is spent,  
With every art to cease to cease  
The works of war intent!

Should universal War  
Shake free His arid land;  
Her name inspires the warrior  
Who fights at her command.

# The *Straits Chinese Magazine*

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- ❖ Modeled after *Blackwoods* and *Macmillans*
- ❖ Upper-class periodical to give voice to Chinese diaspora of Malaya
- ❖ Edited by Song Ong Siang and Lim Boon Keng



# The *Straits Chinese Magazine*

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- ❖ Victorian values versus ethnic Chinese identity
- ❖ 中學為體，西學為用 or, “Chinese learning as the essence, Western learning for application”



# The *Straits Chinese Magazine*

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- ❖ Victorian values and norms continue to structure most of the short stories and essays
- ❖ Whiteness transmuted into Victorian masculinity (self-discipline, restraint); and Victorian femininity



# “A Victim of Chap-Ji-Ki”

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- ❖ Vol 2. No. #6
- ❖ morality tale of how gambling ('chap-ji-ki') will lead to insanity and death
- ❖ teaches: Victorian values such as self-restraint as form of masculinity

## A VICTIM OF CHAP-JI-KI.

BY LEW SEE FAH.

“IS this Bon Tock's house?” asked Tan Toh Peng of the first man he met at house No. 299 Cecil Street, Singapore. He had but just arrived from Bangkok with the object of arranging with his friend Chee Bon Tock to be the local agent of his firm. He had other reasons for visiting Singapore, for he had been a voluntary exile from his native place for seven years. Bon Tock and he had become great friends at Bangkok. They had known each other at school, and when Bon Tock was brought down to Bangkok from the interior of the country seriously wounded by Siamese brigands, Toh Peng had him lodged in his own house and attended to by Dr. Swallow, the best European surgeon in the place, until he expressed a desire to return to Singapore and settle down finally. Dr. Swallow indeed had advised his staying in Bangkok a while longer, but he was anxious to leave, and the doctor had warned him not to unduly excite his mind over anything for some time to come.

“Yes, this is my brother Bon Tock's house,” was the response.

“Is he at home? I wish to see him on business,” Tan Toh Peng said.

Chee Bon Tat, the other speaker already introduced to our readers, was silent. He had sad news to tell of Bon Tock, but ought the public to be informed of it. He did not know the visitor and that settled the matter. “My brother is seriously ill, and no one may see him” he replied.

“What, is he ill again?” eagerly questioned Tan Toh Peng. “I did really hope that when he said good-bye to me at Bangkok he would not have a relapse; and it was in that hope that I have come here to see him on important business.”

“Are you the friend of my brother who so kindly looked after him during his long illness at Bangkok?” queried Bon Tat of the visitor.

“I am that friend,” was the reply. “And now that you know who I am, surely you have no objection to tell me what exactly is the nature of Bon Tock's present illness. I hope he has not had a shock to his mental nerves.”

This last remark caused Bon Tat involuntarily to start. “Why did you say that?” he asked.

“Your brother's illness at Bangkok was caused by injuries received at the hands of Siamese brigands in the interior whither he had gone to buy cattle. His attendants were killed, all his money was taken from him and he was wounded and left for dead. When assistance came, he was still lying insensible from a wound on the back of his head. But he had a skilful surgeon in Dr. Swallow; though once in the course of his illness, his brains showed symptoms of weakness, and I heard the Doctor particularly warn him when he was leaving for Singapore against any undue excitement.”

“Alas that my brother should have forgotten that warning!” Bon Tat said, while tears glistened in his eyes.

“Then my conjecture is right,” the visitor eagerly asked.

“Yes” was the response, “my poor brother's mind is so seriously affected that the doctors I have called in have held out little hopes of his recovery. That terrible malady came on so suddenly that I at first could not believe the news. He was quite well in the morning when I saw and spoke to him just after he came ashore from the ship; in the afternoon he was a lunatic.”



# “Chinese Athleticism”

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- ❖ News article (Vol 1 No.#1)
- ❖ Asking for land for “athletic games and sports generally” to cultivate Victorian ideals of health and manliness

## THE TEACHERS' CONFERENCE ON THE NEW EDUCATIONAL CODE.

The teachers of some of the schools in Singapore met last January to discuss the proposed New Code for public instruction in this Colony. Their report has not yet been presented to Government, so that it is impossible to state in any detail what its recommendations are. Still there seems no objection to stating generally what the teachers consider the good and what the bad provisions of the New Code.

The New Code substitutes payment according to the average attendance for payment by results; it allows freedom of classification; it provides that examination shall be by sample. The opinion of teachers seems to be generally in favour of these changes. The New Code encourages the teaching of *specific subjects (extra subjects)* in standards V and VI as well as in standard VII. The opinion of teachers seems to be that this would be a mistake. It would lead to a superficial smattering of the subjects taught, and would take up time and labour which might be more advantageously given to teaching English.

