

# Reflections on Writing an Honours Thesis

## Takdeer Brar

As my time at Dalhousie University comes to an end, it's with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to reflect and express my gratitude over these past years. My path to the honours seminar has been unconventional in every way. I finished my first semester with a 1.67 GPA, and the most recent a 3.80. I was placed on academic dismissal three times before my sister (Dimpee Brar) saved my life. Words will never be able to do justice for the impact she has on my life. Dalhousie University has given me the opportunity to learn from my failures and rebuild myself. As I reflect back, I would extend my personal gratitude to Mrs. Dimpee Brar, Dr. David Matthias, Mrs. Carla Britten, Dr. Marcella Firmini, and Dr. Justin Roberts. The aforementioned individuals are but a few who inspired and guided me to this point in my life and academic career. Without their belief, support, and encouragement, I would never have gotten to this point. In this process of rebuilding, I was able to discover the political foundations of the United States.

In so doing, I gained an appreciation and understanding of the impact that the United States of America has on history. The United States of America is the longest-surviving democratic republic in the history of mankind, a history that is dominant with dictatorships and tyrannies which prey on individuals. Even ancient democracies and republics were unsustainable and quickly degenerated into the regimes mentioned earlier. However, the United States of America remains an anomaly of an experiment where individuals—not groups—rule under the laws they consent to creating. The Founding Fathers' view of the United States of America was pragmatic. The Founders were aware of and accounted for the good and evils of human nature. For the Founders, history has shown that we are not gods or beasts, but we can be either. What makes the United States of America so great is that they're pragmatic.

We are neither beasts as Thomas Hobbes conceives or gods like Karl Marx's believes. The Founding Fathers were well aware of the goods and evils of human nature. As such, the Declaration of Independence in 1776 constructs a government that works with human nature rather than against it. A close analysis of the Declaration reveals a universal declaration of human rights based on the

law of nature. According to Thomas Jefferson, since all men are created equal, the government is only constituted by individuals to protect their life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. As such, Jefferson purposefully limits the ends of government as “happiness and security” in securing these natural rights. In so doing, Jefferson sets forth a federal limited-mixed regime with a separation of co-equal branches—executive, judicial, legislative—that check and balance each other. Under the Declaration, political power flowing from the “consent”—voting—of individuals must be separated and continuously checked by government institutions to avoid “political slavery,” which George III and Great Britain’s parliament imposed on the American colonists by concentrating the powers of all three branches of government within themselves. Ultimately, the first form of the U.S. government under the Articles of Confederation 1777 failed as they did not follow the Declaration’s outlines for the government.

The American Founding Fathers quickly realized the shortcomings of the U.S. government under the Articles of Confederation (AOC). Accordingly, in fear of political slavery by a tyrant or a group of individuals, political power was delegated entirely to states. By doing so, the federal government was only a deliberative forum in which states sent representatives to discuss issues. To such an extent was the federal government hampered that they could only “declare war” while the states retained economic, foreign policy, security, and political jurisdiction. The failures of the AOC were quickly apparent once the American Revolution was over in 1783 with the signing of the Paris peace treaty. The consequence of the accumulation of debt from the revolutionary war would see the country on the brink of civil war. First, state legislatures began circumventing the federal government by issuing local currencies to pay back their share of war debt. Second, civil rebellion erupted in Massachusetts, known as “Shay’s Rebellion,” led by ex-revolutionary war veterans over the Federal government imposing taxation. In response, the Federal government was unable to raise an army to put down the rebellion. They had to hire Massachusetts mercenaries as the state’s had the power to levy an army. To their astonishment, the Founding Fathers understood that a new constitution founded on the Declaration must replace the Articles of Confederation. If not, the Founders wrote, their experiment where laws are king would collapse into a civil war.

Thus, in response to the failures of the Articles of Confederation, the Founding Fathers met in 1787 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to form a new constitution. Accordingly, the middle section of the Declaration of Independence (DOI) outlines the U.S. Constitution of 1787. Specifically, the

middle section of the DOI lays out its charges against George III and the British Parliament for concentrating all three branches within themselves—executive, legislative, judicial. They argue that all three branches must remain separate as only God can be the judge, juror, and executioner. As man is not god, the three branches must be equal, separated, and continuously check each other to avoid tyranny—a concentration of political power. As such, the U.S. Constitution adopted measures such as a federal system, bi-cameral legislature, and separation of checks and balances. Indeed, the U.S. Constitution's articles I-III outline each branch—legislative, judicial, and executive role and powers. Furthermore, under the U.S. Constitution, the political power which derives itself from citizens is continuously separated and checked through the measures above to avoid a concentration of power. Ultimately, the Declaration and U.S. Constitution favor a limited government to prevent dangers of tyranny against the citizens.

However, progressivism's rejection of the interpretation, as mentioned earlier, of the Declaration and U.S. Constitution, is now dominant with politicians and academics. According to progressives, they reject the Declaration and U.S. Constitution principles in favor of a living interpretation. For progressives, individuals and governments have progressed past the Founding Fathers' fears. This living interpretation of the Declaration and U.S. Constitution argues for direct democracy and enlargement of government in welfare policies. Progressives call for the removal of various institutional checks enumerated in the Declaration and U.S. Constitution.

On the other hand, the problem with this historicism of the progressive's is simple. If ideas are limited to the age at which they are invented, then the methods and conclusions we apply today are likewise not to be relevant tomorrow. Our methods are therefore limited. Therefore, it remains extraordinarily difficult to apply today's understanding to yesterday. Ultimately, this narrative in rejecting the Declaration and U.S. Constitution for a limited government has become the dominant danger in the U.S.

It is in direct response to the progressive's attack on the American Founding that my thesis sets forth to refute. By re-examining the Founding Fathers' construction of the U.S.A. government between 1776 to 1789, we can understand the reasons why government and individual powers are limited. Moreover, we can also refute the progressive narratives of reforming, enacting direct democracy, and expanding government. For example, Elizabeth Warren, President Joe Biden, President Barack Obama, and former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton all argue for abolishing

checks in the U.S. Constitution of 1787. Most common is the mainstream media's argument for the abolition of the “electoral college.” By going back to the American Founding, we can understand the reasons why the Founders set forth the U.S. Constitution upon the Declaration of Independence. The Founders were explicit in their writings that the Founding documents—Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution—are universally applicable in the fight against the tyranny of the individual or government.

