“We are very pleased to present these fine examples of student work from Duke’s Academic Writing classes. You will see that our Academic Writing courses permit a wide range of work by students in a variety of disciplines. This work is both creative and scholarly, and thus introduces first-year students to the kind of rigorous and innovative thinking that distinguishes an academic community such as Duke.”

Denise Comer
Thompson Writing Program
# Table of Contents

4  **Hope as an Anchor: Optimism for the Afterlife in Geer Cemetery Epitaphs and the Rise of Black Wall Street**  
   Bella Birch  

10 **Ticket**  
   Carina Lei  

17  **A Proposal for Optimal Removal of Benzo[a]pyrene from Houston Waterways**  
   Joseph Schwartz, Ben Platz, Ben Peng  

23  **“It's the Green, it's the Green, it's the Green You Need:” Deviation from and Conformity to Disney's Hierarchical Narrative in *The Princess and the Frog***  
   Karianna Klassen  

31  **Crisis Makes the Identity, Identity Makes the Crisis**  
   Lilia Qian  

35  **The Minority Problem: The Effect of My Racial Ambiguity on My Adolescent Identity Development**  
   Maya Todd  

41  **Over Our Heads: The Hidden World of Bird Communication**  
   Sophie Cox
Foreword

Sheryl Welte Emch

True to the name of the journal, *Deliberations*, this collection of outstanding essays, written by first-year students in Writing 101--Duke's one-semester, first-year course in academic writing--are indeed deliberations. That is, each essay was written, and rewritten, with careful and reflective consideration. The process of generating ideas, exploring and reflecting on their significance, writing and revising and editing, was without a doubt an extremely deliberate process, done consciously, thoughtfully, slowly, (sometimes joyfully and sometimes painfully), with the utmost concern for the process and the product. In other words, these essays are deliberations of the highest quality, and have the potential to touch many lives.

I have been teaching first-year writing at Duke for 15 years (and loving every minute of it!), so I am no stranger to the fascinating and vast array of topics being offered to introduce first-year students to university-level writing. All Writing 101 classes share the goals of helping students to introduce the work of others, articulate a position, situate their writing within specific contexts, and transfer their writing knowledge beyond Writing 101. That said, each instructor, inspired by their academic discipline and personal interests, puts these goals into practice in different ways, creating very distinct classes with an array of unique final papers and projects.

These papers and projects foster the development of strategies for generating, supporting, and sharing their ideas within a community of scholars. While all Writing 101 students are encouraged to write as though they are writing for a broad audience, for most students their immediate community is comprised of another 14 first-year students and the professor. For students whose work is published in *Deliberations* (or elsewhere), however, their community expands infinitely. Their work is no longer being read just by their classmates, their professor, or anyone else with whom they decide to share their work. These students have chosen, and been chosen, to share their work with the entire Duke community and beyond. They have put their ideas out for public consumption, as well as public scrutiny, deliberately and bravely expanding their audience and community of scholars. This is no simple task, but rather an act of strength and courage, an ability and willingness to engage openly and honestly about their own and others' ideas.

Our editorial board, consisting of an extraordinary group of Writing 101 instructors and previously published Deliberations' student authors, selected seven remarkable essays that reflect the diversity of academic disciplines of the TWP faculty, and in turn, the impressive range of beliefs about and approaches to academic writing. Each of the published essays touched, inspired, moved, provoked, and/or resonated with several readers in some way.

In Bella Birch’s essay, Hope as an Anchor: Optimism for the Afterlife in Geer Cemetery Epitaphs and the Rise of Black Wall Street, she examines the connection between race and attitudes towards death expressed on grave markers in Durham cemeteries. Using data collected by her and her classmates at Geer and Maplewood, Durham’s Black and White cemeteries from 1877 to 1944, she illustrates how Geer (the Black cemetery) epitaphs are more pessimistic about life and show positivity towards death. Bella expands on this idea by demonstrating that Geer grave markers have a high occurrence of the anchor design, a symbol of hope, and optimistic verses from 1st Corinthians in their epitaphs. Furthermore, she connects the growing frequency of these optimistic elements at Geer after 1900 to the rise of Durham’s Black Wall Street and Hayti. She suggests that new economic and educational opportunities for Durham’s Black community may have influenced religious attitudes by creating a sense of optimism towards both life and death, and she explores this phenomenon through an inspection of a few St. Joseph’s AME Church fans. Finally, Bella expresses the hope that her research will highlight the vibrancy of the Hayti neighborhood prior to Urban Renewal and shine some light on the attitudes and achievements of those who have long been overlooked.

In Sophie Cox’s essay, “Over Our Heads: The Hidden World of Bird Communication,” she combines research on avian communication with personal anecdotes and observations of the birds in her backyard. Throughout the essay, Sophie asks questions that intrigue her and that scientists are trying to better understand: What are birds really saying when they squawk and chirp and sing? What is going on in those little bird brains? Drawing on personal experience, Sophie examines the field of avian communication and cognition by focusing on the birds she knows best, specifically a pair of wild Carolina wrens that she’s been hand-feeding mealworms to in her backyard for two years. The hours she’s spent up close and personal with the wrens have inspired an endless list of questions. What are they thinking? What are they saying? Why do they trust her? Can birds actually trust, at least in the human sense of the word? Should we rely on human traits to define birds’ abilities and minds, or do we have other options? By asking these engaging questions, Sophie does an impressive job of looking more closely at the research and speculation surrounding avian communication and cognition.

In Karianna Klassen’s essay, “It's the Green, it's the Green, it's the Green You Need:” Deviation from and Conformity to Disney’s Hierarchical Narrative in *The Princess and the Frog*, she explores the extent to which The Princess and the Frog, Disney’s last feature-length, 2D-animated film, challenges the corporation’s traditional narrative about class and hierarchy. The film stars the working-class, Black, protagonist-turned-
princess Tiana, who subverts the racial and class expectations set by prior Disney princesses. Karianna examines Tiana's characterization and storyline in the context of the film's sanitized, post-racial setting. Disney's hierarchical narrative outlined by Dr. Lee Artz, and Tiana's relationship to other characters. Through this conversation, she illustrates the film's failure to challenge the core power structure established by Disney's canon. Karianna's investigation of race, class, and hierarchy in The Princess and the Frog reveals implicit messages that challenge the morality of social mobility, delegitimize the struggles of marginalized groups, and promote damaging "pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps" narratives while failing to acknowledge legitimate racial and financial disparities.

In Carina Lei's graphic novel, Ticket, she illustrates an oral narrative drawn from a 2012 interview of a man named Carl Fong, given by the Chinese Laundries in Massachusetts Oral History Project. Fong, the son of two Chinese laundry business owners who immigrated to the U.S. in the early 20th century, shares a story that provides insight into one of the cornerstones of the Chinese American immigrant story: Chinese laundry businesses. Carina illustrates Fong's story in Ticket and utilizes the artistic aspect of the graphic novel format to communicate key themes of his story through intentional use of color and symbols. Her artist's statement explains the themes and symbolism used, as well as provides historical context for both Fong's story and Carina's reasoning behind her artistic choices. Finally, Carina's bio explores her thoughts on the impact of this project on her own understanding of her Asian American identity and subsequent artistic choices. She hopes that through the creation of a piece of media about this oral narrative and the articulation of her own thoughts on the matter, a key part of history gains more awareness and underscores the importance of oral narratives on understanding both the past and the future of Asian Americans.

In Lilia Qian's essay, Crisis Makes the Identity, Identity Makes the Crisis, she follows the identity transformations of the disco movement, from humble, anti-capitalist beginnings to the curious hypocrisy of its subsequent commercialization and mass production. The essay begins by explaining the conditions of disco's birth as an underground movement which broke social barriers and gave a platform to New York City's disenfranchised. It then explains how this quiet revolt became part of mainstream culture, a development that seemed to counter all it had once stood for. In the essay, Lilia points out the necessary impermanence of counterculture, demonstrating that the success of a counterculture movement can also be its demise. By tracing through key moments in disco's history, she explores the way ideals emerge and transform in hostile environments.

In the co-authored essay A Proposal for Optimal Removal of Benzo[a]Pyrene from Houston Waterways, Joseph Schwartz, Ben Platz, and Ben Peng present a multifaceted approach to the decontamination of a dangerous carcinogen from a metropolitan waterway. The authors found that the waterways of Houston, Texas are some of the most contaminated in the United States, serving as an optimal test setting for Benzo[a]Pyrene (BaP) removal. Although significant research has been done into the removal of polycyclic aromatic carbons from water, a specific and low risk method of removing BaP has yet to be established. With a combination of iron-oxide nanoparticles and biodegradable corn-steep derived biosurfactants, it's believed that if BaP can be efficiently removed in Houston, this method is likely to be reproducible in parts of the world with similar characteristics. Motivations for the research were established through a time-sensitive analysis of global warming, ecological changes, and environmental justice concerns. The authors maintain that swift and purposeful implementation of such decontamination techniques can minimize ecological damage towards humans and wildlife alike. Through this presentation of a new combination of methods to remove BaP, Joseph, Ben, and Ben urge the scientific community to explore these options as they pertain to the safety and wellbeing of life.

