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C/O Library Award Administrators
The University of Maryland Libraries
7649 S Library Ln
College Park, MD 20742

Re: Application essay for the UMD Library Award (2021)

To whom it may concern;

Summary. The following essay was produced for the purpose of applying for the University of Maryland’s Library Award for Undergraduate Research. I have submitted for consideration my PSYC300 research study writeup, titled “‘Minds’ in ‘Homer’: A quantitative psycholinguistic comparison of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.” The paper contains two empirical studies. In short, I statistically compared how often words related to “mind” appeared in both works in both Greek and English versions. My professor was Dr. Edward Bernat from the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Department of Psychology. The paragraphs hereafter address the following areas: (i) topic development; (ii) research sources and techniques; (iii) analytical methods, and; (iv) a *post factum* assessment. Each is taken up in turn.

(i) Topic development. I began my research by exploring potential topics that had gaps in the literature. I came upon the topic of mental language within the Homeric epics known as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Alas, while this topic was heavily treated by prior investigators, most works were qualitative in nature. One prior quantitative study—which I conceptually modeled my own after—included a miniscule sample size of one translator who translated both works. It seemed to me therefore necessary that the topic be treated by means of concerned scientific inquiry with a robust sample size.

Because this project was interdisciplinary, the topical foci were twofold: (1) Homeric Greek terms related to “mind,” and; (2) proper execution of statistical analyses.

(ii) Research sources and techniques. For my data set, I was required to find translators who translated both the *Il.* and *Od.* Having done this, I had to collect text-only versions of both translated works. That is, for each translator, I had to compile some 300,000 words in two static text files. The challenge was daunting on account of the fact that some of the books were not digitized. Some works were digitized, but required many hours of manual sanitation in order to remove front matter, footnotes, and back matter.

The library played a causative role in my ability to secure the final sample size of 17 translators and 34 works. I seized half of the sample size by means of the library’s digital offerings, particularly EBSCOHost. Thereafter, several key library team members assisted me personally in securing another 30% of the final sample size. Finally, McKeldin Library’s powerful scanner allowed me to use the optical character recognition (OCR) feature in order to transcribe a few print-only books into text. In sum, the library’s role in collecting the works was helpful to a superlative degree.



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(iii) Refinement of analytical methods. For the scientific portion of the study, the teaching assistant for the course—Jordan Epistola—played an important role. Jordan spent many hours with me after class in order to help me design a robust study. This process took months of refinement. Along the way, he offered useful feedback and much-needed guidance. I made use of his office hours as well. Without his help, I would not have been able to execute the scientific portion of the work. Through the course of the project, Jordan introduced me to new statistical analysis tools, methods, and procedures. These contributions collectively refined my approach such that it was simple and adequate for the task at hand.

(iv) *Post factum* assessment. In thinking about my research procedure, I am happy to say that I took advantage of the library's resources to a superlative degree. That is, I made use of the helpful staff, diverse digital offerings, as well as the powerful scanning equipment. In many cases, securing a single text source for my data set required the complex coordination of all these parts. Without the library's assistance, I fear that my sample size would have consisted of 5 translators instead of the 17 I utilized.

A final important point deserves mention. There is, in general, vocal and written support for interdisciplinary research. However, in practice there are oftentimes barriers to such research. As for the University of Maryland, I may plainly state that the University has been tangibly supportive of my interdisciplinary interests. That is, the Department of Psychology allowed me to exercise the methods of science with respect to other fields, in this case classical studies. Such allowances and support are necessary for any institution who claims to serve the cause of interdisciplinary research; a cause which, to be sure, the University has served.

Thank you for the time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Boban Dedović".

Boban Dedović