Reading Log #9

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History 1120

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1. Dueling is a well-known, long standing tradition in European culture. It was a contest of honor and bravery and was used to settle disputes. In *Pistols at 6 o’clock,* Bown writes of the final duel ever to take place in Upper Canada. The article seems to mainly focus on the fact that John Wilson was not found guilty of murder, despite the fact that duels in this time period were illegal. This shows that laws surrounding dueling were not regularly enforced. In the other article, Morgan also wrote that as long as dueling code was followed, the law was sometimes overlooked. It also focuses on what the constructs of “honour” truly are.

2. Stephen Bown’s writing comes across as more of a story than a historical article. Closure is brought to the story in the words of Reverend William Bell, “Such are the effects of indulging the pride of the human heart, and a false sense of honour”. 1 Much attention is brought to the word “honour in both articles. In Morgan’s article, she writes “…the flexibility of this code was limited by both race and gender”. 2 The question that remains is what is the true definition of honour? In the end, Morgan decides that it really doesn’t matter what honour is. She writes, “…the 'phantom' of honour was less important than men's responsibilities towards financially dependent wives, children, mothers, and sisters.” 3 The most honourable man, is more committed to family than his selfish, petty feuds.

3. Many topics were addressed in these articles including legal actions, honour, and the settling of feuds in the early 1800s. The most important topic however, was family. It makes me wonder how many men were brave enough to set aside their pride, and put their family first in that day and age. It seems like the ability to say no, took a lot more courage than the ability to say yes.