R. W. Hullett.

## ABOUT QUEEN VICTORIA.

The Queen is said to be engaged in dictating and revising an autobiography, which is to be published some time this year. It will be interesting to read the story of the longest reign in English history, and to learn what the Queen herself thinks about it.

\* \* \* \* \*

The *Westminster Gazette* gives prominence to a report that Queen Victoria has decided to commemorate the fact that she has enjoyed

the longest reign in English history by abdicating in favour of the Prince of Wales.

## H. E. WU TING FANG.

The new Chinese minister to the United States of America who left Hongkong on the 13th instant for Washington is H. E. Wu Ting Fang, better known among ourselves as Ng Ah Choy. The Hongkong papers have made lengthy references to him, and have spoken of him as “an old Hongkong boy.” To speak of him in that way is to leave out of account the early part of his life which he spent in these parts. No doubt it was in Hongkong that His Excellency first attracted the attention of the Chinese Government; but we can scarcely credit him with being ashamed or reluctant to acknowledge himself as a Straits-born Chinese. His countrymen here ought to look up to him as a brilliant example of a successful self-made man.

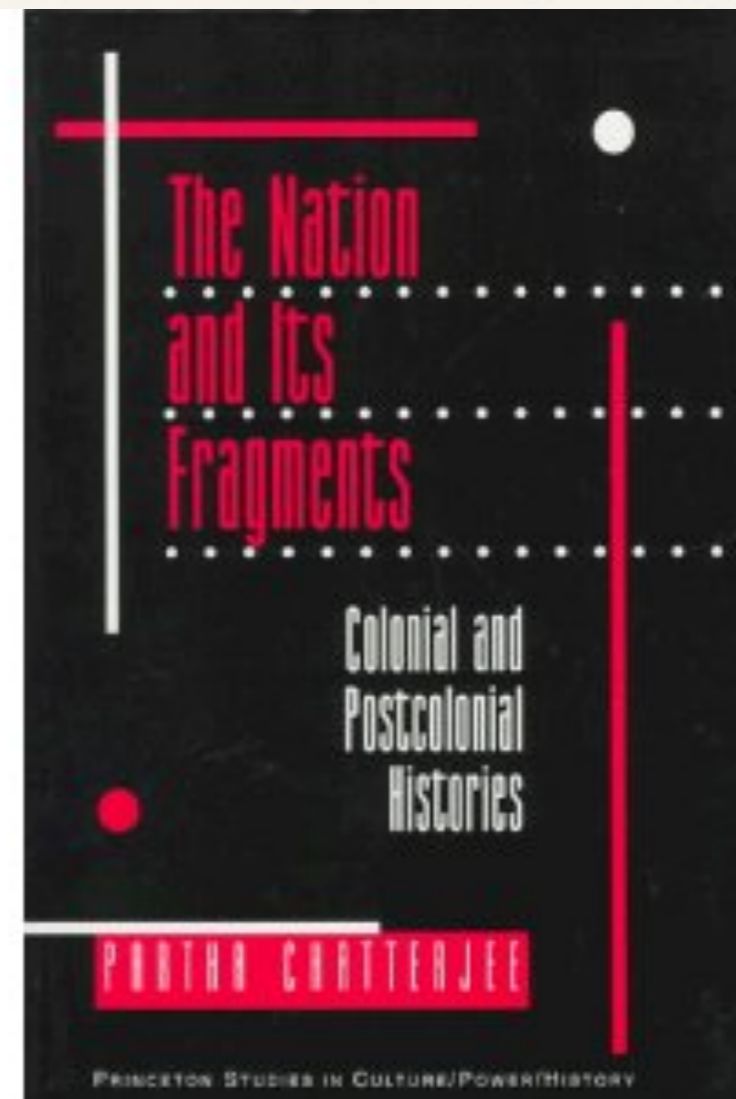
## CHINESE ATHLETICISM.

We hear that a petition has been numerously signed in Singapore by the members of the Straits-Chinese community applying to the Government for the grant of a piece of land with a sea frontage in the immediate vicinity of Fort Palmer for the purposes of athletic games and sports generally. If this grant of land should be made, the Straits Chinese Recreation Club will remove from its present playground in Hong Lim Green and erect a new pavilion on the new site. We sincerely hope that the application will meet with a favourable response from our Government, and that the interests of athletics will be greatly promoted and stirred among the Babas by the