**Isabel Brechin**

My name is Isabel Brechin, and I am currently finishing up my honours undergraduate degree in History here at Dal. This time a few years ago, I definitely didn't think it would happen. Throughout my undergrad, which began in 2017, I have been balancing school with part time work, and taking fewer courses as a result. My intention has always been to finish my undergrad slowly, (hopefully with less debt than I otherwise would have). This time last year (March 2020) I was in Glasgow, Scotland on a study exchange at the university of Glasgow. My family history is Scottish, and I had always wanted to live there for a period. This seemed like the perfect opportunity. Little did I know that the pandemic was about to hit, and that I would be heading home on an emergency flight six weeks into my placement. While the rapid change was disappointing, I consider myself lucky that I was able to go home so quickly, and that my family and I remained safe, and have been since. I like to think the pandemic brought me new opportunities. One was that, as I was working from home this spring and summer, I had the opportunity to take some credits at the same time! This means that I am, surprisingly, going to graduate from my undergrad this spring.

The pandemic also fanned the flames of my desire to study the history of women in agriculture. I have worked on a women's and non-binary led organic farm since I was 18 and have long been passionate about the essential role that women have always played in agriculture. It seems to me that women taking on powerful roles in the feeding of their families and in the commerce of food is one of the few historical universals. Women have always been prominently involved in agriculture. It is only recently in western history, that men have come to dominate the agricultural sector. The cultural assumption in the west seems to be that women and non-binary led farms are not the norm. When we picture a farmer today, it is safe to say we don't picture a woman at the helm of the tractor. Nonetheless, even in our patriarchal society, women still make up 28.7% of agricultural landowners in Canada, and this number is rising.

As a result of my work, ecofeminism has always held a particular draw for me. Throughout my undergraduate it has been difficult to find courses that integrate my interest in the history of women and gender and environmental history. I have also been focused throughout my undergrad on taking a wide variety of history courses, especially ones that study history outside of Europe, making the likelihood of the course content being gender and women oriented even slimmer. Upon taking my first course with Dr. Krista Kesselring, called "Sex and Gender in Pre-Modern Europe,"

my interest in gender and women's history in Europe was reinvigorated. The structure of the course was incredibly well organised, and the learning environment was outstanding. I knew very early on that if I could complete an undergraduate thesis, it was Professor Kesselring who I would like to guide me!

The thesis process has been a challenging but rewarding opportunity. Having never written anything of this length before this year, I was quite daunted. While I was sure that I wanted to study women in agriculture, especially poor women, in some capacity, I was unsure what I wanted to study specifically. Not only that, but I had no frame of reference for what an undergraduate thesis could be. Luckily, with excellent guidance from Professor Kesselring, I stumbled across some calls from earlier agricultural historians of Early Modern English gender and women's history for further study of dairy women in Early Modern England. I quickly realised how understudied these women were and launched wholeheartedly into the research process. Eventually, I came up with a thesis which focused on continuities and change in dairy women's lives in Early Modern England prior to and in the early stages of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions. Dairy is a special space in the study of agricultural history as a space that has traditionally been dominated by women. It is a space where generational knowledge about economics and skills of the trade, have passed from mother to daughter over generations.

My thesis found that women held significant power as commercial and small household-producers of dairy products. Before the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions their knowledge and expertise were culturally and socially recognized and praised. They had deep networks of trade, traditional practices in the ways they worked, and many women found significant wealth, an aspect of dairying on which my thesis focuses significantly, through a transcription and analysis of a postmortem inventory. As enclosure deepened and industries changed, they were slowly but surely displaced from dairying. However, they demonstrated their power by actively resisting these changes. They did not make it easy for scientific and agricultural thinkers to make their arguments!

The process taught me a lot about how historians do research, as well as boosted my writing skills immensely. Though it may sound silly, I think that, partially out of necessity, I developed a better ability to focus for long periods of time throughout this process. This skill mostly came with a transcription I completed of an Early Modern woman's post-mortem inventory. This is a unique opportunity that I would never have had if I had not done a thesis. The work of palaeography was a challenge for me, both in my ability to budget my time and to focus and learn the intricacies of

Early Modern handwriting. The other hardest part of the thesis process for me was simply to start writing, and to continue writing consistently for a few months. One part of the process that was absolutely necessary for me was due dates, and multiple ones. I know that without a due date for each chapter, getting myself rolling would be quite difficult. These due dates kept me motivated and kept me writing and revising.

Another unique thing that comes with the thesis process is the opportunity to receive feedback from a professor and to take the corrections and resubmit. Unlike most classes, whereby the time you receive feedback you are usually moving on to a different project or a different class entirely, you have the opportunity to receive feedback, discuss it with your professor and resubmit, many times (depending on your professor's patience level, of course!). Our other required thesis course opened my mind to other ways of doing history and ensured that I was reflecting on my process and my intentions throughout the year.

Especially because there will not be a formal graduation ceremony, having a completed thesis feels like a tangible accomplishment, a marker of the work that I have put in over the last four years. I am forever grateful to my incredible advisor, to my peers in my honours class, and to my friends and family for supporting me through the process. To readers who are considering writing a thesis, my advice is to go for it! I think that taking honours has helped me in my other classes as well by encouraging better time management and better and more efficient research and writing skills. Not only that, but if you can write a thesis, you'll know that you can tackle whatever comes next after undergrad.

## Catherine Charlton

If you had asked me on the last day of grade twelve where I pictured myself being in four years, I would have very comfortably answered that I would be graduating Dalhousie with a major in biology, ready to embark on a master's degree in audiology. It was a very good plan. I can just as comfortably say, however—with the wisdom of retrospect—that it was the wrong one. The beginnings of this realization probably occurred when I decided to attend the University of King's College for its liberal arts Foundation Year Program, though I still enrolled in the program as a science student. The feeling intensified, I remember, during my very first "Intro Biology" class, when I suddenly discovered that the intricacies of cell life held absolutely no charms for me. Three weeks later I found myself browsing Dalhousie's Academic Timetable, trying to drum up a shred of interest for upper-year biology courses with such scintillating names as "Microbial Eukaryotes" and "Diversity of Algae." I decided to have a peek at the history courses—not to *take* them, mind you, just to *look* at them. Two days later I was standing in the registrar's office at King's, rather sheepishly inquiring about the procedure for switching one's program. Four years later I am still content with this decision, and am all set to graduate with an honours in history and a minor in English. Let's just call it the scenic route.

For all its twists and turns, this route ultimately led to my decision to pursue an honours degree, and last September I logged onto Brightspace to begin Dr. Bell's honours course. Here, I had the opportunity to learn about subjects I had never studied, to further my understanding of more familiar topics, and to have my thoughts enriched and challenged in many helpful ways. As this class was one of only a few synchronous classes I had this year, it was a lovely opportunity to get to know my classmates as more than simply names on a discussion board, and I am grateful to them for helping to make this class such an informative and enjoyable undertaking. I am thankful, too, for the opportunity that writing the honours thesis has given me to focus my attention on a question that has interested me for some time now, namely, how did the Second World War impact student life at Dalhousie University?

