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David Harris Flaherty Scholarship Application

As an English student interested in Modernism, the UVic libraries have useful resources for conducting research. This past semester I enrolled in ENSH 371, a course focussing on British modernist prose, yet aiming to underscore an intersection of the arts in social and discursive evolution. As always, it is essential to examine current social and cultural climates to understand how people can operate within them, and I believe that discourses and ideologies that prevail today are heavily influenced by those of the early twentieth century. Thus, I attempted to use the McPherson Library's archival resources to explore these links as they exist and to also explore how we can trace these links through archival research.

For this course, I wrote a creative essay riffing off Mary Butt's novel *Armed with Madness*. In this novel, the characters play the 'Freud Game,' which is a game meant to expose hidden associations between seemingly disconnected things and the nature of these connections (such as connection in their social function). In this fashion, I wrote a paper of deconstructed arguments, each linking to the last in perhaps unexpected ways. My research involved examining photographs, letters, art pieces, and poems from the UVic special collections to explore how various forms of media work as paradigms of British modernism and to explore how we construct our knowledge of the past. I used the collection of Joseph Clearihue's World War I photographs to explore visual culture in the Modernist period and how visual culture became increasingly embedded with social conceptions of what knowledge and truth are. I linked this discussion with notable literary works such as *To The Lighthouse*, *The Doors of Perception*, and *All Passion Spent*, extending traditional literary research to cultural research and connecting specific pieces of evidence from the library to a greater global discussion. I also considered photographs of James Joyce, Vita Sackville-West, and Virginia Woolf, connecting them to Andre Bazin's ontology of photographic images to comment on how the camera and photography in general change humans' perceptions of themselves and others (and of course, this lends itself well to exploring the rapidly increasing use of digital media today). Further, I looked at artistic works and letters from Mary Butts and W.S. Graham to explore the impressionistic evidence we have of life in the early-mid twentieth century.

These explorations also extend to examining questions of how we gather knowledge through text, images, and alternative testimonies – different forms of preserving something past.

Searching through the UVic archives prompted me to think further about how our current knowledge is built off past knowledge and how that knowledge is passed on to us. Aptly, this exploration fits well with Modernist concerns of epistemologies, and the archival material inspired me to include explorations of these questions in my creative essay.