# Hybrid Victorian Values: Shared Across British Empire

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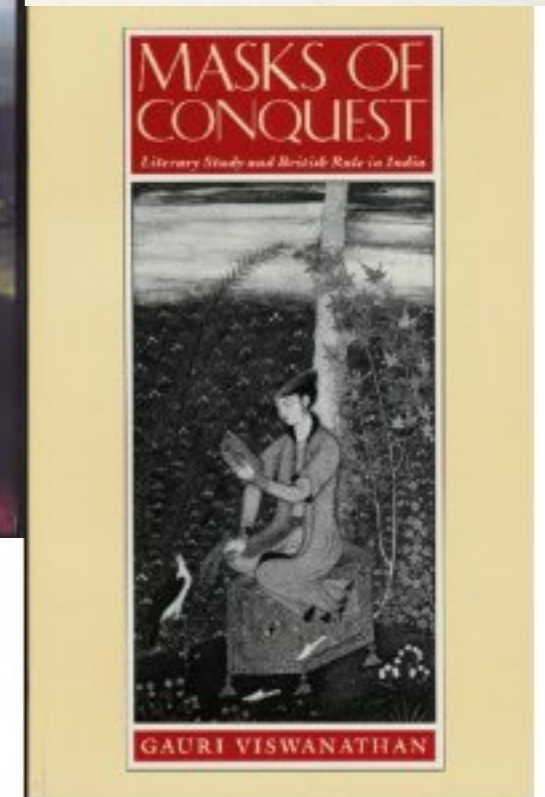
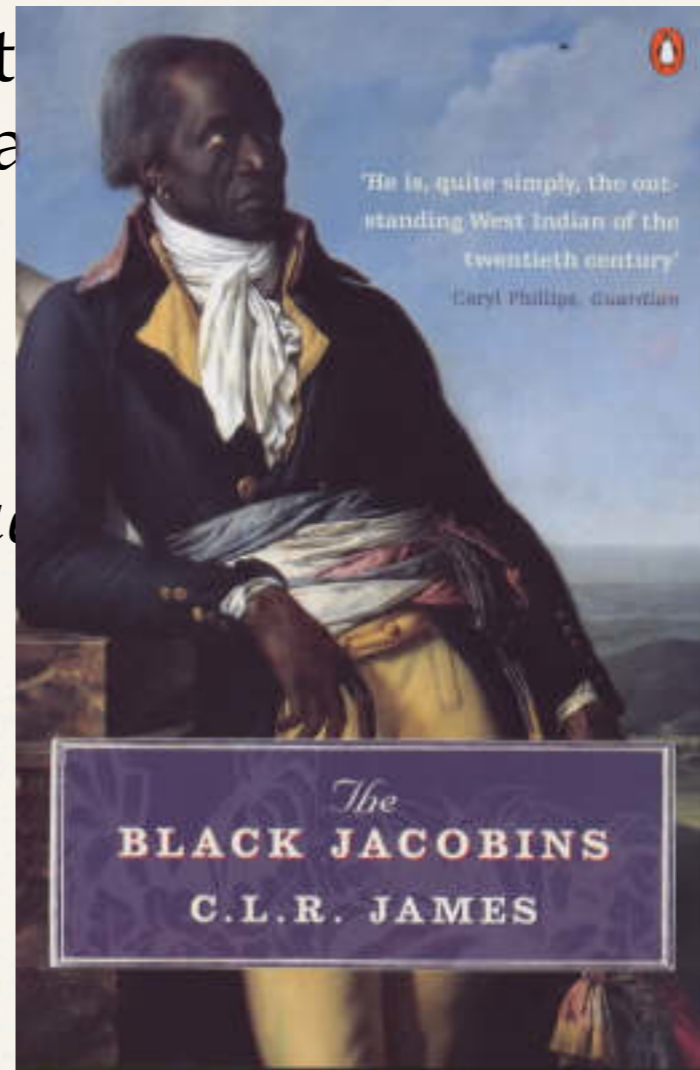
- ❖ Philip Holden, Daniel Goh, Chua Ai Joo, *Imperial Nationalism*
- ❖ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments* “outer / material”



# Why the *Straits Chinese Magazine*?

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- ❖ Impact of Victorian ideals transported with other parts of British Empire, a resonance with Empires
- ❖ C.L.R. James' *Black Jacobins*
- ❖ Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*

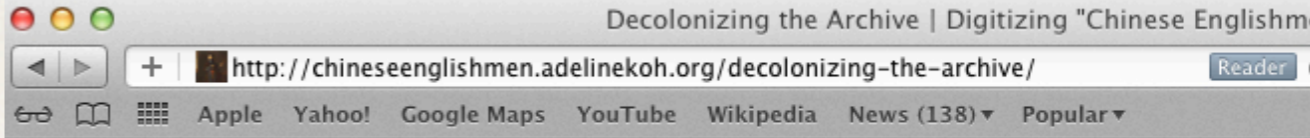


# Designing a Decentralized, “Postcolonial” Archive

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- “Decentralized” archive--> modes for democratic access and exchange

