Sena Crow

Reflective Essay for Research Award

The multi-directional support I have received from the English department as well as the Seattle University and University of Washington libraries are what made my honors research project possible. I began work on this project over a year ago, when I wrote a shorter paper for my Indigenous American Literature class with Christina Roberts. At that point in time, I had only utilized the online databases that were available through the Lemieux library such as Academic Search Complete and JSTOR. Those these were certainly helpful resources, my project would not have been as deepened as it was without the assistance of the Seattle University and Suzzallo/Allen libraries.

Not only did our honors’ cohort’s work with Lynn Deeken help me research my subject more effectively, it also helped me to narrow in on and strengthen the focus and shape of my project. The keyword search exercise we did as a group helped me to shift my focus from a more historical, cultural lens to my more specific interests in dystopia and futurism. While I was gaining confidence in doing effective research, I was also shaping my project into a stronger argument.

Most of my resources from my project were books I obtained through the Interlibrary Loan program, with many of my source materials coming from books from the Suzzallo and Allen libraries at the University of Washington. Obtaining entire books was especially useful, as it helped locate my argument within a world of discourse. I learned how to not only identify and verbalize the arguments and importance of my sources, but also draw out their significance as one part of a larger conversation.

Something that I have been particularly reflective about in writing this essay is the ethics around crediting theories and ideas, and how these scholarly recognitions can fit in my essay. For
instance, there are many ways to talk about and define decolonization, but my essay sticks with
Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang’s definition. I decided to subscribe to their take on the matter
because I believe it helps deepen my argument rather than the general use of the term. How far
should I go into each definition, and what kind of context should I provide when I mention terms
like “settler-colonialism?” Because this is an English literature paper, I had to find a balance
between literary criticism and theorizing and analyzing the written text in front of me. Through
receiving feedback from multiple kinds of readers—professors and students alike—I tried to
revise my paper as to establish a common knowledge for all readers. Ultimately, I believe I
found a balance between appealing to readers with a specific relationship to my topic as well as
guiding readers who are less familiar with my honors project subject.

Decisions like these were aided through the mentorship of the honors reading course
instructor, Dr. Clark-Hillard, as well as my honors advisor, Dr. Roberts. Because both of these
faculty members have different academic focuses and specialties, they were able to give me
reader feedback so I could revise my essay to appeal to a wider range of readerships. Of course,
additionally, my sessions with my fellow cohort members were immensely valuable for their
peer feedback and evaluation of my work. In both our class sessions and our writing sessions, we
were able to hold each other accountable and provide feedback to one another without the stakes
of evaluation. The multiple levels of guidance I received, through the library, the department,
and my fellow cohort members, all heavily shaped the outcome of my project for the better.