

Entry3

31 December 2021

### Wyndham Robertson Library Undergraduate Research Award Submission Essay

Throughout the writing of my paper, “‘Their eyes met at the same instant’: The Queer Gothic and Triumphant Romance of *The Price of Salt*”, my research plan changed and adapted many times. In the early phases of my project, I used the writing process as an exploratory space for working through the questions I had about my primary source, *The Price of Salt* by Patricia Highsmith. As I did this, I also started gathering secondary sources through fairly surface-level research that pertained to the wide scope of critical work on the Gothic genre and the novel. In simultaneously exploring what intrigued me about my subject and what in particular excited me about *The Price of Salt*, I was able to hone in on smaller and smaller subject areas such as Gothic conventions, queer recognition, and paranoid readings that then allowed my paper to truly begin taking shape.

Many of the initial sources I pulled did not end up in my paper, but regardless of whether I ended up using them in the final draft or not, many of those early articles and chapters led me to other authors through their citations. In looking for further sources in this manner, I was led to oft-cited scholars who have made major contributions to Gothic studies and therefore were necessary for me to devote attention to, such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, David Punter, and Sigmund Freud. This procedure of locating a source, reading it, and then utilizing that source’s works cited in order to locate more pieces of the puzzle I was assembling quickly became the backbone of my research process and helped me to develop a firm grasp on my subject. Some of the pieces I located in this way were fairly obscure, and therefore most of the books I checked out for this project were ILL books. The use of databases such as Google Scholar and WorldCat were also of course instrumental to my research process, but so was being able to just wander through the stacks of the library. Quite a few times I would go to a shelf for a specific book and then just browse to see what else was nearby. I found multiple sources this way, including Catherine Stimpson’s *Writing Sexual Difference*, which became a major tenet of my paper’s central argument.

The main challenge I faced in the writing of this paper was its sheer magnitude, but I was able to face and overcome the daunting task of such a large project through tools I acquired from my professor and the librarians, which include tips such as breaking down researching and writing into a series of very small checkpoints, using keywords while determining if a source is relevant, and writing a comprehensive annotated bibliography. Overall, in the writing of this paper I truly allowed the research to guide me rather than trying to shoehorn sources into a predetermined thesis statement, a choice that resulted in a paper that I believe synthesizes research and close reading very well, and of which I’m extremely proud.