-“Postcolonial” refers to Edward Said & postcolonial studies collective of the 1980s, more of a mode of criticism than time period



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar containing the URL <http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/decolonizing-the-archive/>. The browser's navigation bar includes links for Apple, Yahoo!, Google Maps, YouTube, Wikipedia, News (138), and Popular. The website's navigation menu includes 'ABOUT', 'DECOLONIZING THE ARCHIVE', 'THE STRAITS CHINESE MAGAZINE', and 'TABLE OF C'. The main heading of the page is 'Decolonizing the Archive'. Below the heading is a photograph of a traditional Chinese board game, likely Go, with pieces on a checkered board. The text below the image discusses the mission of the archive and the concept of 'decolonizing the archive'.

## Decolonizing the Archive



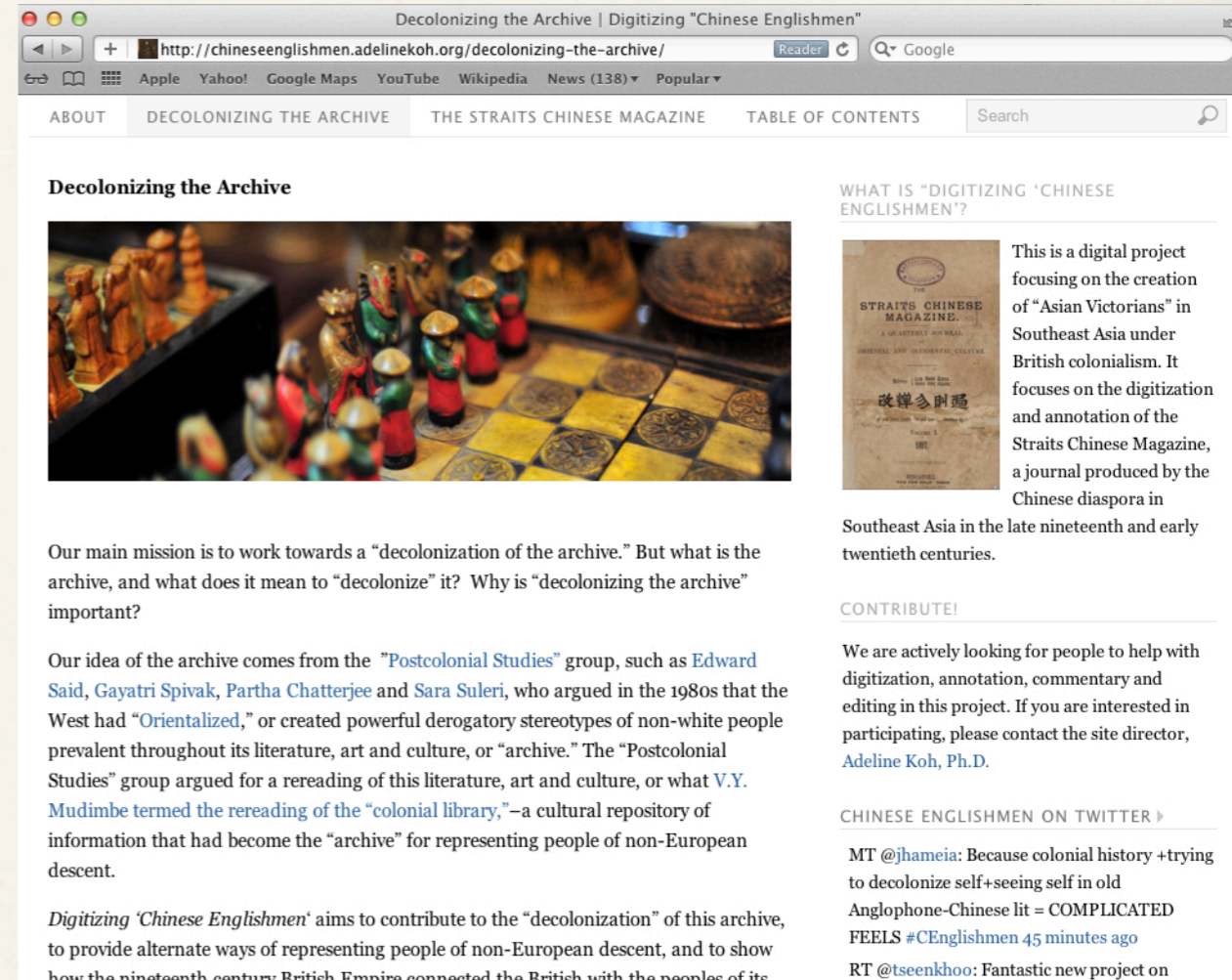
Our main mission is to work towards a “decolonization of the archive.” But what is the archive, and what does it mean to “decolonize” it? Why is “decolonizing the archive” important?