Educational institutions have historically been tested and refined by global struggles, and my thesis describes how Dalhousie faced the challenge of the Second World War. To do this, I relied greatly on a fascinating primary source, the *Dalhousie Gazette*, a student newspaper published twenty times per schoolyear. My thesis organizes the wartime period into three sections.



I argue that the first schoolyear of war was essentially a year of grace, a year which eased students into the reality of wartime student life while not materially affecting or greatly restricting elements of university life. I present Dalhousie students as looking to the past war, the present war, and the post-war world in attempts to navigate their situation and argue that the developments of this year laid the practical and ideological foundations for the remainder of the war. I then consider the next two-and-a-half schoolyears of war, October 1940 to December 1942. I contend that these were the years in which the war really ‘came home’ to Dalhousie students, most significantly due to the demands of compulsory military training and the first instances of wartime student death. I situate the student experience in these years as one of acclimation to militarization, a militarization not only of the university but also of Halifax. Students during these years, I argue, increasingly questioned the implications of this militarization. In addition, students were encouraged by both university faculty and their peers not to forget the broader needs of a wartime world in their preoccupation with their own difficulties. Finally, I consider the last two-and-a-half schoolyears of war, January 1943 to March 1945, arguing that the primary concern during this period was to guard against complacency. Students for whom the war had become routine were urged not to let this normalization become complacency, particularly in relation to their geographical, institutional, or post-war situation.

Overall, I argue that Dalhousie students during the Second World War navigated issues of comprehensive security. By this, I mean that students perceived wartime threats to security not just in practical terms (such as fear of an invasion of Halifax), but also in less tangible arenas, such as threats to the ideological security of universities and to freedom of expression. Moreover, I argue that the wartime years were the end of an era at Dalhousie. They were the last years of Dalhousie’s small-school collegiate atmosphere, which the influx of veterans in 1945-46 effectively ended. This was also a time of endings and beginnings, such as the resignation of Dalhousie’s president in the last wartime schoolyear and the modernization of the *Gazette* soon after the war’s culmination. Overall, the wartime years tell a story of resiliency, adaptation, and transformation.

What I appreciated most when researching my thesis was the opportunity to read so many issues of the Dalhousie *Gazette*. I quickly realized that student newspapers during this time are incredibly interesting reads. I got to know the students who appeared often in the *Gazettes*, and after a year of online classes I feel that I know more about many of these Dalhousie students from

the 1940s than I do about my own classmates. I also appreciated the ever-present humour of the *Gazettes* and am delighted with the plethora of jokes I have learned during my research, which proves that these papers still accomplish their self-stated goal of being both enlightening and entertaining. I was also very pleased to have the opportunity to read a *Gazette* in person when the staff at the Dalhousie Archives helpfully let me see a copy.

I tried to capitalize on my location in Halifax to learn about Dalhousie's history through experience. Whenever I was at the University of King's College, I pictured the campus during its wartime stint as HMCS *Kings* and mentally filled it with naval officers-in-training. After reading a particularly interesting book review in the *Gazette* I tracked down the book in question and read it myself. Visiting the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, I walked through the Navy Gallery and thought of the many Dalhousie students who had served in this branch of the services, and later that week I went to the Halifax Memorial in Point Pleasant Park and found the names of those who were lost at sea. An employee at Dalhousie's Studley gymnasium gave me a tour of the building where the Dalhousie students in the Canadian Officers' Training Corps had spent so much time drilling, and an equally kind staff member at the Westin Nova Scotian (formerly the Nova Scotian Hotel) showed me the hotel's ballroom, where so many Dalhousie dances were held during the war. Finally, after reading exactly ninety *Gazette* advertisements which promised me that a life unsurpassed in perfection would result if I only indulged in a certain drink, I celebrated the conclusion of my thesis research with a bottle of Coca-Cola.

It has been a wonderful year, and the honours course and honours thesis have improved my thinking and writing in so many ways. I am especially grateful to Dr. Bannister for his exceptional guidance throughout this process, and to Dr. Crooks, for being my second reader and for recommending Dr. Bannister as a supervisor in the first place. I am also thankful every day for my family, who have graciously put up with me peppering my conversations with *Gazette* quotes for the past six months. Finally, it has been a privilege to experience the honours course under Dr. Bell's capable and inspiring direction, and to learn from the many insights of my classmates. My very best wishes to you all.

**Natasha Danais**

For me, the whole process of writing my honours dissertation has been a daunting and exhausting task.

When I learned that I had to write something about how my final year as a university student in the honours history program, I rolled my eyes a little. What do I have to say about my experience that has not already been said? Hundreds of students before me have written something like this, and hundreds more will have to write something like this. I've always been aware of my lack of originality and this has been with me throughout my degree.

What I know that I should write for this reflection piece is that I am currently a fourth-year student who is majoring in history and doing a minor in French. My dissertation topic is the Manitoba School Question. I chose this since I wanted to write about Canada's colonial history. However, I am aware of being white and therefore a product of colonization, so I chose something that was related to me and my family's history. I'm from Winnipeg and went to French public school until grade 9. All throughout my time attending a French school, I was taught, in the broadest terms, that learning in French was a privilege my family and community had fought for. I had not really given it more thought until I was faced with choosing a topic for a 100-page-long paper.

While doing research for my dissertation, I learned that at the time of Manitoba's entrance into Canadian Confederation, Manitoba was seen to be a second Québec. The French-Catholic community represented approximately half of the population. However, the ethnic demographics changed so quickly that by 1890, the French population was a shadow of what it had been. The massive influx of settlers from Ontario (who were mostly Anglo-Protestant), and the resulting changes in legislature led to changes to the public education system. Although there were clauses in both the Manitoba Act and the British North America Act to protect minority language and religious rights, Manitoba's legislative assembly ignored these clauses and abolished public French-Catholic education.

There were a few court cases following the abolition of public French-Catholic schools. After a few years of legal battles, and a country-wide debate about whether the federal government could and should intervene, the newly elected federal government with Wilfred Laurier as its head struck a deal with Manitoba's Premier, Thomas Greenway. The resulting compromise established

a bilingual school system that permitted education in other languages and in other religions if there were enough students to justify it.

As the provincial demographics changed, in 1916, the province successfully managed to abolish all non-English public education. This is the part of the Manitoba School Question that really interested me since the French-Catholic community came together and organized themselves in order to illegally teach French. Teachers had to hide French textbooks and look out for school inspectors in order not to lose their job. They also created administrative and community organizations that would promote the placement of French-Catholic teachers in their own French communities. The French-Catholic community's organized resistance is what impressed me so much and still makes me so proud to be Franco-Manitoban.

