

Peter and Ana Lowens Fellowship Program Application: Tamara Wallace

For this project, I am interested in using three alchemical sources from Special Collections to explore the different fields of alchemy and alchemists' motivations in the early modern period. The specific manuscripts I will use are:

- *A treatise touching the philosopher's stone [microform]: gathered out of the best authors that have written upon that arte / by Edward Cradocke*
- *Alchemical texts: unpublished manuscripts from the Bodleian Library*
- *Ali Puli fonds*

With these materials, I want to understand the various interests of and experiments carried out by alchemists, as well as attempt to determine the exact purpose of these experiments. Additionally, I want to figure what motivated early modern alchemists to attempt the projects they did and the perceived benefits of alchemy. I choose these manuscripts for this project because they represent a diverse set of writings from across the early modern period.

A potential research or creative output I am interested in pursuing using these materials is a digital exhibit. The exhibit would explore the questions discussed above and present them to the public in such a way that it 'demystifies' alchemy. I would like to take this approach because I feel popular media dismisses alchemy as superstitious or foolish, but I highly doubt alchemists would have considered what they were doing magical. Hence, I want the exhibit to reflect the early modern proto-scientific beliefs that fueled alchemy and also depict exactly what alchemists were doing in their laboratories. Within the exhibit, I would also like to build in an interactive component, like a text-based video game or something similar, in order to give the exhibit viewer a more immersive experience. I am also considering focusing solely on the interactive fiction/video game component as the sole creative output.

I will benefit from the program by developing my skill in working with primary sources, which is incredibly useful for historians. Working with primary sources is also an important skill for me to develop because I intend to complete an honours thesis in my undergraduate and pursue graduate studies. Additionally, I would like to learn how to work with and read from older documents, which is something this program provides the opportunity for. So, taking part in this program and completing the associated project will help me develop a solid foundation of research skills, which will be very useful in my future endeavours. Furthermore, I have a strong interest in public history and one of my career goals is to work in a museum or a heritage organization. Thus, creating a public-facing project will allow me to explore this side of historical research and develop my skills in presenting said research to a broader audience.