Our idea of the archive comes from the “[Postcolonial Studies](#)” group, such as [Edward Said](#), [Gayatri Spivak](#), [Partha Chatterjee](#) and [Sara Suleri](#), who argued in the 1980s that the West had “[Orientalized](#),” or created powerful derogatory stereotypes of non-white people prevalent throughout its literature, art and culture, or “archive.” The “[Postcolonial Studies](#)” group argued for a rereading of this literature, art and culture, or what [V.Y. Mudimbe](#) termed the rereading of the “[colonial library](#),”—a cultural repository of information that had become the “archive” for representing people of non-European descent.

*Digitizing ‘Chinese Englishmen’* aims to contribute to the “decolonization” of this archive, to provide alternate ways of representing people of non-European descent, and to show how the nineteenth century British Empire connected the British with the peoples of its


# A “Postcolonial” 19th-century Archive?

- ❖ A ‘postcolonial archive’ is one which examines and questions the impact and creation of imperialist ideology within the structure of the archive itself
- ❖ Elizabeth Povinelli--investigate the compositional logics of the archive
- ❖ Allen Isaacman, Premesh Lalu, Thomas Nygren: an archive which interrogates traces of colonialism & apartheid in knowledge production



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/decolonizing-the-archive/>. The page title is "Decolonizing the Archive | Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'". The navigation menu includes "ABOUT", "DECOLONIZING THE ARCHIVE", "THE STRAITS CHINESE MAGAZINE", and "TABLE OF CONTENTS".

### Decolonizing the Archive




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### WHAT IS “DIGITIZING ‘CHINESE ENGLISHMEN’?”



This is a digital project focusing on the creation of “Asian Victorians” in Southeast Asia under British colonialism. It focuses on the digitization and annotation of the Straits Chinese Magazine, a journal produced by the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### CONTRIBUTE!

We are actively looking for people to help with digitization, annotation, commentary and editing in this project. If you are interested in participating, please contact the site director, [Adeline Koh, Ph.D.](#)