Even though I've now spent countless hours writing and reading about the Manitoba School Question, I do not know who will read, appreciate, or even know about this paper. I do not know if I have contributed any significant work to this very specific part of Canadian history. I guess these are all thoughts that university students encounter when faced with completing a project that has consumed their thoughts for a whole year. Throughout the whole process, I kept asking myself: what's the point? And although I did learn a lot, grew as a person, and have completed the single, most difficult project I've ever attempted; I only did it because I am entertaining the idea of going to grad school. I do not think this is a good enough reason to have committed a whole year to an ambition I'm not committed to. I think the amount of work I've had to do is not justified when contemplating a 'maybe'.

Additional to the difficulties of writing an honours dissertation, the difficulties of doing this in the middle of a pandemic greatly exacerbated the stress and isolation I believe I would have felt if I had written this during a 'normal' academic year. This year has been exhausting. As a student and just as a person. The pandemic has been exhausting and working from home has been exhausting. I suspect that my self-criticism and feeling of inadequacy has been made worse due to the pandemic.

Since I'm technically a student at Kings, and not Dalhousie, I always compare difficult things to the Foundation Year Program at Kings. The year that I did FYP was one of the hardest years of my life. I always think that if something isn't as difficult as FYP, it's not that bad. Now I'm not sure what was more difficult; FYP or this. Perhaps I'm hypercritical of myself, my productivity, and my coping mechanisms since I am about to graduate. I am writing this blurb

while I still have a couple of weeks left of my undergrad and of writing for my dissertation. The feeling of hopelessness and uncertainty is heightened by the prospect of my graduation during a recession. I have no concrete plans for the future and feel lost. My experience while writing my dissertation has been punctuated by the different layers of uncertainty. The natural next step for honours students is graduate school. This seems like the only logical step for my future, but I am not yet ready to commit to a couple more years immersed in academics. I feel lost.

If I were to disregard all the stress and anxiety that I've felt over the course of this year, I could say that this has been generally pleasant. My supervisor has been supportive and encouraging. I've been able to find enough literature on my topic in order to complete my dissertation. I have learned so many interesting things in class due to the guest lecturers of the seminar classes. But if I knew how difficult this was going to be and if I could visualize a professional future outside of academics, I probably would not have done this. Especially not in the middle of a pandemic. I am proud of myself and I know that I have learned lots of skills that I can take with me to the next project. I am excited to hold a complete, printed and bound copy of my dissertation. I think ensuring that I can physically see and feel the product of this year will help.

I am excited to complete and submit my final and completed dissertation. Not only that, but I am excited to have guiltless leisure time.

## Alex Kennedy

Hello! My name is Alex Kennedy, and I am currently completing my Bachelor of Arts, with an Honours in History and a minor in Political Science. I started studying at Dalhousie in 2016, and I am hopeful that I will be continuing to do so, except this time working towards a master's degree in history.

To me, working on an honours thesis was the last step of an incredible journey. History has always been my interest of choice since I was a child and having the chance to study in depth an area of my choice seemed like a fitting way to end my undergraduate work. I've studied many areas of history during my time at Dalhousie, from the ancient Greeks to the considerably more recent Apartheid regime in South Africa and regretted none of it. Despite that, the chance to specialize in an area before moving towards a master's degree was one I jumped at.

I chose to specialize in the study of discipline and punishment the British Royal Navy during the Golden Age of Sail (generally regarded as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though my specific interest was from 1750 to 1850), as my interest had been sparked by previous classes on maritime history and my own British heritage. Obviously, my first order of business was to find a slightly slimmer topic to focus on, as I had selected a very broad subject. I eventually chose to focus on courts martial during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, as I had been inspired by a book focused on that topic, *Naval Courts Martial, 1793–1815*, by Dr. John Byrn. I was specifically interested in the variables that could be found within courts martial, such as how rank could affect the verdict or how marines within the Navy were treated differently from ordinary seamen, and the purpose of my honours thesis became finding the key variables that could influence the process and outcome of a court martial, as well as drawing links between the variables.

Writing an honours thesis is certainly a challenge, but one that I think is well worth doing. My focus on the British Royal Navy led to me discovering a great deal that is seemingly unrelated to my main thesis, but that I was able to incorporate and that actually strengthened my main argument, with the tensions between the British and Irish being a good example of this. Furthermore, my focus on courts martial included topics such as drunkenness and sexual crimes, which reveal a great deal about contemporary attitude among the British. Furthermore, by focusing on a thesis essay, I found my writing skills vastly improving. At one point, my supervisor had me go back and fix several mistakes with citing that I had been unknowingly making. While somewhat

tedious, I am very glad he did, as it ensured that I would not make those same mistakes again and reminded me to pay attention to similar matters in the future. In other matters as well, however, I have seen a noticeable improvement in my writing style through working on the honours thesis.

For me, one of the greatest challenges throughout the process was finding suitable secondary literature sources. Part of that was due to my reliance on primary source material for examining courts martial record. However, my work on the honours thesis did lead to me discovering new methods and strategies of finding secondary literature, which was incredibly helpful and will serve me in good stead as I go on to do a masters in history. On a similar note, my organizational skills also saw major improvement, as I ended up keeping a separate document that listed all of the various sources I was using, as well as roughly planning out all of my chapters before writing them.

My time management skills have also seen significant development during my time working on the honours thesis, as I will readily admit to being somewhat of a procrastinator. On projects like this one, however, even I realized the necessity of setting deadlines for myself and meeting them. I actually finished writing a solid honours thesis several weeks before it was due, although I am continuing to add to it and fix problems where I find them even now. I tried to average a chapter a month, although given that my second chapter was by far the longest, it ended up taking a little longer than I had hoped. Trying to plan out the deadlines was one of my greatest challenges when working on my honours thesis, and I am incredibly grateful for the guidance that my supervisor offered me in this respect, as it enabled me to finish my first completed draft just under a month in advance of when the honours thesis is required to be submitted to my supervisor and second reader for feedback, giving me ample time to polish the essay and continue to add more literature. Regardless of how early I finished, I cannot deny that the necessity for good time management meant that I ended up developing time management skills in order to meet the requirements of the honours essay.