In Maya Todd's essay, The Minority Problem: The Effect of My Racial Ambiguity on My Adolescent Identity Development, she explores the relationship between her racial ambiguity and her identity development through investigation of formative moments where her racial identity was called into question. Furthermore, she analyzes the effects of identity denial on her perceptions of her own race, as well as the use of racial malleability as a coping mechanism. This powerful personal essay delves into meaningful reflection, discussion, and awareness of the impact of racial ambiguity on the manner in which Maya interacts with the world.

Individually and collectively, these essays have pushed my thinking, my emotions, and my teaching, informing my ideas about their various topics, as well as about writing, revising, and collaborating. Each author possesses a distinct voice that comes across loudly and honestly, identifying and sharing with others what the author thinks is important, and why, and thus, who they are and/or want to be. By reading these essays you will become part of an ongoing conversation about important and diverse ideas, about how to communicate those ideas in compelling and engaging ways, and ultimately, about how to find and make meaning. I hope that you, too, will be touched or provoked by, resonate or empathize with, and perhaps even be moved to take action as a result of reading the following essays. I invite you to experience these essays both personally and academically, or however you see these two dimensions intertwine.

Cheers! Sheryl
Growing up, I loved history class, but I noticed that local history was often overlooked. I grew up in Los Angeles, a city full of transplants, and it seemed like most people I spoke to had very little knowledge of the city they lived in. I became intrigued with local history for this exact reason- I wanted to understand how the physical environment and cultural landscape I interacted with every day came to be. I became obsessed with the buried parts of history: the Battle of Chavez Ravine, the Rape of the Owens Valley, the Watts Riots. I savored the challenge of digging up the past in a city that constantly reinvents itself.

When I started at Duke, I had the privilege of beginning this process all over again. The majority of Duke students are not even from North Carolina, let alone Durham, and there seems to be a general lack of knowledge about the history of the city and the university. Eager to discover Durham's past, I signed up for Archaeology of Durham for my writing 101 course. I have always been interested in archaeology because I find it fascinating how simple material objects can give us a glimpse of what life was like long ago.

The course made me look at Duke and Durham in a completely different way: I better understand the origins of many of the physical and cultural structures that we take for granted in this city. When Professor Tharler told us we would be doing research on cemeteries in Durham, I was especially excited. I am not spooked by graveyards or lonely in them; on the contrary, I find them to be peaceful and reflective places where I can feel the presence of the departed around me. I felt like I finally had my chance to get to know the people of Durham, even the ones who were never written about in history books. I know they lived, loved, and made memories. I hope they can feel me remembering them.

"The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place."
- Percy Bysshe Shelley

I would like to acknowledge my incredible professor, Andrew Tharler, for inspiring my classmates and I to dive deeper into Durham's history and for incorporating this unique research project into our course curriculum. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Sheryl Welte Emch and the entire Deliberations editorial board for providing insightful revisions for this paper. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for always encouraging my love of history.

The voices of the dead can be loud. They speak not through words, but through the stones that mark their graves; each faint epitaph, fading design, and mossy crack tells its own story.

In Durham, North Carolina, cemeteries give valuable insights into the lives of people who may otherwise be overlooked in the historical record. The grave markers examined in this study date from 1877 to 1944, a period of great social and cultural change throughout the United States. They are located at Geer Cemetery, Durham's African American cemetery, and Maplewood, the main cemetery used for White Durhamites during this time period. By comparing the grave markers from Geer and Maplewood, one can track how narratives around death reflect experiences of Durham's Black and White communities. The tendency of Geer Cemetery epitaphs to focus on death as a reward and a victory, as well as the optimism towards the afterlife within Durham's Black community. This optimism suggests that people of color may have taken comfort in the idea of fairness in death as they confronted the rampant discrimination of the Jim Crow South. Furthermore, the optimistic epitaphs at Geer continued into the early 20th century, coinciding with the rise of Black Wall Street and Hayti (pronounced “HAY-tie”), suggesting that the hope inspired by the progress of Durham's Black business community also may have translated to a hopeful view of death. The Hayti District is a historic African-American community in Durham that was founded by freedmen shortly after the Civil War. An examination of the expansion of the White Rock Baptist Church and of the fan collection from St. Joseph's AME Church exemplifies the connection between economic growth, community, and religious attitudes in early 20th century Hayti.

The research methodology for this investigation consisted of an archaeological survey of Geer Cemetery and a roughly contemporary section of Maplewood Cemetery. The data was collected by Duke University undergraduates via a digital survey form and then mapped in an interactive ArcGIS Dashboard (https://dukeuniv.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/608c58d57df8432ab7ca65ec5a2848cc). It is important to note that while the data included in this paper...
from Geer Cemetery is representative of the entire cemetery, the data from Maplewood Cemetery represents only a fraction of all Maplewood grave markers. During the survey, we recorded names and dates of birth and death if provided. Next, we indicated if each marker was individual or shared and recorded marker form, condition, shape, material, and design elements. We measured each marker’s dimensions and took note of grave orientation and exact location. We transcribed each person’s epitaph and the inscription technique. Lastly, we took photos of each grave marker. The survey included 274 grave markers at Geer and 139 grave markers at Maplewood. In order to examine the attitudes towards death expressed at Geer versus Maplewood, I focused on inscriptions, repeated design elements, and dates of birth and death. Using an Excel spreadsheet, I was able to graph and compare the frequency of different symbols on grave markers. I also searched for repeated words and phrases in epitaphs. Lastly, I tracked birth and death date trends within groups that had similar design elements and epitaphs.

The results show that the epitaphs recorded at Geer Cemetery portray death as a hard-won victory, suggesting that Durham’s Black community viewed the afterlife with optimism compared to the challenges of life on earth. The language used in Geer epitaphs renders life as a grueling and difficult journey. For example, the inscription on Mary Harris’s (1859-1919) Geer headstone states, “Having finished life’s duty / She now sweetly rests” (fig. 1a). The word “duty” connotes that life is an unpleasant task but a necessary stepping stone to reach the ideal state of “sweet rest.” This idea that one endures the troubles of life to earn the reward of death appears repeatedly at Geer. The epitaph on the shared Geer headstone of Commilels Swepson (1841-1918) and Woodson Mitchell (1823-1891) implies that a peaceful death is the prize for enduring their difficult lives: “Thy trials ended, / Thy rest is won” (fig. 1b). Similarly, Granston McAdams’ (1843-1910) epitaph explains, “His toils are past, / His work is done; / He fought the fight, / the victory won” and Reverend S.A. Simmons’ epitaph proclaims “Now his labor’s done! / Now, now, the goal is won” (fig. 1c and fig. 1d). It is worth noting that four out of five of the deceased with the aforementioned epitaphs were born before the Civil War, and three of them would have been men between the ages of 18 and 50 during the time of the war, so they likely experienced the extreme “trials” and “toils” of slavery. Furthermore, the repetition of the word “won” demonstrates the importance of the idea of victory in Geer epitaphs. The use of these words could have had added significance for Durham’s Black community as it alluded to both the Civil War and the metaphorical battle of living in a segregated America. The idea of victory would be especially potent for the men who had experienced slavery and then freedom after the Civil War. The Orange County freedman’s marriage records, for example, indicate that Woodson Mitchell immediately took advantage of his new ability to legally marry in 1866 (Orange County, North Carolina, Freedman’s Marriage Record).

In contrast, the Maplewood epitaphs do not display any strong or consistent tone. An absence of words describing life as challenging and a lack of focus on the afterlife demonstrate that the White community did not have noticeable optimism towards death. Not once in the epitaphs surveyed at Maplewood is life ever described with the words “duty,” “trials,” “toils,” or “labor.” Though the people buried in Maplewood surely had individual struggles in their lives, their epitaphs, unlike those in Geer, do not give a sense of collective struggle or assume that life was challenging. Additionally, the idea of death being a victory is not prominent at Maplewood. Christian doctrine holds that one must constantly fight against sin through avoidance and repentance, so it makes sense that death is a victory for someone who has overcome sin and died as one of the blessed. Though Durham’s White community was predominantly Christian, there is not a single occurrence of
the words “victory” or “won” in the Maplewood epitaphs. In general, the Maplewood epitaphs mention death and the afterlife less than those at Geer, many times leaving these topics out of the equation completely and focusing instead on remembrance of life achievements. For example, Susan E. Richardson's epitaph reads “AS A WIFE DIVORCED / AS A MOTHER AFFECTIONATE / AS A FRIEND EVER / KIND AND TRUE,” and Fred A. Green's epitaph reads “Elected Attorney for the City / of Durham May 8 1895.” These epitaphs tend to highlight the lives of the deceased rather than describe their resurrection and afterlife. No pattern of repeated phrases or imagery surfaced in the examination of Maplewood epitaphs. On the contrary, Geer Cemetery epitaphs clearly depict death as a positive and even triumphant state.

