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English National Identity in English Colonial and Imperial Literature and Undergraduate Publication Research

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Recommended Citation

Medeiros, Megan A., "English National Identity in English Colonial and Imperial Literature and Undergraduate Publication Research" (2015). *Senior Honors Projects*. Paper 423.

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Honors Project: History Thesis and Publication

Research

Megan Medeiros

Part I: English National Identity in English Colonial and Imperial Literature: Eighteenth Century to Early Twentieth Century

Introduction:

What defines a nation? How does a nation define its citizens? What national characteristics pervade a culture, a people, a life? The question of a nation's identity is a popular point of research for the historian.

My Paper:

For my project, I chose to research Englishness to inquire about national identity. Throughout my paper I worked to highlight the characteristics, norms and structures of English national identity. To make my argument, I chose to use English works of literature as a primary source of historical evidence. However, since England has such a long list of proficient and well-read authors, I narrowed down my base of evidence by using novels which featured the confrontation between English characters and characters defined as non-English, non-European, and non-white. Thus, my paper represents how Englishness has been defined and established through its confrontation with "otherness."

Results:

From my research, I was able to argue that classic English authors established, defined, and perpetuated English norms, characteristics, and standards of English national identity and, thus, helped create and draw attention to boundaries drawn to distance Englishness from otherness.

Part II: Publishing historical papers in academic journals

Purpose, Rationale and Aim:

Ever since I was a child, I have loved to learn about history and, as a result, I have almost always known that I wanted to study history in college. As a Senior, I have been seriously considering continuing my education and getting my Masters and PhD in history. As a result, I modeled my project as a means to "test the waters" for serious academic work in history. The first section of this project was to get a glimpse into writing and researching a substantial and original historical paper. To complement that, this second portion was designed as a means to research the publishing world which professional historians are obliged to face.

Research:

For this portion of my project, I compiled and researched a number of questions that are relevant to publishing historical papers. Questions I attempted to answer included: What is publishing like for historical papers?

What are the requirements? Can I publish as an undergraduate? What are the guidelines? What can I expect?

Results:

Through my research, I found that publishing is a long process which demands a serious time commitment and a lot of work. Many journals have different paper and content requirements. Also the process of publishing is especially difficult for undergraduates, though not impossible.