I'd like to finish by offering a few words of advice for anyone thinking about joining the honours program. I honestly cannot recommend it enough. I found it was an incredibly helpful process in general, and listening to the various professors who came in to speak to our class was one of the most enjoyable parts of my academic career. To anyone thinking of joining, however, perhaps the most important piece of advice I can offer you is to find a good supervisor with whom you can work well and who knows your topic. I was incredibly lucky to have Dr. Jerry Bannister

offer to work as my supervisor, and I am beyond grateful for all the help he offered me. Without him, this process would have been far more confusing than it was, and his feedback was invaluable to my work. Dr. Bannister also knew my topic extremely well (in fact, his classes were what sparked my interest in naval history), making working with him a highly enjoyable and helpful experience. Furthermore, I cannot overstate the importance of planning when it comes to your honours thesis. One of the most helpful things for me when writing the honours thesis was that I always had a fairly detailed idea of what I wanted to work on, when I wanted it finished, and the sources that I wanted to incorporate. Obviously, this is subject to some amendment. I ended up cutting off a section of my final chapter, where I had wanted to talk about discrimination against foreign Europeans within the Navy, as I could not find enough sources to make it a viable topic. Despite that, having my essay planned with rough estimates of deadlines probably saved me weeks of time. Furthermore, although it did not happen to me, looking back, it would have been very easy to fall behind when working on the essay. Deadlines are key to avoiding that. Finally, although it is somewhat incongruous with my previous remarks, taking breaks while working on your honours thesis is highly important. Sometimes, its best to just step away and think over what you want to say, rather than stress yourself out over the thesis. Speaking as someone who has experienced it while working on my honours thesis, burning out is to be avoided. Sometimes you do need to work long hours to meet deadlines, but when possible, it is better to work for shorter periods and take frequent breaks. Its far more efficient in the long run, and you are more likely to enjoy writing your honours thesis if you aren't marathoning it for days on end.

I'll end my reflections here with a few words of gratitude. First of all, I need to thank Dr. Jerry Bannister, as without him, this process would have been far more painful than it was. I honestly could not have asked for a better supervisor. Thank you so much for everything. In addition, Dr. Chris Bell deserves applause, for he made the honours program work even despite the conditions that COVID imposed on us. Furthermore, I need to extend a personal thanks for the advice he offered during our classes discussing our honours theses, agreeing to be my second reader, and for authoring a fascinating book with close ties to my topic. I also think I speak for the entire honours class when I thank all the professors who spoke to us, as your talks were fascinating. A special thank you to Dr. Ajay Parasram, who actually inspired (and suggested a few sources for) one of my chapters when he discussed our honours theses with our class. And finally, I need to



thank the fellow members of my honours class. You guys are great, and I enjoyed working alongside all of you

To anyone who is thinking of taking the honours class, I strongly urge you to do so. It was one of the best experiences of my life, and while it was difficult at times, I don't regret a single moment. If you decide to do so, I wish you the best of luck! I promise you, its worth doing.

**Adam Maclaren**

Not quite a year ago, I had a conversation with my manager at work about a tax put on bread in Ireland. All bread used by the chain Subway fell into the Irish import tax category of cakes and confectionaries, rather than bread, because of the tremendous amount of sugar used in its production. This was incredibly hilarious to me because of the irony, but also incredibly telling. Why do we use so much sugar to make bread these days? When and why did this happen?

I have always been obsessed with food; I have always loved to cook, I have worked and learned in a kitchen throughout my time at university, and above all else, I love to eat.

Following three years of history at Dal, I had become increasingly curious and aware of what the story behind an object, be it material or representative, can tell about us. Foods hold so many past ideas and actions, from throughout the whole of our human existence, just beyond the surface. Individually, locally, and globally, food informs both the lines between cultures and the vast, remarkable overlap across them which maps fail to show. Thus, the history of food is one of the more diverse and insightful ways by which we may discover the past - and what it continues to say about us and Irish Subway franchises.

I am a tea-drinker; I drink about one or two cups a day, every day - but why? I know that tea comes from China, but I have never been there. I have seen plenty of cows and ears of corn, but never a tea-tree or a sugarcane. Why is it then, that even when my budget is at its tightest, I can always afford my tea and sugar?

For my thesis, I decided to investigate. Through research and over time, I discovered that just behind the story of tea and sugar (and the reason for my own habit), were the histories of great changes happening to the world at the time - changes that have influenced our societies today greatly.

It is difficult for us now to imagine a world without sugar; we expect it to be both easily available, but also present in far more foods than ever before. Prior to the Middle Ages, for example, sugar had been available only to the most wealthy. Should I had lived then, I likely never would have heard of it, let alone tasted it. It is difficult to find something without sugar today; in fact, an entire industry of 'sugar-free' foods and artificial sweeteners have been developed as sugar's antithesis. There are no 'carrot-free' soft drinks, nor any synthetic rutabaga.

Some of my earliest memories revolve around the incredibly delicious (and unbelievably sweet) tea served to me by my Grandmother when I was just a bean sprout. But those outside of eastern Asia had little-to-no idea that tea existed prior to the late-sixteenth century! How did this all change within a couple centuries, when it had been so unchanged for millennia.

I have studied the early modern period in England for the subject of my paper. This time and place saw the developments of global networks of trade, shifting prevalence of various economic theories, changing expectations of the individual in society - and above all else, the common choice of drink. Sugar and tea had been changed from rarity and novelty to cultural symbols in very little time.

Throughout the project, I discovered several unexpected elements common to the rise of tea and sugar. Firstly, I learned that both tea and sugar became very important to the English state. At this time, wealth was becoming increasingly equated with power for states, so the perpetuation of growth for tea and sugar in England was encouraged - often forceful, often self-serving. The problem of undue corporate or industrial influence in the process of politics is heavily debated today, and the study of how the commercial and political worlds became so entangled can be analyzed, critiqued, and understood through the history of tea and sugar. The debate over what rate to tax a certain bread, for example, can at least be partially explained.

Secondly, the history of tea and sugar greatly informs about how we as a society act about food. Prior to the early modern era, what we ate was generally what we could grow around us. Sure, some could afford to purchase a rare food or good from a bordering region or country, but that was the exception. Largely because of how the tea and sugar industries developed, we recognized just how profitable it could be to broaden our palates. Whereas the desire to purchase and consume a new food was initially just another way for the wealthy to assert their status, the financial gain had by those involved in the tea and sugar trades soon outgrew the market of the few to seek out the market of all. This brought tea to these people, but also a place for the common individual at the table of commerce as well.

Thirdly, I learned just how far people are willing to go to acquire these goods. At this time, England began to desire conquering and exploiting thousands in order to perpetuate their taste for foreign foods and the wealth derived from them - tea and sugar being the example here. In order to have sugar, they built sugar plantations in the Americas worked by brutally exploited unfree labour. They went to cruel lengths to acquire and subjugate parts of India and China in order to

secure lines of trade for tea. We must not forget the sometimes violent, often brutal means taken by this society in order to satisfy the expectations we carry today, so that we may avoid the consequences of their greed again.