The Black community's evocation of death as a type of victory is also found in the repeated use of the Bible verse 1 Corinthians 15:5 at Geer Cemetery, supporting the view that death was not seen as a painful end, but as an end to all pain. The verse reads, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (King James Bible, 1 Corinthians 15:55). These words serve as the epitaph of three graves (Samuel Barbee, Amelia Walker, and William Markham) at Geer Cemetery and none at Maplewood. Out of all the text in the Bible, why is this specific verse the one that occurs exclusively and more than once in Geer cemetery? This verse's popularity can be attributed to the fact that it epitomizes the attitude of victory over death expressed by the Geer epitaphs. Once again, the epitaphs personify death as a force one must physically fight against, and in this verse, death has lost the battle because it does not cause pain with its “sting.” In this section of 1 Corinthians, Paul reveals a truth of the gospels to the Corinthians (“1 Corinthians 15:55 Meaning”) when he announces joyous news about what will happen during the Second Coming: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” and “the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-2). This passage emphasizes death as an active state and a form of rebirth rather than a miserable ending. The Geer epitaphs that describe the trials of the deceased make it clear that the “sting” of life made death a welcome reward.

This optimism about the afterlife was a way for Black Durhamites to cope with earthly struggle, a sentiment also reflected in the prominence of the anchor symbol at Geer Cemetery. The anchor appears twenty-one times as a marker decoration at Geer Cemetery, always shown with leaves in the background (fig. 2). Though the section of Maplewood that was surveyed dates from roughly the same time period as Geer, there are zero instances of the anchor design in the Maplewood survey. What accounts for this remarkable discrepancy? In Christian symbology, anchors represent steadfast belief and hope: Hebrews 6:19 states, “hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” Additionally, the shape of the anchor acts as a disguised form of the cross. The anchor symbol was especially important for early Christians in the Roman Empire and is likewise found frequently in their tombs in the catacombs (“An Anchor”). Because Christians living under Roman rule were not allowed to openly practice their faith, they used the anchor symbol as a secret code to convey their beliefs to other Christians (“An Anchor”). This seemingly small act of resistance is comparable to the everyday acts of resistance performed by enslaved people before the Civil War and by African Americans in the Jim Crow South. Perhaps these common themes of quiet resistance and strength in faith made the anchor symbol especially appealing to members of Durham’s Black community. The anchor can be seen as a beacon of comfort that reminded people that everyone would be judged fairly in God’s eyes after death. The evil nature of those who preached racism and inequality would ultimately be revealed; they would be punished and those they had mistreated would go to heaven. In this way, the anchor acts as a symbol of not only hope for eternal life, but also vengeance towards
those who were abusive on Earth.

The optimistic symbols and epitaphs found at Geer are driven by hope for the afterlife, but the growing frequency of these symbols in the early 20th century suggests that this optimism may also be linked to the success of Black businesses in Durham. All the anchor symbols, allusions to 1 Corinthians inscriptions, and epitaphs describing death as a victory appear on gravestones dating to the same twenty-year period, 1907-1927. This period coincides with the golden age of Durham's Black Wall Street. Despite the many obstacles created by Jim Crow segregation, Durham's Black community was growing economically prosperous and fostering a culture of pride and progress (Magnus et al.). The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, the largest Black-owned company in the US for most of the 20th century, moved their headquarters to Parrish Street in 1906, and other Black-owned businesses followed suit (Anderson 218). Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois visited Durham in 1910 and 1912, respectively, and both commented on the impressive level of Black entrepreneurship and the thriving industry on Parrish Street, which became known as Black Wall Street (“Durham’s ‘Black Wall Street’”). Every year, Emancipation Day was celebrated with parades (Anderson 217). The Hayti neighborhood grew more affluent, and one of the neighborhood’s landmarks, the White Rock Baptist Church, became a communal gathering place for African Americans. In many ways, the expansion of the White Rock Baptist Church during this period represents the attitude of hope and mobility that emerged from the economic success of Black Wall Street. Indeed, this economic success directly benefited the church because congregant Aaron Moore, one of the founders of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, donated the money that enabled White Rock to build a Sunday school and establish the Durham Colored Library in the church basement in 1918 (“White Rock”). James E. Shepard, one of the pastors at White Rock, was the founder of the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua for the Colored Race, which was opened in 1910 in the Hayti District. This school would grow to be the respected, historically Black liberal arts institution that is now known as North Carolina Central University (Anderson 219-220). The economic strength of Durham’s Black community and the efforts by leaders like Moore and Shepard to create infrastructure and educational opportunities gave Black Durhamites hope for the future and pride in their community’s ability to overcome barriers.

The sense of optimism that followed the success of Black Wall Street is further expressed in the fan collection from St. Joseph's AME church, now located at Duke University’s David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library. These paper fans used by churchgoers in the 1940s have color prints on one side and advertisements on the other side for businesses mostly located on Parrish Street or Fayetteville Street in Hayti. Though the fans date from slightly after the twenty-year period mentioned above, they still capture the attitudes of the Hayti community in its prime, shortly before urban renewal devastated the neighborhood. The prints depict pleasant scenes of middle-class life: children praying in their pajamas before bedtime, smiling girls watering flowers in a windowsill, a woman carrying a basket of peaches, a woman sitting with a dog on her lap (fig. 3). These images suggest a certain level of affluence in Hayti, which is reflected by all the advertisements for specialty and luxury shops such as a pie bakery, a beauty shop, a fish market, and a shoe repair shop. One can imagine that as the congregation sat fanning themselves while listening to a sermon on a hot summer day, they might have both consciously and subconsciously connected messages about the ability to overcome and keep faith in Christ with the success
of all the Black-owned businesses (many of which were a short walk from the church doors) advertised on their fans. Moreover, these businesses directly sponsored the religious messages on the backside of the fans. An advertisement for Duncan’s Garage features a guide on “How to use the Bible when you need help,” which recommends 1 Corinthians 15:20-58, the exact verse that appears on grave markers at Geer Cemetery, for times of mourning (fig. 4). Therefore, not only did these businesses indirectly affect attitudes towards death by creating an atmosphere of growth and positivity, but they also directly promoted messages of religious positivity via their connections with the churches. Racist policies and ideas were still a daily burden for African Americans in Durham, but there was a sense of potential for positive change and the possibility that Black Durham was entering into a prosperous new era. This spirit of hope and belief in upward mobility may be the reason why the grave markers from this period have such enthusiasm for the afterlife.
The epitaphs and anchor symbols from early 20th century Geer emphasize the hardships of life and the glories of death in a way that is completely absent in Maplewood. The deep sense of victory and positivity for the afterlife at Geer Cemetery acts as a window into a time of great change and a rise in Black entrepreneurship in Durham. While books about Durham’s history give readers an overview of events, including an understanding of their causes and effects, they do not capture the feeling of the times or the attitudes of individuals. This examination of Geer Cemetery gives a powerful glimpse into the optimism that residents had for the future of Hayti and contributes to our understanding of how much was lost when urban renewal destroyed the neighborhood and displaced the community just a few decades later.

Cemeteries have the unique ability to tell these otherwise untold stories. The voices of the dead do speak loudly, and by listening, one can appreciate the struggles and achievements of those who laid the foundations of modern-day Durham.

Fig. 4: Fan from the St. Joseph’s AME collection recommending 1 Corinthians 15:55 for mourning.

Works Cited


Orange County, North Carolina, Freedman’s Marriage Record, page 237, no. 752, marriage record of Woodson and Matilda Mitchell, 9th August 1866.

St. Joseph African Methodist Episcopal Church fan collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.
Ticket

Carina Lei

Writing 101: Asian American Narratives

Instructor: Susan Thananopavarn

“American Studies” was the required literature course for juniors at my high school. I vividly remember reading and discussing at length the nuances of racial politics throughout the Revolutionary War and the subsequent two and a half centuries through our readings, but specifically only within the scope of white, black, and Native American race relations. It was a wonderful, in-depth, and thoughtful class, but not once was there any mention of Asian American history within the curriculum.

Senior year, I registered for a course called “Asian Studies” to fill the last open literature class slot in my schedule. In this class, I read excerpts from Confucius’ Analects, wrote about Buddhism and Hinduism, painted traditional brush paintings for my final project – but again, in a class about Ancient Asian civilizations that existed far before the formation of the United States, I learned nothing about Asian American history. It seemed, then, that there was no space for this subject in any of the curricula at my high school. It felt like an arbitrary binary to me – I could be taught about either Asia or America, but nothing in between.

When I saw that Duke was offering a Writing 101 course called Asian American Narratives, I signed up immediately. The Asian America that I learned about in Dr. Thananopavarn’s class was one that I had never been exposed to in any educational environment before – entire histories, stories, and cultural legacies left out from all my schooling thus far. We read newspaper articles, diary entries, and memoirs exploring different aspects of Asian American history previously unknown to me. This was concerning to realize, to put it lightly – equally concerning was the fact that the things I was learning were directly applicable to me, and that being so blindsided to my own history has left me blind to the historical context and key influencing factors of my current position as an Asian American living in the U.S. in the 21st century.

Our final project for the class, entitled “History through Narrative,” charged us to produce our own narrative about an aspect of Asian American history after reading and learning about so many examples in class. We were told to be intentional when choosing what narrative to explore – to consider whether or not the histories we were exploring were seldom acknowledged, and what we can learn from knowing these histories exist. I thought this apt, considering the impact the class had had on my conceptualization of my own Asian American identity after learning the histories behind it.