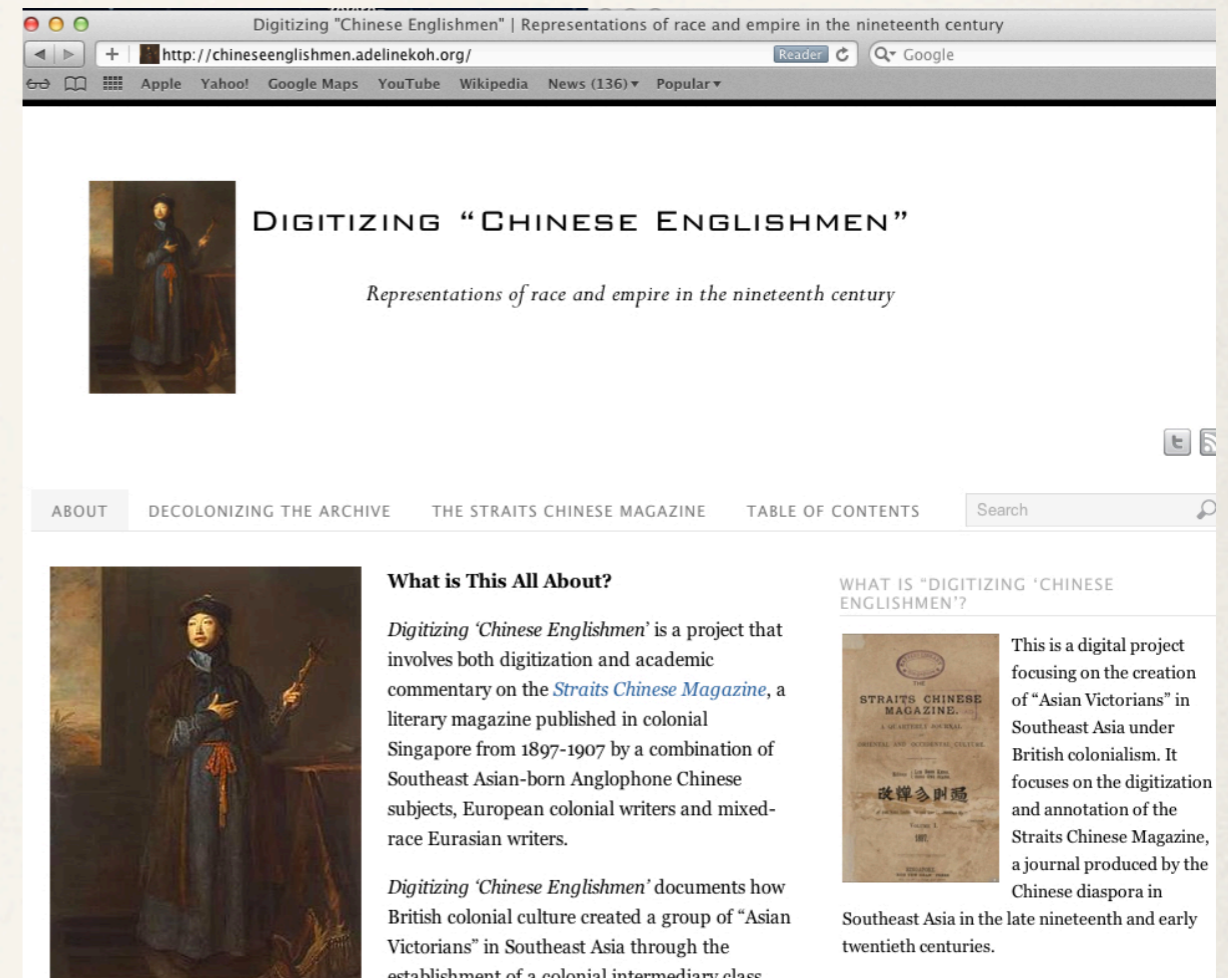
### CHINESE ENGLISHMEN ON TWITTER ▶

MT [@jhameia](#): Because colonial history +trying to decolonize self+seeing self in old Anglophone-Chinese lit = COMPLICATED FEELS [#CEnglishmen](#) 45 minutes ago  
RT [@tseenkho](#): Fantastic new project on

# The Structure of *Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'*

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- ❖ Subject matter--> allows for more comparative structures of similar hybrid dynamics across 19th century European empires
- ❖ Spinoffs: “African Englishmen,” “Indian Englishmen,” “Caribbean Englishmen” etc...



Digitizing "Chinese Englishmen" | Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century

http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/

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**DIGITIZING "CHINESE ENGLISHMEN"**

*Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century*

ABOUT DECOLONIZING THE ARCHIVE THE STRAITS CHINESE MAGAZINE TABLE OF CONTENTS Search

**What is This All About?**

*Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'* is a project that involves both digitization and academic commentary on the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, a literary magazine published in colonial Singapore from 1897-1907 by a combination of Southeast Asian-born Anglophone Chinese subjects, European colonial writers and mixed-race Eurasian writers.

*Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'* documents how British colonial culture created a group of "Asian Victorians" in Southeast Asia through the establishment of a colonial intermediary class

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# The Structure of *Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'*

- ❖ “Hypertext” linkages, use of tags, provide different types of reading
- ❖ May “open up” text to different interpretations

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/>. The page title is "Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen' | Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century". Below the title is a navigation menu with links: ABOUT, DECOLONIZING THE ARCHIVE, THE STRAITS CHINESE MAGAZINE, and TABLE OF CONTENTS. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a large image of a woman in traditional Chinese attire. To the right of the image is a section titled "What is This All About?" which contains introductory text about the project. A red arrow points from the navigation menu to this section. Another red arrow points from the text "What is 'Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'?" to a smaller image of the magazine cover. The text describes the project as involving digitization and academic commentary on the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, a literary magazine published in colonial Singapore from 1897-1907. It also mentions that the project focuses on the creation of "Asian Victorians" in Southeast Asia under British colonialism, focusing on the digitization and annotation of the magazine, a journal produced by the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## PROJECT TAGS

british patriotism chinese athleticism gambling mission  
statement moral turpitude self-restraint sport &  
masculinity table of contents victoria **victorian**  
**values volume 1 volume 2**

# The Structure of *Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'*

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- ❖ Comments field-- “Opening up” of archive

## One Response to *decolonizing the archive*



**Katherine D. Harris** says:

February 28, 2012 at 5:00 pm

Can you add a section here on the technical aspects of the project? Platform, etc. Also, selection of the materials used would be helpful. Otherwise, looks like a great start!

REPLY

### RECENT COMMENTS

---

[Dr Ian Welch](#) on [About](#)

[Alex Gil](#) on [The Straits Chinese Magazine](#)  
[admin](#) on [The Straits Chinese Magazine](#)

[Alex Gil](#) on [The Straits Chinese Magazine](#)

[Katherine D. Harris](#) on [Decolonizing the Archive](#)



# Future Plans

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- ❖ “Crowdsourcing” annotations / peer review--targeting experts in the field, and audience participation
- ❖ Move to *Scalar* (<http://scalar.usc.edu/>): allowing for objects to be tagged with metadata in RDF form to make it interoperable with other NINES projects
- ❖ Scalar also provides added functionality for comments to become pages, and for site readers to create their own paths through the project

# Social Media & “Chinese Englishmen”

- ❖ Twitter account: @CEnglishmen
- ❖ Twitter hashtag: #CEnglishmen

**Chinese Englishmen**  
@CEnglishmen FOLLOWS YOU  
Twitter acc for Chinese Englishmen, website on Victorian Empire in Southeast Asia  
<http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org>