Lastly, tea and sugar have influenced our lives as individuals. Clearly, they have become common parts of the diet of many more people than before the early modern period. Beyond what we eat, however, they have also influenced when and why we eat. For example, the workday now usually includes several breaks oriented over a good that was introduced in the early modern period; tea breaks, coffee breaks, or cigarette breaks all divide the day for most of those employed. As these goods were being introduced, the way we work did too, and the ability of letting a worker enjoy a (caffeine and calorie dense) cup of tea helped to prepare English society for the labour demands of the Industrial Revolution.

Throughout the thesis process, as I learned more and more of the grand and lasting scale of the causes and consequences of the history of tea and sugar, I still had one in the morning. I had another halfway through work. I had one to keep me alert while formatting my thesis' footnotes. The study of food history uniquely enables us to look at such informative changes across centuries, continents and cultures, all while keeping us grounded in our own worlds. There is something beautiful in the study of a shared humanity granted by the global consensus that chocolate is wonderful, for example, as opposed to doing the history that solely concentrates upon our more hateful and ugly natures.

While my thesis was limited to a specific place, and bound by a specific time, the insightfulness and multifacetedness of our food cultures and their histories reveals the best that history has to offer. It offers consensus and appreciation without foregoing distinctivity. It offers insights into what we like and demand as individuals and as societies. It demonstrates the limitlessness of ends we take to appease our appetites- for good or for ill. Above all else, through careful and extensive reflection, it holds all of these insights in harmony, all in a teacup.

## Georgia Simon

Hello, I'm Georgia and unlike some I did not start my University journey at Dalhousie. For my first year I studied at Acadia University and although I met many amazing people there, I was ultimately unsatisfied with my options and made the decision to transfer. I am glad I did because I don't think I would have the same thesis topic if I hadn't. Initially, I was not that interested in Russian history. Like many, my perception was influenced by the upmost basic comprehension we tend to get in high school. It was only when I learnt the details and history from below that I became very invested in the subject, especially the intellectual and literary history.

From this, I learnt that people of the past are much more complicated than simply being 'fearful' or 'brainwashed' and I became very interested in the human experiences of the Soviet Union. How did people experience this era in history? Unlike in high school, university gave me the knowledge and know-how to read primary sources. Memoirs and diaries interested me, learning what life was like in a place and time I had never been and could not comprehend encouraged me to learn more about what life was like for the ordinary person. Of course, this changes depending on the decade in Soviet history. Ordinary life during WWII was not necessarily the same in the 1980's. This is where my thesis topic developed. In the 1930's Stalinist era state violence was frequent, shaping and dismantling the lives of millions. When you read the memoirs of these people who witnessed the whole ordeal, you begin to wonder how they made sense of it as it occurred. How has historical memory changed? In contemporary western society memory changes and develops all the time, but what about in an authoritarian regime? In 1956, Nikita Khrushchev delivered the Secret Speech, essentially denouncing Stalin, signalling a period of relaxed censorship. The Thaw, named after Ilya Ehrenburg's book by the same name, allowed public discourse to open. What now? Beginning in the 1940's millions of Gulag survivors poured back into society with voices and stories to tell. How under such historical circumstance do people remember the past? Now memoirs and literature began to be published in the Soviet Union and abroad. Underground journals allowed the illicit distribution of unpublished works. In this regard, Russian poet Anna Akhmatova once said, "two Russians will look each other in the eye: the one that sent these people to the camps and the one that came back".<sup>1</sup> This is the basis for my thesis. I

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<sup>1</sup> Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Picador, 2008), 583.

aim to track the memory of Stalinist-era state violence that peaked in 1937, by observing diaries, memoirs, and literature from the Great Terror to the Thaw.

Researching my thesis has taught me to reconsider how I define and think about certain topics. For instance, what does resistance look like in the Soviet Union? In the traditional sense resistance can be described by protests, demonstrations, boycotts, even performance art, but in an authoritarian regime how might resistance take different forms? Passive resistance, small everyday acts of defiance were common and held meaning for those who performed them. Just because the presentation of outward resistance does not appear as frequently as we might assume, does this mean that people were willingly compliant? Of course not. By broadening what we consider to be resistance we can better understand the convictions of our historical subjects. When we contextualize diaries and memoirs in their historical framework, we can see how public discourse influences the individual, not only by the media, but the rumors and gossip of everyday life as well. Consequently, this can provide insight on how individual and collective attitudes changes and expands over time. I think these reminders helped me better understand the way people made sense of not only their lives but of Soviet society as well.

It is easy to imagine how you think you would behave in a historical setting but when you *really* think about it, it's much more difficult than at first glance. I think it's important, especially when reading the personal documents of people in the past, to remember the human element and circumstance people are under and how this influences their actions and opinions. Although we might think that the acts of denunciation, panic, and betrayal during the Terror are horrendous, we also must ask ourselves, what would *you* do in an environment where you and your family's survival is threatened. In this environment the line between perpetrator and victim is blurred, further complicating an already complex situation. Sometimes the explanation for why people do certain things is simpler than it appears. Embracing Soviet ideology and becoming part of the collective is not always a result of simple compliance but perhaps just wanting to be a part of something. Being included in society was crucial to many Soviet diarists in the 1930's, the fear of being alienated, an outsider, was often at the forefront of their minds. Reading the memoirs of people whose lives were so uprooted and shaped by Stalinist terror proved to be extremely saddening. It is amazing to me how people persevered and continued after such devastating events.

We can ask ourselves why does this matter? What is the point in studying historical memory? Although one could give many answers, I would say that it is important because it

portrays how history is understood, processed, and changes over time. Investigating historical memory also invites us to observe the primary sources themselves. Diaries, memoirs, letters, and more shape the archive, which in turn, shapes historical narrative. What is and is not available and why are questions we should be asking of the archive. Imagine if we learnt about WWII only from the perspective of the French, we would not get close to the entire scope of events. If the archive is dominated by certain groups, then the narrative is generally shaped by that information. In the Soviet context, diaries and memoirs were more likely to come from the intelligentsia or working class. The collective farms produced much less diary documentation, a product of their lifestyle. Many collective farmers simply had other things to worry about, therefore their historical voice is less noticeable in the archive and even less in English translations. Although it is impossible to gather a complete picture of history, we should consider what is and is not represented. That being said, historians should also consider *how* and *why* history is represented the way it is. People often write memoirs out of a duty to contribute to memory, but why do they depict themselves the way they do? How people decide to write about themselves, what they omit and include, also shapes the archive. To make things more complicated, public discourse can further influence people's perception of themselves. Before writing my thesis, I hadn't really thought about these issues, but now I think I've become a more mindful when examining sources.