To those ends, I chose to do my final project on the history of Chinese laundries; we hadn’t had a chance to cover them in class and as a Chinese American myself, I thought it important to know more about the history of my own community. Inspired by the symbolically rich imagery in Thi Bui’s The Best We Could Do and the raw depictions of emotion and dialogue in Mira Jacob’s Good Talk (both are graphic novels and were class readings!), I decided to create a graphic novel to tell the story of Carl Fong, the son of two Chinese laundry business owners in the mid-twentieth century (drawing has always come easier to me than writing has, anyway).

Quick interjection to say that the next part of this bio will probably only make sense after reading the graphic novel and artist’s statement!

My decision to tell this story in a graphic novel format and to use paper as a main motif is self-referential. The red and pink of the metaphorical paper of the novel itself continues to follow the theme of papers allowing upward social mobility, even outside of Carl Fong’s story. This coloring is instead intended to acknowledge my ability to tell such a story by being able to learn from resources during the present day about the cultural and historical legacy of my own marginalized community, as well as highlight the parallels between the lives of two different people, both children of Chinese immigrants – Carl Fong and myself.

When making Ticket, I drew from my Asian American Narratives class readings, read books and articles from Duke libraries, and used drawing software available through a free Duke student subscription. Even when only considering the scope of this one class project, juxtaposing my own position as a Chinese American living in the U.S. with the actual histories and oral narratives of Chinese immigrants a century ago made it difficult not to become hyperaware of the immense privilege that I as the author had while making Ticket. This was something that stayed in my mind during the reading, writing, and drawing processes. While recognizing the themes of upward mobility in Carl Fong’s story, I started to draw parallels to the same themes in my own life, and thought it only appropriate that I incorporate this thought into my art through the red pages.

I want to thank Dr. T for introducing me to these histories through thoughtful and intentional discussions, and for making the class such an enjoyable one! Thank you so much!!! I also would like to thank the Deliberations board, and Dr. Sheryl Welte Emch especially, for their thoughtful comments and their dedication to helping me during the editing process. Last but not least – thank you to my parents for their continued support of my interest in learning about Asian American history and culture along with their enthusiasm for my art and writing, to Jenny Green for her very thorough spell-check, and to Nichole Zhang for her many helpful comments (and unhelpful jokes) as well.
My name is Carl Fong.

These are my parents. They owned a Chinese laundry...

I was the translator between the clients and the laundry workers...

...and would collect laundry tickets and bills from clients.

We washed the clothes and delivered them back by early morning—around 2am.

When I was 10...

I started helping with the family laundry we had in Boston.

We started driving when darkness set in. We planned out our route to 20-30 laundries at night to pick up clothes and started around 7-8 pm.

We eventually moved to Charlestown, MA.

Charlestown wasn’t kind to the Chinese.

There were always gang rivalries between Charlestown and Somerville, and Everett.

They’d always pick on me. Now, when I tell my golfing buddies, they say:
I would miss a lot of school because of the odd hours.

My mother, though, had other ideas...

She worked the best for her 6 sons...

...even in the midst of bucket of toxic soap and life.

I appreciate the laundry business... I think it builds you up.

I was sad to see the laundries go...

But I understand some laundries sent their kids to college.

They scrimped and saved and did without and saved up to pay tuition and their children became success stories coming out of laundry.

I eventually went to Boston Tech for electrical engineering.

When I graduated, I think my parents enjoyed seeing me get my diploma even more than I did.
Artist’s Statement

In the late 19th century, gold was discovered in California, and thousands of Chinese immigrants left their homes to seek fortune abroad. They called the United States Gum Saan, which means “Golden Mountain,” and a new era of Chinese immigration to the U.S. began. Erika Lee, award-winning historian and author of the book The Making of Asian America, writes about this wave of Chinese immigration which culminated with over 63,000 Chinese people living in the U.S. by 1870 (Lee 59). The reality of the politics of race and immigration in the U.S., however, stood in stark contrast to the rumored mountain of gold. In his book Chinese Laundries: Tickets to Survival on Gold Mountain, psychology professor John Jung writes that the massive influx of Chinese immigrants created a ready source of cheap labor to replace the recently freed slaves in the South, as their labor was deemed inferior to that of white workers (Jung 14). Even so, capitalists sought the cheaper Chinese labor as a means of breaking white worker strikes, leading to growing resentment among white laborers (Jung 16-18). Anti-Chinese sentiment spread as leaders of the anti-Chinese movement placed the blame for the current job scarcity on the large influx of Chinese laborers, who had been building the transcontinental railroad and taking on other labor-intensive jobs (Lee 91). A series of exclusionary laws were enacted throughout the 1870s, barring the Chinese laborers from working in mining, logging, fishing, farming, or any other work they sought after the railroad had been completed. Trapped by legislation and given little other choice, the Chinese turned to laundry businesses – which had less competition from white laborers – to keep themselves afloat in the midst of such a discriminatory workforce (Jung 17). In short, writer and activist Wong Chin Foo explains, the Chinese turned to laundry not because it was any sort of traditional occupation, but “simply because there is no other occupation by which they can make money as surely and quickly” (qtd. in Lee 75-76).

The graphic novel Ticket tells the story of Carl Fong, the son of two such Chinese laundry business owners in the 1940s and 1950s, and draws directly from the 2012 interview with Fong and the Chinese Laundries in Massachusetts Oral History Project (Institute for Asian American Studies). The stories discussed in Fong’s interview depict the overarching themes of his self-made prosperity and optimism, as he cites his family’s laundry business (named “Fong Wet Wash”) as one of the main reasons for his family’s upward social mobility. In fact, his interview concludes with updates on where he and his brothers were at the time of the interview; many of them had gone on to attend prestigious universities and start non-labor jobs, opportunities that Fong credited to the family’s laundry business. John Jung similarly rationalizes the “lives of drudgery” that Chinese laundry owners endured, calling the laundry business “not an end in itself,” but rather a means of both survival and opportunity for themselves and their families (Jung 222). In both Carl Fong’s oral narrative and John Jung’s analysis, laundry itself was simply a means of obtaining a better life and small slice of the proverbial Golden Mountain. Jung introduces this point in his title -- Chinese Laundries: Tickets to Survival on Gold Mountain -- and continues to emphasize the importance of the tickets mentioned, a motif that is revisited throughout the graphic novel also named Ticket:

The laundry ticket became an emblem of the Chinese hand laundry. Although a laundry ticket is nothing more than a small piece of paper that serves as a
claim check linking each customer with his laundry items, it came to be used to ridicule Chinese as in the well-known mocking expression, “no tickee, no washee.” ...A completely different meaning of ticket, a means of gaining admission beyond a barrier, is the sense that is intended by its inclusion in the title of this book. The laundry was the best, and at one time, the only, “ticket” available to Chinese immigrants to rise from their low position in society (Jung xii - xiii).

*Ticket* has extended this meaning toward a general theme of papers facilitating access to upward mobility in Carl Fong's story. Within the graphic novel, this theme is illustrated with the color red with the intention to draw the reader's attention toward it because it stands out from the black and white, but also because the color red traditionally symbolizes happiness and fortune in Chinese culture. In applying meaning from traditional Chinese symbolism to the various red-highlighted papers in Fong's story, *Ticket* hopes to further emphasize Carl Fong and John Jung's points and push the reader to realize the ubiquity of these themes within the Chinese immigrant story. In particular, it hopes to challenge the reader to realize that this yearning for admission and desire for upward mobility is present in multiple aspects of Fong's life outside of just the laundry business. The fake papers Fong's father buys to gain physical access into the U.S., the symbolic power of the laundry tickets Fong takes from customers allowing his family to run a business, and the graduation diploma that he finally receives when he completes his education are all examples of this desire, and are all emphasized with the color red. Each of these papers acts as a form of admission into upward mobility for Fong's family, culminating at the end of the story with him and his brothers going to university.

In order to fully understand the themes of Fong’s story illustrated within *Ticket*, it is necessary to first contextualize the history of Chinese laundry businesses in the mid-20th century – specifically, to understand the social, political, and legislative factors that forced Chinese immigrants to turn to laundry work in the first place. A long list of exclusionary laws pertaining to immigration had been passed in the U.S. during the previous century, eventually culminating in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882: the first and only piece of legislation to exclude a group of people from immigration based entirely on race (Lee 90). This act banned Chinese laborers from entering the U.S. for 10 years, and required that non-laborers present certification from the Chinese government if they wanted to immigrate (Chinese Exclusion Act). New laws in 1892 and 1902 renewed this exclusion law, and it was passed permanently in 1904. Laws like these made it extremely difficult for Chinese laborers to enter the country, which led to the widespread use of the “paper sons” method, in which Chinese immigrants would falsely claim membership of a group that wasn't barred from entering the US -- usually as exempted merchants or family members. They could buy papers and a fake identity, pretending to be a business partner or false child of a merchant already legally in the U.S., hence the name “paper sons” (Lee 95). Despite its illegality, this way of entering the U.S. was a widespread, multinational business; in fact, around 90-95 percent of all Chinese immigrants entering the country are estimated to have used this method (Lee 95). However, even through this practice emerged as a means of skirting past restrictive immigration laws, up to a fourth of all new arrivals were still rejected from entering the U.S. in the early 20th century, illustrating the severity with which these exclusionary laws were implemented (Lew-Williams 209).

