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Thesis Reflection 2020

When Notre Dame announced that we would not be returning to campus after Spring Break, uncertainty became the new normal as both students and professors were forced to adjust to an online format. My thesis, however, reminded me of the old normal, and for that I am grateful. As an independent project, my research continued without extensive alteration to the system and habits I had established earlier in the semester. I had already been regularly emailing my advisor Professor Yasmin Solomonescu, so I continued sending drafts and revisions, and she continued to offer helpful feedback and detailed guidance. Most of the new challenges—for example, not being able to fully consult some print sources—I anticipated, but others I did not fully expect—Google Docs is great for keeping a history of comments, etc., but it also has its limitations. Despite these new realities, I felt supported by my advisor and the English Department throughout the entire process.

As a long-term project, the thesis experience has definitely helped develop my research, writing, organizational, and time-management skills, as I believe the program is generally intended to do. But working during this stressful time has also taught me the value of flexibility and creativity in a more practical way, particularly for this assignment. I first began considering a thesis as a junior when I was in London as part of the Kennedy Scholars Research Seminar. In this sense, I had a bit of a head start in articulating what I wanted to study. And while some topical aspects of my thesis have remained relatively consistent over the past two years—*Pride and Prejudice*, adaptations, place—my interests and ideas have taken many directions and required many revisions. As I worked from home, however, I approached the places and houses

of my novels from a fresh perspective—even after such an extended time working with this subject matter—when I most needed to establish my argument. This ultimately helped me tie everything together in a more meaningful way. Overall, then, the thesis has been a rewarding experience and I am thankful to have had the opportunity of completing it in the English Department.