Despite the lack of motivation enticed by online class, I enjoyed researching my thesis. Paradoxically, the extra time I had from learning at home did not help with my procrastination. Being in one place for most of the day and not having a set space to do schoolwork was more of a challenge than I had anticipated. I did not realize how much I relied on structure to keep me on schedule. This reminded me of the importance of good time management, a skill that I might need to further refine. I hope that anyone who also struggled with motivation during the pandemic knows that they are most defiantly not alone. Nonetheless, I am happy with my research, however, I am happy it is over. That relief one feels from finishing an essay is amplified on completing a thesis. I'd like to give a big thank you to my honours supervisor Dr. Denis Kozlov for helping me in my research and putting up with my procrastination. If you are a history major and have a particular topic you wish you could expand on, I think the honours program might be for you. The program gives you the opportunity to explore those questions you might still have from an essay written semesters ago. I know it did for me. In all, I'm pleased I made the decision to transfer to

Dalhousie 3 years ago, if not, I might not have discovered my interest in Soviet history. Good Luck!



## Hannah Wygiera

If I have learned anything over my four years at Dalhousie, it is that passion is important. I have enjoyed my time in the honours program, simply because I was able to take my interests to a new level. I got to see how I could take one interesting topic and turn it into a huge project that I ended up incredibly proud of. The skills that I learned will carry me throughout my university career. I entered university thinking I would study Ancient Rome. I went to Italy earlier that year and loved seeing every cobblestone. However, I took one class on Early Modern England and my life changed. It was the one class where I absorbed everything. I called my family after every class to tell them everything I learned. I believe my honours thesis reflects my passion in this area of history. My poor family has endured a year of me talking endlessly about my research. However, they can also see why it matters to me and why it excites me.

My interest in Early Modern England and the Reformation stems from my childhood in the Anglican Church. My dad is an Anglican priest and I quickly got used to people asking me, “What is the Anglican Church?” My only answer was, “It is basically the Catholic Church without the pope.” This question filtered into my research interests because I wanted to be able to find a better answer and explanation. Over the years, I have done research papers on the Elizabethan Church and the Book of Common Prayer, and on Quakers and female preachers. I uncovered an incredible world of context that led me to religious crimes and my eventual thesis topic. Dr. Krista Kesselring, who became my supervisor, recognized my interests, and suggested what ended up becoming my thesis topic.

My honours thesis unpacks the decriminalization of heresy as a capital offence in Early Modern England. The history of heresy has a large historiography, but the focus has been mostly about doctrine. I examine the crime of heresy and argue that heresy’s decriminalization as a capital offence was the result of a Protestant fear of Catholicism. The statute that outlined the punishment for heresy was created in 1401, called the *Writ de Heretico cumburendo*. The *Writ* established the protocols for detecting, trying, and punishing heretics, which reflects the relationship between the English Church and state. Heretics were detected by bishops, imprisoned by the state, tried by the Church, and punished by the state. The punishment described in the *Writ* was death by burning. The 1401 statute officially made heresy not just a religious offence, but also a capital offence. The first victim of the *Writ* was John Badby, who was burned in 1410. Throughout the sixteenth

century, each monarch approached heresy slightly differently. Orthodoxy changed but so did the relationship between church and state, especially with the English Church's separation from the Roman Catholic Church. In Henry VIII's reign, both Catholics and Protestants were at risk of being heretics. In Mary I's reign, Protestants were targeted as heretics. Elizabeth I's reign differentiated between popish traitors and radical Protestant heretics. In fact, only six heretics were burned in the Elizabethan period. The last man to be put to death for heresy was Edward Wightman, who was burned at the stake in 1612. Overall, the *Writ* saw the burning of approximately 400 people in England.

Following Wightman's burning, England began debating the nature of heresy as a crime and its punishment. The Civil Wars in the 1640s saw the rise of religious diversity, as new religious groups flourished in the absence of censorship and the disruption of civil and religious authority. Members of Parliament could not agree on what beliefs were heretical, making it a period of religious debate. Many leaders still wanted heresy to be punishable by death, but they could not agree on what beliefs. It was also during this period that the separation of church and state became more apparent, especially when ecclesiastical authority was abolished. In 1648, Parliament passed an Ordinance against blasphemy and heresy. It divided heresy into two levels. The first level could be defined as religious errors; they did not deserve death, only imprisonment. The second level of beliefs deserved death. Interestingly, heresy was defined as a felony, which indicated the punishment of hanging instead of burning. As well, there was no mention of the Church's role. Heresy had become a secular crime instead of a religious offence.

The *Writ de Heretico cumburendo* was abolished by Parliament in 1677. Toleration may have been a motivating factor; it was certainly brought up in many debates about heresy and religious diversity, especially during the Civil War years. However, it was not the main reason for abolishing the *Writ*. Toleration would allow erroneous beliefs to continue. Members of Parliament may have wanted to abolish the *Writ*, but many still wanted heresy to be a crime. A constant theme throughout my thesis is the relationship between church and state. Before the *Writ* was abolished, bishops were worried that their authority to punish religious offences would be taken away. They argued that heresy fell under ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In order to maintain their authority, bishops were allowed to punish heresy with excommunication. The *Writ* was also abolished during the Exclusion Crisis, a period where many members of Parliament wanted to exclude the king's Catholic brother James from the line of succession. Protestant members of Parliament were

sensitive to the dangers of popery, and the thought of a Catholic monarch was dangerous. Members of Parliament feared a Catholic retaliation on Protestants and that Mary I's reign, where around 300 Protestants were burned for heresy, would repeat itself. If the *Writ* still existed, most Protestants in Parliament were in danger of being prosecuted as heretics and burned at the stake. Therefore, in order to protect themselves, they abolished the *Writ*.

Overall, this past year was challenging in many ways. I lived on the other side of the country and was constantly calculating time differences. I also did not have access to physical books because most libraries near me were closed. Therefore, I am very thankful for Dalhousie's document delivery service. I learned that it is entirely possible to write a thesis with only online sources. Thankfully, my topic had many accessible databases. I learned how to navigate them quite well. I gained valuable research skills but also learned that I am adaptable to crazy global situations. When I applied to the honours program, I did not anticipate that there would be a global pandemic. However, I proved to myself that no matter what life throws my way, I can still research and write a thesis. I am forever grateful to my family for their support and interest in my research. I am also thankful for my husband who listened to all my new discoveries and never complained with all my piles of research scattered throughout the living room. I am also thankful for Dr. Kesselring, who was an amazing supervisor. She helped me access books and taught me all the complicated aspects of English law. I can honestly say I learned a lot this past year and I am very excited to pursue a master's degree.