It was during this time that Carl Fong’s father arrived in America. Fong’s father,
like many others, relied on fabricated papers to get into the country because he was
classified as a laborer. After successfully entering the country by buying the fake
papers under the name “Chin,” he was able to bring his wife over as well. Though not
mentioned in Carl Fong’s interview, Fong’s father and other
paper sons would have had to undergo extensive testing at
Angel Island and obtain witness affidavits swearing their
non-laborer status in order to successfully enter the U.S.
Witnesses had to be white and affirm in their affidavits
that they were non-Chinese (Jung 37). Testing consisted
of arduous and mentally taxing interrogations that could
last for weeks, and Chinese immigrants were asked about
thousands of niche details about their family history in
order to prove their legitimacy to the U.S. government.
Any interrogation answers during the interrogations that
were inconsistent across family members were grounds
for deportation (United States Immigration Station). Carl
Fong’s father’s fabricated papers, then, were truly the only
way he could gain admission into the U.S., hence, their
metaphorical significance as a ‘ticket’ to a better life within the story.

As difficult as it was to enter the country, workforce discrimination within the
U.S. wasn’t any better: a host of very clearly racist ordinances targeting Chinese
laundries was passed by a public who increasingly feared the expanding presence
of the Chinese in the U.S. In 1870, an ordinance in San Francisco banned carrying
laundry with a pole, a method commonplace to Chinese laundries; another ordinance
decreed that laundries could not be run in wooden buildings because of the higher
fire hazard, even though only Chinese laundries were run in wooden buildings (Jung
76-77). Additional laws that required the Chinese laundry owners to pay unfair fees,
limit hours of operation, and move to different living areas were passed in the late
1800s and early 1900s, further restricting Chinese laundry businesses.

After obtaining entry into the U.S., Fong’s parents opened Fong Wet Wash,
a Chinese laundry located at the intersection of Main and Bunker Hill Streets in
Charlestown, Massachusetts. While Fong does not mention any of the specific
legislation affecting his family in particular, anti-Chinese sentiments of the time
were clearly still present in Charlestown, as Fong had several run-ins with the
local gangs while working odd hours for his family business. Violence toward the
Chinese families, especially laundry business owners, was common during that
time: accounts of robberies, harassment, and vandalism of Chinese laundries were
especially prevalent (Jung 92-96). In Fong’s interview, he states, “I remember they
always had gang [rivalries] between Charlestown and Everett and Somerville and
they would always pick on me until it came time to recruit another fighter… Being
Chinese living in Charlestown... I tell that to my golfing buddies now and they say,
‘you lived in Charlestown?!’” (Institute for Asian American Studies)

While laundry provided a ready form of livelihood and subsequent upward
financial mobility for Chinese families, highlighted by the red coloring of the laundry
tickets in the graphic novel – it is clear that the social and legislative factors at the
time made it very difficult for them. The laundry tickets are spoken about by Fong
and Jung as if they are tickets to success and fortune; however, the reality is that they
were tickets to so-called success and fortune in a society that actively institutionalized
racism and discrimination so deeply against Chinese immigrants, within an industry
that was forced upon them. Fong ends his story on a cheerful note, touting the
opportunities laundry created for him and his brothers, but it is important to note
that his family’s means of social mobility still largely exists within a hegemonic
system, with the overwhelming power still white. The papers his father had to buy

As difficult as it was to enter the country, workforce discrimination within the
U.S. wasn’t any better: a host of very clearly racist ordinances targeting Chinese
laundries was passed by a public who increasingly feared the expanding presence
of the Chinese in the U.S. In 1870, an ordinance in San Francisco banned carrying
laundry with a pole, a method commonplace to Chinese laundries; another ordinance
decreed that laundries could not be run in wooden buildings because of the higher
fire hazard, even though only Chinese laundries were run in wooden buildings (Jung
76-77). Additional laws that required the Chinese laundry owners to pay unfair fees,
limit hours of operation, and move to different living areas were passed in the late
1800s and early 1900s, further restricting Chinese laundry businesses.

After obtaining entry into the U.S., Fong’s parents opened Fong Wet Wash,
a Chinese laundry located at the intersection of Main and Bunker Hill Streets in
Charlestown, Massachusetts. While Fong does not mention any of the specific
legislation affecting his family in particular, anti-Chinese sentiments of the time
were clearly still present in Charlestown, as Fong had several run-ins with the
local gangs while working odd hours for his family business. Violence toward the
Chinese families, especially laundry business owners, was common during that
time: accounts of robberies, harassment, and vandalism of Chinese laundries were
especially prevalent (Jung 92-96). In Fong’s interview, he states, “I remember they
always had gang [rivalries] between Charlestown and Everett and Somerville and
they would always pick on me until it came time to recruit another fighter… Being
Chinese living in Charlestown... I tell that to my golfing buddies now and they say,
‘you lived in Charlestown?!’” (Institute for Asian American Studies)

While laundry provided a ready form of livelihood and subsequent upward
financial mobility for Chinese families, highlighted by the red coloring of the laundry
tickets in the graphic novel – it is clear that the social and legislative factors at the
time made it very difficult for them. The laundry tickets are spoken about by Fong
and Jung as if they are tickets to success and fortune; however, the reality is that they
were tickets to so-called success and fortune in a society that actively institutionalized
racism and discrimination so deeply against Chinese immigrants, within an industry
that was forced upon them. Fong ends his story on a cheerful note, touting the
opportunities laundry created for him and his brothers, but it is important to note
that his family’s means of social mobility still largely exists within a hegemonic
system, with the overwhelming power still white. The papers his father had to buy
were necessary due to white laborers’ pressure to push for anti-Chinese exclusionary laws. The witnesses and the affidavits that allowed Chinese immigrants to enter the country had to not only be white, but also swear that they were not Chinese. Fong Wet Wash was able to exist because the laundry business had less white competition. Even Fong's diploma (giving him an American education) comes from an American school, which was the only way for him to climb the socioeconomic ladder in a white-dominated society. Laundry was a ticket to upward mobility, yes, but only because it was a ticket given by those already in power. This idea is particularly illustrated on page 3, with the white customer positioned above Fong, handing him a laundry ticket and essentially providing the consumption necessary for Fong's socioeconomic stability. It is also reiterated throughout the graphic novel with the red-pinkish haze that surrounds the people and events in the story, aiming to again emphasize that Fong's entire American Dream-esque life was derived from a society that left Chinese immigrants with little choice. The ubiquity of the red in the papers and the haze is included not only to visually illustrate the yearning for acceptance and admission in all aspects of Fong's life as mentioned previously, but also to reveal the many barriers to admission that originally entreated this yearning. Chinese laundries will forever remain an integral part of the Chinese immigrant story: a ticket to socioeconomic success in America as well as a reminder of the discrimination and hardships that Chinese immigrants were forced to endure to achieve success.

Works Cited:


A Proposal for Optimal Removal of Benzo[a]pyrene from Houston Waterways

Joseph Schwartz, Ben Platz, Ben Peng
Writing 101: H2O 101
Instructor: Jamie Browne

Specific Aim:

The goal of this research is to find the optimal removal method for one of the most dangerous polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons—benzo[a]pyrene—from Houston waterways, as work to remove pollutants in these ecosystems is currently lacking. Houston is disproportionately affected by polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) pollution and has a population of nearly 2.5 million (Sanskom et al. 2018). By working to find the best removal method, we will take a large step in the right direction to increase the quality of life for Houstonians while improving Houston's aquatic ecosystems. We believe that using a combination of iron oxide nanoparticles and biodegradable corn steep derived biosurfactants will provide the most cost-efficient, quantitatively effective, scalable, and nontoxic method to remove benzo[a]pyrene from Houston waterways.

Background and Significance:

Subsection 1: Introduction

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) constitute a class of dangerous, highly toxic chemicals. Chemicals of this class are omnipresent, appearing in air, waterways, and often within the bodies of organisms. According to public health organizations such as the CDC and FDA, the carcinogenicity of these chemicals is well established (ATSDR 2013). The carcinogenic structural composition of PAHs is known to cause cancers of the skin, lung, bladder, liver, and stomach while also

Joseph Schwartz
Over the course of the semester, my academic writing course H2O 101 introduced me to the struggles many face to ensure that the water in their environment is healthy from the perspectives of both personal use and ecological benefit. Our instructor, Jamie Browne, introduced us to carefully chosen case studies including Flint, Michigan, and the Keystone pipeline, which we collectively analyzed and discussed. This revealed the roles that factors like environmental justice, climate change, and ecological theory play in access to water that benefits people and their environment.

H2O 101 has also broadened my perspective of water beyond the Delmarva peninsula, the area where I was born and raised. The peninsula’s intricate labyrinth of tributaries set between the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean have always provided a abundance of opportunity in the area through ecotourism, trade, and other industries. I’ve benefited from such opportunities myself, working as a boat mechanic during high school. This class reaffirmed the idea that water is not always such a plentiful and useful resource. Even in places where it is abundant, access to water and the opportunities it can provide may be extremely limited. One great example of this is Houston, the location our research proposal aims to study. Despite its proximity to Galveston Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, and numerous tributaries, the water quality of the area varies greatly. Areas that are often near lower income communities tend to have worse water quality, and the onset of environmental changes like global warming only exacerbate the worsening water conditions. I feel fortunate to have learned about the societal nature of water through this class and to have had the chance to apply my knowledge in my group's research proposal.