6 TWEETS  
4 FOLLOWING  
5 FOLLOWERS

**Tweet to Chinese Englishmen**  
@CEnglishmen

**Tweets**

- Chinese Englishmen** @CEnglishmen 1h  
MT @jhameia: Because colonial history +trying to decolonize self+seeing self in old Anglophone-Chinese lit = COMPLICATED FEELS #CEnglishmen
- Chinese Englishmen** @CEnglishmen 28 Feb  
RT @tseenkoo: Fantastic new project on 'Chinese Englishmen' in colonial SE Asia from @adelinekoh - [chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org](http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org) #cenglishmen
- Chinese Englishmen** @CEnglishmen 27 Feb  
A Steampunk Anthology from Singapore — Written From A Postcolonial Perspective [zite.to/xWqIXJ](http://zite.to/xWqIXJ) #stocktonpostcolonial #cenglishmen
- Chinese Englishmen** @CEnglishmen 27 Feb  
Pinterest Growing Fast in Asia Pacific Region [zite.to/zM5DHQ](http://zite.to/zM5DHQ) #CEnglishmen
- Chinese Englishmen** @CEnglishmen 27 Feb  
Is China the Undisputed King of the Art Market? [zite.to/xHCW33](http://zite.to/xHCW33) #CEnglishmen

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# More on “Decentralization”

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- ❖ Work should always be open-access, freely accessible
- ❖ In the future, work on an easy-to-navigate mobile view for the project, making commentary easy



# Public-Facing Scholarship, the Digital Humanities and the Postcolonial Archive

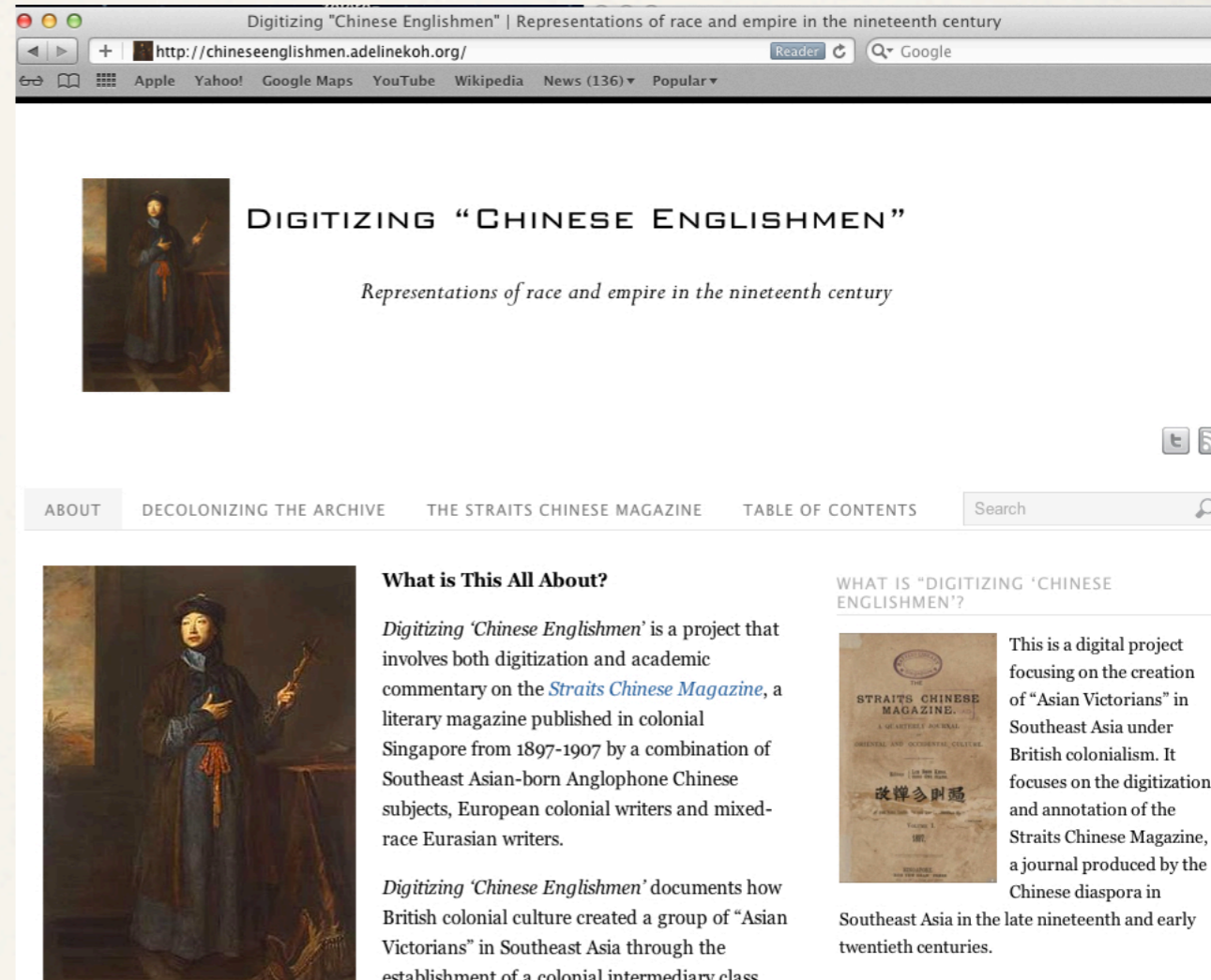
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Open Archive