The honour's program is incredibly rewarding. I looked forward to the seminar every week and hearing from the incredible professors of the History Department. There are so many ways to approach history and so many areas of history that I had not been exposed to before this year. I appreciated the thoughtful discussions and the support of my fellow honours students. If anyone reading this is considering joining the honours program, do it. The exposure to different areas of research, the supportive environment, and the opportunity to explore your research interests in depth is a chance that should not be passed up. It is hard work, but the reward (and relief) you experience when you finish your thesis is worth it. The skills you take away from it are worth it. Above all, the chance to take your passions and turn them into a research project is perhaps the most exciting aspect.

## **Matthew Zolkivski**

When I began, I only initially intended to take the program due to its being a requirement for my future educational plan. Once I got researching and writing, I began to understand why people would do this program. Aside from the choice of what content one focuses on, the ability to work alongside an experienced professional and write with their guidance has changed how I write and what processes I take when writing. I would define the features of growth and appreciation of the honours thesis through three categories: personal growth, rising to the challenge, and then a brief synopsis of what I personally found in my research.

### **The personal growth**

The personal growth that comes with taking on a responsibility like this is life changing if one were to find themselves pursuing further academia following their undergrad. Aside from the benefits to be had for one's career, the honours thesis offers an opportunity to work with professors on a topic closely, helping an honours student to overcome each issue and better their writing. More than that, a project like the honours thesis forces the student to change their ways of procrastination. There is such a massive work ahead when one begins, the idea of procrastinating is madness. Beginning this project, I felt that it was so monstrous a behemoth, that it was undefeatable. The infinite peak that we honours students attempt to reach the summit of is such an amazing achievement, that we look back on it with pride. It is not that this is terribly hard, assuming one does not procrastinate, but the honours thesis is a passion piece. This project is not just a paper, but is a symbol of the writer's grit, their force of will.

### **Challenges**

There are many challenges that one grapples with when taking on a project like this, from a changing thesis, to changing primary sources. The challenges presented are many, but those who choose to become honours students show the strength of will to rise to those challenges. One will encounter many stressful situations, be repeatedly told their arguments "need work," and will definitely have to swallow their own pride sometimes. When they feel good points coming, try to make them, but the challenges of creating clarity make the writer grow with each draft, and sigh with each revision. In the case that one does end up cramming in the last month of the thesis, they will suffer more immeasurable mental anguish than they have ever encountered as a writer before.

The sheer amount of academic pressure would be enough to crush even the finest of academic spirits. Do. Not. Procrastinate.

Another challenge, external to those in the Thesis, is the challenges and inhibitions that life presents to the writer. Covid-19, work, needing to make rent, dealing with family, or dealing with any other struggles of the self, the writer will be repeatedly inhibited by the curveballs of life. With each challenge, the writer of an honours thesis will retain another piece of resolve, a piece of glue to hold themselves together through such times. Much like a finely crafted sword, the perfect techniques to create a strong unbreaking author will find their way to the writer. When the writer reaches the end and looks back upon their journey, they would not wish for another, yet they somehow know that they would be more prepared for another such challenge than ever before.

### **Satisfaction from suffering: The writing of my Honours Thesis:**

When I began my journey, I had no idea the amount of work that was involved in the honours thesis. The only thing one knows when entering honours, is possibly what they are interested in. That interest transforms into a passion, and that passion becomes your work. Through trials and tribulations, I was able to begin my research, find my passion, and formulate my question: “To What Extent Did Revolutionary Americans View Indigenous Peoples as One, Versus as Many?” From this question, my advisor and I began to discuss: what is relevant to this, how can it be approached, and what will be most clear and understood by an uninformed reader? We eventually settled on three topics: language, treaties, and genocide, the third of which would later change to focus on the alienation of Indigenous independence.

My first chapter focused on how the governing body of the Revolutionaries during the Revolution, the Continental Congress, used the term “Indian” within their letters and during their meetings rather than using specific names of tribes. This was done for the purpose of evaluating the extent to which the Congress understood linguistically and the valuation of translators. Within this chapter I also approached how the problematic language and the term “Indian” was used in a derogatory way, as well as when proper indigenous tribe names were used with a manipulative intent.

My second chapter focused more specifically on the language used in treaties, how treaties played a role in othering indigenous peoples, and how the different treaties were used in different ways depending on which imperial government was in control, i.e. the British and later the Americans. The contents of this chapter largely pertain to: the role played by William Johnson,

the British superintendent of indigenous affairs until 1774, the events leading up to the American Revolution, the effects these events and the establishment of the Proclamation line had on settler-indigenous violence, as well as a deconstruction of several of the major treaties that were signed during the Revolutionary period.

The third chapter focused on the alienation of Indigenous independence and the role it had on manifesting the many tribes as one in law, in the eyes of settler, and in the fights that were slowly turning against the indigenous groups within the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes regions. In each chapter, I tried to recap the relevant events of the Revolution in order, within their themed contexts, i.e. military encounters from 1763 to 1795, treaties of that same period, and how language changed throughout that period. In my third chapter, this especially meant focusing on Dunmore's war, different massacres that were committed based on race, the strange way Indigenous identity was appropriated by the Revolutionaries (such as the image of America as an indigenous woman), the villainization of indigenous peoples via propaganda, the difficulties of remaining neutral, amongst many other points meant to target key changes for Indigenous peoples and how they were being delegated with.<sup>1</sup> These features of the Revolutionary period provided insight into how indigenous rights degraded across said period, ending in major losses of land independence, the ceding of lands, and the beginning of early Indigenous Reserve systems in North America.

My thesis concluded with a more successful flourish than I imagined, resulting in the realization that, although there was not a total assumption of an individual indigenous government to be delegated with, the loss of rights and the lack of support in the late eighteenth century led to a more united sense of oppression on the Frontier by groups such as the Mohawks. The almost universal struggle that indigenous peoples would continue to grapple with leading into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was seemingly born, somewhat ironically, in the flames of Independence.

## **Conclusion**

Now for the sweet words all those future honours students will be wishing to write for the next year: "in conclusion." In conclusion, the honours Thesis was overall worth the struggle. It

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<sup>1</sup> Dunmore's War: a war fought by lord Dunmore against indigenous people of the Frontier for not following the problematic rules laid out in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1763), which sold the lands of the Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingoes, out from under them.

made me grapple with sources and my writing techniques in a way that no other paper has ever made me do. This was by far the longest hamburger essay I have ever had to write, and I am certain that my masters will depart the hamburger model in favour of a more elaborate food-based metaphor for a paper structure.

To all those who approach this program, may you not be shaken by the immensity of the mountain that is the Honour Thesis, for what awaits you in the great valleys beyond will come much more quickly and much more easily from such an elevation. You will succeed in the face of those tens of thousands of words, and you whom accept the challenge, will be astonished by what you might learn about yourselves, what you might learn about the world around you, and what lies in wait for you within the echoes of history.