I would like to thank my partners in my writing group, Ben Platz and Ben Peng, for their help constructing this proposal. I would also like to thank Jamie Browne for her continuous support and instruction that challenged us to better understand water's role in the world around us. Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Sheryl Emch and the Deliberations Editorial Board for their constructive feedback that elevated our proposal.
Ben Platz

While taking Writing 101: H2O 101, I was exposed to many intricacies of water that I had never thought about before. From environmental justice to droughts to wetlands, the course focused on several case studies that provided constant new insights about water in the world. Specifically, as someone who has a special interest in healthcare, I found how pollutants interact with the body to pique my interest.

One place that comes to mind when I think of water pollution is somewhere I have visited countless times in my childhood – Houston in Harris County, Texas. With its numerous industrial districts, Houston is a hotspot of warehouses and factories that store and produce these chemicals as by-products and commercial goods. Even with several sources of clean water feeding into and around the area, the quality of water varies drastically throughout Houston proper and its suburbs, with some freshwater streams being perfectly safe and others putting you at risk of cancers and other debilitating medical conditions. As described in this paper, the goal of our proposal is to research and identify the most optimal method that would remove one of these toxic chemicals – benzo[a]pyrene – from Houston waterways.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank my research partners Joseph Schwartz and Benjamin Peng for their part in developing this proposal. I would also like to thank Jamie Browne, our H2O 101 professor, for giving us the opportunity to research and develop a project that means a great deal to me personally. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Sheryl Welte Emch and the Deliberations Editorial Board for their suggestions and feedback throughout the editing process.

This group would like to thank Dr. Sheryl Welte Emch and the Deliberations Editorial Board for their many suggestions and the opportunity to share this culmination of research from this semester. We would also like to thank our professor, Jamie Browne, for pushing us at every turn to think as critically as possible and to see all aspects of pollution including activism, health, and conservation; this paper would not have been possible without her.

Subsection 2: PAH Information

By definition, all PAHs contain multiple bonded rings of aromatic hydrocarbons, resulting in a very stable structure. Benzo[a]pyrene follows this definition with 5 conjoined aromatic rings totaling 20 carbons in structure. The inhalation and ingestion of this chemical are associated with hemolytic anemia, damage to the liver, and neurological damage (EPA 2000).

PAHs are primarily created through combustion. The most common sources of this combustion are fires, burning coal, and refineries. It should be noted that a large percentage of PAHs are formed when burning fossil fuels (ATSDR 2014). After their formation, PAHs enter the environment and bind tightly to particles in the air, water, and soil. Simply breathing, drinking, and eating can result in ingestion of PAHs into the body.

By themselves, PAHs pose little risk. However, the metabolism of PAHs causes a variety of dangerous deleterious effects. Once PAHs are in the body, they are oxidized and begin to react with DNA (Chakravarti et al. 2008). The products of these reactions can remove base pairs from DNA strands, and because of the stability of the new DNA structure, errors can occur in replication causing detrimental mutations. Soon after these mutations begin, they accumulate to such a high degree that cancers form.

Subsection 3: PAH relevance in Houston:

While PAHs can have concerning effects on ecosystems across the globe, Houston is particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of PAH contamination due to its environment and industrial capabilities. These factors can be clearly portrayed through an examination of Galveston Bay, which is encompassed by the Greater Houston area. Rowe et al. (2020) state that “The generally higher concentrations of PAHs in biota from Galveston Bay” are a result of “intermittent spills of gas and oil,” the bay’s proximity to the “urban industrial complex of Houston,” and “periodic flood events” that redistribute PAHs from land surfaces to the bay. (Rowe et al. 2020). Houston’s nearby bodies of water have been so aggressively polluted by PAHs through these means that certain species of fish like the Gulf killifish have changed genetically over time to adapt to the large PAH concentrations of its ecosystem (Franco et al. 2022). The adaptation of animals to this new environment demonstrates a fundamental shift in the state of Houston’s aquatic ecosystem as a direct result of human pollution—a worrying trend that could amplify in magnitude over time if PAH levels are not reduced.

The negative effects of PAH pollution are not localized to certain species of fish and aquatic life. PAH
pollution is also highly dangerous to humans. Consequently, environmental justice neighborhoods, or neighborhoods “disproportionately exposed” to carcinogens like PAHs “from both industry and transportation infrastructure” like “Manchester, located on Houston’s East End” are a point of concern (Sansom et al. 2018). Thus, the removal or remediation of PAHs from Houston ecosystems will benefit both the local wildlife and many of the residents. While it may seem inappropriate to consider the primarily airborne pollution that environmental justice neighborhoods face when discussing the aquatic effects of PAH pollution, empirical research demonstrates that PAHs suspended in aquatic environments are able to circulate into the air in quantities that pose health risks to humans due to surface exchange (Tidwell et al. 2017). As Houston is a city with several large areas of open water, including the Galveston Bay, it stands to reason that lowering the concentration of PAHs in the water would lead to a lower concentration in the air, thus benefiting human health.

Houston’s susceptibility to floods provides another dimension of importance for PAH removal, particularly when contextualized with the onset and growing impact of climate change. Floods caused by natural disasters like Hurricane Harvey redistribute PAHs from primarily industrial areas to the rest of Houston, including recreational and residential areas (Casillas et al. 2021). Moreover, in the years leading up to Harvey, the amount of pavement in the greater Houston area increased drastically, replacing the previously existing water-absorbing soil (Bogost 2017). This allows water to wash over the entire area, decreasing the ability to resist flooding. Additionally, floods can transport PAHs from land surfaces to the water, introducing them to aquatic ecosystems and locations farther inland. (Rowe et al. 2020). Quantitative evidence of this has been found through studies like that of Bacosa et al. (2020), which tested water samples in the Houston area shortly after Hurricane Harvey. They found that “four of ten [sampled] sites had benzo-a-pyrene concentrations exceeding the Texas Standard for Surface Water threshold” (Bacosa et al. 2020).

Subsection 4: Future Changes and Conservation:

These findings are particularly worrisome due to the threat of climate change. According to NASA’s Earth Observatory, climate change is expected to increase the severity of natural disasters like hurricanes (NASA 2005). This will lead to more Harvey-level disasters, redistributing large quantities of PAHs from industrial areas into both aquatic ecosystems and residential areas more often than ever before. Additionally, climate change is expected to worsen the general water quality of Texas reservoirs (Gelca et al. 2016). By increasing pollutant 5 concentration and decreasing the overall quality of the water, climate change has a monumental capacity to damage or destroy Houston’s aquatic ecosystems.

Consequently, finding optimal methods to eliminate toxic PAHs from Houston waterways can help to improve the conditions of Houston ecosystems. By doing so, they will not be sent into a worse stable state, which is a new equilibrium established by pushing an ecosystem from one basin of attraction to another through a stochastic event. This is especially applicable to Houston due to the continuous worsening of conditions and increases in stochastic events spurred on by climate change (Scheffer et al. 2001). By entering a worse stable state, the biological health of Houston ecosystems would be greatly diminished. Returning to the better stable state that the ecosystem currently exhibits would require conditions to be much
better than they were at the time of the initial state-swap, which would be difficult to achieve (Scheffer et al. 2001). Avoiding such a state swap by improving the conditions through the removal of PAHs is the best way to ensure the future health of the Houston ecosystems.

**Subsection 5: Benzo[a]pyrene Specifics:**

Our proposal focuses on benzo[a]pyrene, a common PAH and carcinogen with the structure of a fused benzene and pyrene ring. Although all PAHs are dangerous, this chemical is particularly detrimental to the Houston area for multiple reasons. It is more water-soluble than most PAHs, posing a double threat to both the air and water systems of Houston. It is also identified by the USEPA as a priority contaminant due to its potent toxicity, demonstrating that it is more biologically detrimental than most PAHs (Mojiri et al. 2019). Lastly, benzo[a]pyrene is particularly prone to harmful environmental relocations through events like Hurricane Harvey (Bacosa et al. 2020). This leads to further environmental pollution, and it also means that global warming will greatly enhance this chemical’s ability to cause damage. Therefore, in the context of PAH decontamination in the wider Houston area, the scope of this proposal is limited to the removal of benzo[a]pyrene.

Multiple different methodologies have been proposed and tested regarding the removal of PAHs in general and benzo[a]pyrene in particular, all with varying degrees of cost, efficacy, methodology, and support. Among them are the use of iron oxide nanoparticles (Hassan et al. 2018), activated carbon (Ilyas et al. 2021), and lipopeptide surfactants derived from corn (Vecino et al. 2015). This study, based on experimental findings in Houston, aims to evaluate their applicability and practicality to the Houston area’s freshwater ecosystems and devise an optimal treatment plan for PAHs that primarily focuses on benzo[a]pyrene.