# Goals of *DCE*


- Answer Alan Liu's call to consider ways DH can integrate cultural criticism into its concerns
- Amy Earhart's call to encourage more scholars to engage w digital textual recovery



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/>. The page title is "Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen' | Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century". The main heading is "DIGITIZING 'CHINESE ENGLISHMEN'" with the subtitle "Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century". Below the heading is a navigation menu with links: ABOUT, DECOLONIZING THE ARCHIVE, THE STRAITS CHINESE MAGAZINE, TABLE OF CONTENTS, and a search bar. The main content area features a large portrait of a woman in traditional Chinese attire on the left. To the right, under the heading "What is This All About?", there is a paragraph explaining the project: "Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen' is a project that involves both digitization and academic commentary on the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, a literary magazine published in colonial Singapore from 1897-1907 by a combination of Southeast Asian-born Anglophone Chinese subjects, European colonial writers and mixed-race Eurasian writers." Below this is another paragraph: "Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen' documents how British colonial culture created a group of 'Asian Victorians' in Southeast Asia through the establishment of a colonial intermediary class". To the right of the text is a small image of the cover of the *Straits Chinese Magazine* and a text box titled "WHAT IS 'DIGITIZING 'CHINESE ENGLISHMEN'?" which states: "This is a digital project focusing on the creation of 'Asian Victorians' in Southeast Asia under British colonialism. It focuses on the digitization and annotation of the *Straits Chinese Magazine*, a journal produced by the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/ Reader Google


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## DIGITIZING “CHINESE ENGLISHMEN”

*Representations of race and empire in the nineteenth century*

ABOUT DECOLONIZING THE ARCHIVE THE STRAITS CHINESE MAGAZINE TABLE OF CONTENTS Search




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# *Digitizing Chinese Englishmen*

DH recovery for people of color in British Empire

*Also encourages Dialogue between Victorian Studies and Digital Humanities; Strives to be a Postcolonial Archive*

# A “Postcolonial” Archive

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- ❖ Attempts to overcome traces of colonialism that persist in knowledge production
- ❖ Not a static project
- ❖ Attempts to remain a self-reflexive archive through active engagement
- ❖ Issues: lack of funding for recovery efforts. Of 141 DH startup grants awarded by NEH from 2007-2010, only 29 were focused on diverse communities and 16 on diverse community texts.

# Public Archives & the Public Humanities

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- Russell Berman: humanities scholars “need to explain to policy makers as well as that public we meet every day--our students--the importance of the humanities.”
- Public archival projects--demonstrate the relevance of humanistic thinking to the global community

January 5, 2012

## Literature Scholars Focus Annual Meeting on Defending the Value of Their Field



By Stacey Patton

As literary scholars prepare to attend the Modern Language Association's annual meeting this week in downtown Seattle, many still remember a provocative *New York Times* article published 20 years ago. That article pilloried the group's 1991 conference as a showcase for self-important, tweed-wearing academics, talk, talk, talking all day about obscure and risqué topics and then retreating to their hotel rooms to cry.

[Enlarge Image](#)

Some saw that article as a caricature and a cheap shot. At the time, the war over literary culture had reached its apotheosis, as scholars questioned the foundations of the discipline, remade the canon, and put greater emphasis on theory-based approaches to literature. Opponents suggested that those changes would somehow lead to the destruction of the humanities and, as some saw it, maybe even the twilight of civilization.

Now, the so-called canon wars are over, but some professors presenting at this year's MLA are looking back with a bit of nostalgia for a time when literature professors had the luxury to squabble.

"Today, we are not facing an internal crisis about the value of our fields," says Russell A. Berman, the association's president. "The crisis we face is a political and economic one."

While even in the early 1990s some wondered about the future of literary education in a campus culture afflicted by social and economic malaise, "the problems described 20 years ago have a fresh urgency in light of the financial crisis," Imani Perry writes in an e-mail. Ms. Perry, a professor of African-American studies at Princeton University, will speak at the presidential forum on this year's theme, "Language, Literature, and Learning."