

The paper I am submitting for this scholarship expands upon a question I explored in a previous paper, also written for my Honors Thesis Writing class. That paper was meant to compare three pieces of criticism on “Fourth Voyage” in *Gulliver’s Travels*; this expanded paper prompted me to delve into my own reading of the text as well as other criticism and primary sources. I based my analysis primarily on Jonathan Swift’s personal correspondence, but I used secondary sources to build upon and further defend my own arguments. I found the process of writing this paper very rewarding and I could not have done it without the resources provided by the MU Libraries.

When deciding my research question, my biggest problem was the sheer mass of criticism on Swift’s writings. I went first to the MLA International Bibliography in order to get feel for the type and amount of criticism on my broad topic: the “Fourth Voyage” in *Gulliver’s Travels*. While reading the “Voyage” I had made note of several points brought up during class discussion which I found particularly interesting, and by using the advanced search on EBSCOhost, I was able to determine which of my interests would be a feasible research topic, which had a base of criticism for me to draw upon and respond to. By using this database I was able to be more efficient by not dedicating significant time to topics which I wouldn’t have sources for. I also was able to narrow down topics because I had to find enough helpful and enriching sources to fill the required page length of around 20 pages. I discovered that through the library I had access to plenty of criticism on the question I found most intriguing: was Jonathan Swift a misanthrope?

In attempting to access these sources, I had to check out what seemed like an endless number of books; however, I discovered that as a student I can check out a practically endless number of books. I also requested several articles from online sources. It honestly surprised me how quickly librarians were able to make these articles available to me. Not only did I draw

extensively upon the texts available to me through the library, I also spent days in Bookmark during finals week. In order to limit those books to ones which were helpful to me, I scoured abstracts as well as table of contents to determine the content roughly and likelihood that each source would be worth my time.

Through this process I learned quite a lot. It was by far the longest paper I've written for a class, and because of this the amount of research I had to do was considerably greater. Luckily for me and my peers, we were given tools that would help us with a task of this size; the class was specifically structured for this purpose. We learned things like how to write with our readers in mind; my readers were my peers each of whom had read the "Fourth Voyage" but hadn't become as familiar with my particular chosen area of interest. We learned how to move from a broad topic, to a narrow one, to a specific research question, a process which my research through the MLA Bibliography and Merlin helped with immensely. We went in depth into which databases to use for to find which source; for instance, for the types of primary sources I used, Swift's correspondence, my first option would be to check through Merlin, then Mobius, and if need be I could make an Inter Library Loan request through the Mizzou Libraries. In writing papers earlier in my college career, I didn't know better than to search through massive amounts of information through broad searches or poor utilization of my resources, but through the process of writing this paper, I discovered a more systematic, organized, and informed approach which allowed me to write a significantly richer and more considerate paper. These are all skills which I will take with me after college and which will serve me well in any field I chose