**Overview:**

To achieve our goal of determining which existing method of decontamination is most optimally suited to Houston’s waterways, we must first consider what an “optimal” solution is. The first consideration is the efficacy of the method being examined—the percentage of PAHs in general and of benzo[a]pyrene in particular removed by the method. While a filtration technique may work in a laboratory setting, a wide variety of factors may make it unsuitable for use in large-scale aquatic ecosystems since they are many degrees of magnitude larger in volume than laboratories, and life within the ecosystem must be considered. Additionally, the optimal method must be environmentally safe; there is little reason to put our decontamination method into use if it also contaminates waterways in some other fashion. Taking all of these factors into account, the optimal decontamination method must be relatively cost-efficient, quantitatively effective at reducing PAH concentrations, scalable to Houston’s waterways, and nontoxic.

**Hypothesis:**

Having reviewed the existing methods of benzo[a]pyrene decontamination present in the literature, we believe that a combination of green iron oxide nanoparticles (Hassan et al. 2018) and the use of corn steep derived biosurfactants (Vecino et al. 2015) is optimal for application to Houston’s waterways. This is because these methods best target our outlined criteria. While iron oxide particles serve to catalyze the photodegradation of PAHs, meaning that they assist in the breakdown of PAHs after exposure to light, surfactants increase the solubility of PAHs by lowering the surface tension of water, making them more prone to biodegradation. Both are highly cost-efficient, as they can be derived from waste products from the agricultural industry, namely pomegranate peels and corn husks respectively. The cultivation of both products occurs in Texas. Unlike methods proposed by Gong et al. (2017) that require active human intervention and maintenance like the use of electrocoagulation (applying a surface charge to water that helps separate suspended matter), both iron oxide nanoparticles and biosurfactants work passively—no active attention is required to maintain their efficacy, making them practical for use in the wide array of Houston’s aquatic systems. Even more importantly, they are both highly efficacious. Iron oxide nanoparticles remove benzo[a]pyrene experimentally at a rate of 99%, the highest out of all measured methods, and while corn steep derived biosurfactants were not as effective at removing pyrenes specifically, they proved highly effective at removing other carcinogenic PAHs. The two methods complement one another by optimizing the removal of benzo[a]pyrene as well as widespread PAH removal.

Additionally, and perhaps more critically, both iron
Oxide nanoparticles and lipopeptide biosurfactants pose no threat to the environment due to their organic sourcing. Other methods, like the use of activated carbon, are deficient in this manner. For example, the activated carbon likely has no negative effects when used to process human wastewater (Ilyas et al. 2021). However, addition of carbon to aquatic ecosystems could unnaturally alter the carbon cycle of the ecosystem and negatively impact health, making it an unsuitable candidate. Due to these factors, we hypothesize that out of all studied methods, the combined use of biosurfactants and iron oxide are the most well suited for use in Houston's aquatic ecosystems. For these reasons, our study aims to provide an experimental evaluation of the efficacy and the efficiency of removing benzo[a]pyrene using this combination of decontaminants.

Proposed Methods:

As the majority of the literature referenced in the hypothesis was proposed and tested for its efficacy in decontaminating human wastewater, not naturally occurring aquatic ecosystems, further testing is needed to confirm our hypothesis. Firstly, although both decontaminants are hypothetically nontoxic, the environmental effects of our proposed decontaminants (iron oxides and biosurfactants) must still be determined. This will be done by comparing simulated aquatic environments in a lab environment treated with both decontaminants; natural aquatic environments will serve as controls. If this confirms that no environmental damage will result from the introduction of the proposed decontaminants, the main experiment will be conducted. Environmental impacts will also be evaluated in the field by comparing environmental metrics between our field data and our control environment. The same metrics checked in our simulated lab environment will be evaluated in the field to ensure that neither decontaminant is harming the environment. We plan to conduct our research in the Brays Bayou—the watershed of the aforementioned Manchester neighborhood that is a focal point of environmental justice (Sansom et al. 2018). In the bayou, 4 sections of comparable freshwater will each be subjected to different 9 treatments: biosurfactant and iron oxide, only biosurfactant, only iron oxide, and no treatment (a control). The effectiveness of all 4 trials will then be evaluated through PAH concentration measurements and other relevant empirical data using the quantitative measurements outlined in Li et al. (2016). The trials will take place over the course of one year to minimize the impact of seasonal variables on decontamination. Although more research must be done into the method’s effects of saltwater decontamination, the best method of decontamination in freshwater will be established based on a comparison of these measurements and models.

Expected Results:

Based on thorough consideration of previous studies on biosurfactant and iron oxide particles, we expect that the experimental results will be in line with our hypothesis. While the concentrations of both agents are feasibly able to be reached in running water ecosystems, they may be lower than in controlled experiments. We still expect to see a significant drop in benzo[a]pyrene concentrations to a point where risks of negative effects on human and aquatic life will be significantly reduced—ideally at least to the EPA limit of 0.2 parts per billion (ATSDR 2013), but preferably as low as possible.

Conclusion:

PAHs in general, and benzo[a]pyrene in particular, are highly dangerous to both human and aquatic organism health. As an area presently contaminated with high levels of aquatic PAHs and uniquely poised to continue to be affected by PAH contamination events, Houston residents and wildlife are particularly vulnerable to the detrimental effects of PAH water contamination. We anticipate experimentation will reveal that the combined use of corn-derived biosurfactants and iron oxide nanoparticles will prove the most effective method for remedying aquatic PAH contamination similar in severity and salinity to the kind present in Houston. This research will not only provide pertinent findings on PAH decontamination in Houston, but also serve to improve other industrially polluted freshwater urban waterways across the globe.
Works Cited:


“It’s the Green, it’s the Green, it’s the Green You Need”:
Deviation from and Conformity to Disney’s Hierarchical Narrative in The Princess and the Frog

Karianna Klassen
Writing 101:
Disney’s Happily Ever After
Instructor: Lisa Andres

"Y ou got what you wanted, but you lost what you had," is gleefully chanted by shrunken heads hung on the wall of Dr. Facilier’s dimly lit voodoo lair. The warning comes at the end of "Friends on the Other Side," arguably the catchiest song of Disney’s 2009 film The Princess and the Frog. Dr. Facilier performs this musical number to convince Prince Naveen and his butler, Lawrence, that he can “make [their] wildest dreams come true.” Instead of making Naveen and Lawrence wealthy, however, Dr. Facilier turns Naveen into a frog and Lawrence into a reluctant accomplice in his larger plan to take over New Orleans. At first, “You got what you wanted, but you lost what you had” appears to be the demons chiding Naveen and Lawrence for their greed and gullibility. By the end of the film, the line reflects a prejudiced warning against Dr. Facilier’s attempt to take more power than his social status allows. “You got the power that you wanted,” the heads seem to be telling Dr. Facilier, “but you lost the freedom you had. Be careful when you try to get more than you deserve.”

This message is not unique to The Princess and the Frog; many Disney films feature villains who reach for more power than they deserve and are struck down by fate, and these villains are an integral part of Disney’s traditional hierarchical narrative. Lee Artz, a professor of Media Studies at Purdue University Northwest, thoroughly outlines Disney’s traditional hierarchical narrative in his 2004 article “The Righteousness of Self-Centred Royals: The World According to Disney Animation.” Artz describes three key archetypal characters in the Disney canon that form the foundation for the hierarchical narrative: the hero, the villain, and the ruler. Heroes are privileged, attractive, and of noble birthright. A story’s end sees the hero maintain or increase their wealth and privilege. Villains, like Dr. Facilier, are unattractive schemers aiming to climb the social ladder. Their power is a fluke, and they are ultimately defeated. The benign ruler is perhaps slightly clueless but overall good-natured, benevolent, and harmless. As the ultimate authority, these
rulers would never abuse their power (Artz 130). The combination of these three archetypal characters perpetuates the narrative that people who are attempting to improve their allotted socioeconomic station are evil and greedy, the upper class have an inherent right to wealth and power and should not be challenged, and people of lower social status are less fortunate because they deserve to be. The hierarchical pattern Artz identified in Disney films challenges the morality of social mobility and depicts a world that favors the wealthy and powerful.

In addition to the archetypal characters Artz outlines, Disney upholds their hierarchical narrative by sanitizing race and class from their media. Scholars Jessi Streib, Miryee Ayala, and Colleen Wixted discuss the sanitization in their article, “Benign Inequality: Frames of Poverty and Social Class Inequality in Children’s Movies.” Disney erases issues of race and class within Disney films, thereby legitimizing poverty and discrimination. Streib and her colleagues refer to this idea as benign inequality; by ignoring race and class issues and portraying primarily upper class narratives, children’s media frames poverty and discrimination as inevitable, normal and acceptable (Streib et al. 16). The sanitization of race and class is a key aspect of Disney’s hierarchical narrative. By erasing the struggles of the lower class, Disney can portray characters working to improve their social status as villains and stigmatize social mobility. Sanitization also allows Disney to portray authority figures as purely benevolent. Confronting race and class issues would force Disney to admit that an authority promotes inequality, challenging the authority’s benign or benevolent characterization.

Disney’s The Princess and the Frog, although never explicitly discussed by Artz and only briefly mentioned by Streib et al., contains elements of Disney’s hierarchical narrative and sanitization. The Princess and the Frog is about a young Black woman, Tiana, in 1920s New Orleans. Tiana is working two jobs in an effort to realize her late father’s dream of owning a restaurant. The wealthy, white Charlotte La Bouff and her father Eli “Big Daddy” La Bouff invite Tiana to serve beignets at their Mardi Gras masquerade ball. While there, Tiana finds a frog, the human Prince Naveen turned amphibian by Dr. Facilier. Because Tiana is not a Princess, kissing Naveen turns her into a frog, too. Frog-Tiana and Frog-Naveen travel through the bayou, search for a way to turn back into humans, and try to stay ahead of Dr. Facilier and Naveen’s butler, Lawrence, who need Naveen as a pawn in a larger plan to kill Big Daddy and take over New Orleans. In the end, Tiana and Prince Naveen get married, become human again, and open her dream restaurant.

In light of the current scholarly discussion surrounding hierarchy and sanitization in Disney, I argue that The Princess and the Frog’s departure from a privileged, titled heroine appears to challenge the traditional narrative about class and hierarchy. Unfortunately, Tiana’s relationship to Dr. Facilier and the La Bouffs undermines that challenge. Juxtaposition of the appearances, aspirations, and rhetoric of protagonist Tiana and antagonist Dr. Facilier leads to a more insidious narrative separating the lower class into either good or bad categories. Disney sanitizes Tiana’s struggles and attributes her success or failure solely to her own hard work while portraying Dr. Facilier as a dangerous antagonist who acknowledges inequality around him and tries to rise above his social station. By contrasting Tiana and Dr. Facilier, Disney perpetuates a version of a model minority myth within the Black community, silences critics of the racial and financial divides within the film, and sells a harmful pull yourself up by your bootstraps narrative that has larger implications for the way society views the lower class. Just as Dr. Facilier’s social position in relation to Tiana’s is harmful,
the powerful and wealthy position of the La Bouffs in relation to Tiana’s changing social status ensures that Tiana’s social mobility does not challenge the traditional power structures established in the film. In the end, what appears to subvert the hierarchical narrative actually results in the reinforcement of that narrative and adds an additional layer of harmful messaging. At first, it appears that *The Princess and the Frog* subverts the traditional hierarchical narrative that Artz outlines. Dr. Facilier fits Artz’s villain archetype: a Black man who is struggling financially tries to take over New Orleans with power he only possesses because he made a deal with his demonic “friends on the other side.” However, Tiana, the central protagonist, is not privileged or of noble birth. Tiana’s neighborhood is introduced almost immediately in the film as a stark contrast to the “stately homes and mansions of the Sugar Barons and the Cotton Kings” that are pictured and described during the film’s opening song (00:09:02-00:09:12). Her mother is a seamstress, her late father was a laborer, and adult Tiana waitresses at two restaurants to save for her dream restaurant. Tiana’s eventual rise in social status—she becomes a princess—means *The Princess and the Frog* appears to be a story of social and economic mobility. Disney seems to subvert their traditional narrative by showing that anyone—regardless of their race or class—become successful or a princess. But that is not the true narrative. Instead, Disney tells a harmful, classist story through the juxtaposition of Tiana and Dr. Facilier.

Disney historically distinguishes heroes and villains with racial or social indicators of inequality. In *The Princess and the Frog*, both Tiana and Dr. Facilier are Black and struggle financially. Without racial or social indicators, the filmmakers reinforced the hero-villain dynamic through three key differences between Tiana and Dr. Facilier: their appearances, their aspirations, and their rhetoric.

Disney promotes the beauty-goodness stereotype in many of its films, *The Princess and the Frog* included. Dr. Dorris Bazzini, a professor of social psychology, and her colleagues did a statistical analysis in 2010 of the physical attributes, personalities, and outcomes of primary, secondary, and periphery characters in twenty-one Disney films. Their findings stated that Disney perpetuates the stereotype that “what is beautiful is good.” More attractive characters have better outcomes, romantically and otherwise, and are “more morally virtuous and less aggressive” (Bazzini et al. 2706-2707). Disney is not the only media company promoting that beauty is good and ugly is bad, and in fact there is some evidence that favoring attractiveness may be ingrained in our biology (Little et al. 1651). However, it is undeniable that Disney reinforces societal stereotypes that favor attractive people (Bazzini et al. 2707). *The Princess and the Frog* employs the traditional Disney method of using beauty to signal heroism and villainy. Tiana has rounded features, large doe-eyes, and the small waist that is almost ubiquitous to Disney-princess proportions. In contrast, Dr. Facilier is lean and lanky, with longer, more angular features and a skull and crossbones on his top hat. Tiana appears warm, kind, and approachable; Dr. Facilier appears scheming and sinister.

The contrast between the character design of Tiana and Dr. Facilier goes even deeper. Disney continues their pattern of queer-coding villains, or creating villians embedded with queer stereotypes, by giving Dr. Facilier effeminate characteristics that evoke the stereotype of a predatory gay man. In her article, “Mean Ladies: Transgendered Villains in Disney Films,” Amanda Putnam, a professor of literature at the University of Central Oklahoma, describes and contextualizes Disney’s habit of giving villains qualities of the opposite sex as a shorthand for good and evil. Putnam states that Disney incites social stigmas by making male villains effeminate and female villains masculine, while simultaneously exaggerating female heroes’ femininity and male heroes’ masculinity (148-149). *The Princess and the Frog* supports Putnam’s thesis. Dr. Facilier is dressed in a purple three-piece suit with long coattails and no button up shirt, leaving his chest and stomach exposed. He gestures with “stereotypical limp-wristed affectation” (Putnam 148), wears a feather in his top hat, and looks Prince Naveen up and down hungrily when they first meet. In contrast, Tiana has the classic feminine hourglass figure, a smooth, silky voice, and large eyes. Even Frog-Tiana is notably smaller and slimmer than Frog-Naveen and has the same hourglass proportions. The dominant heterosexuality of Tiana plays against the deviant femininity of Dr. Facilier, emphasizing the separation of the hero and the villain through character
design. Highlighting the beauty and heterosexuality of the heroes and the unattractiveness and queerness of the villains reinforces social stereotypes that diminish those who do not meet society's beauty, gender, and sexuality standards.

Disney further emphasizes the hero-villain dynamic of Tiana and Dr. Facilier through their aspirations. Both want to escape poverty to a higher socio-economic status, but the framing of their desires is different. For Tiana, her desire is to open a restaurant because she loves to cook and wants to honor her late father. A critical viewer might look past Tiana's lack of awareness of her own poverty and recognize that she is currently struggling due to her lower socio-economic status. If she owned her own restaurant, she could afford a better place to live and improve her financial and social situation. However, Tiana does not discuss money, a better house, or a higher status as a goal throughout the film. She only mentions money in the context of "I need enough money to buy my restaurant," and thus Tiana's ambitions are "pure" as she is driven by love for her father and love of food. Her financial struggles are erased from the context of her goals. On the other hand, Dr. Facilier discusses money and social status blatantly. He is introduced as an avaricious conman who plays wicked tricks on unsuspecting patrons in order to manipulate them into giving him small amounts of cash. Dr. Facilier sells a man a potion to cure baldness for a coin, then looks on with jealousy as a cute, young boy receives a stack of cash for a newspaper. The man who bought the potion is dismayed to find Dr. Facilier has actually sold him a potion that causes extreme hair growth on the entire body, not just the head (00:08:18-00:08:45). Dr. Facilier fits directly into Artz's villain archetype. In the beginning of the film, Dr. Facilier's plan is a desperate, vague attempt to gain wealth. Later, however, Dr. Facilier's plan becomes clearer as he discusses it with his "friends on the other side," the mysterious and vindictive spirits who lend Dr. Facilier their power. He plans to have Lawrence (disguised as Prince Naveen) marry Charlotte, kill Big Daddy La Bouff, and then control the La Bouff fortune through Charlotte. Dr. Facilier wants to gain wealth by taking it away from someone else, just as Scar wishes to take the Pridelands from Simba, the rightful ruler, in The Lion King, or as Ursula wishes to take control of the ocean from King Triton, the true owner of the powerful trident, in The Little Mermaid. Tiana is passionate; Dr. Facilier is greedy. Tiana is earnest; Dr. Facilier is duplicitous. Thus, an implicit judgment is made that desire for more money or higher social status is evil, demonizing people of a lower social class who may wish to reach financial security or a more comfortable social status.

Disney also emphasizes the hero-villain dynamic of Tiana and Dr. Facilier through the differences in their rhetoric. Tiana's rhetoric is all about hard work, and she discusses how close she is to achieving her goal of owning a restaurant only in relation to her own efforts. The first song Tiana sings is "Almost There," where she says, "So I work real hard each and every day, and good things are sure to come my way" (00:14:45-00:14:55). After the song "Dig a Little Deeper," Tiana says, "I get it! I need to dig a little deeper, and work even harder to get my restaurant!" (01:05:45-01:05:55). She attributes all her successes and failures to her own hard work or lack thereof, and she does not acknowledge the racial and financial barriers that she faces. In contrast, Dr. Facilier dares to acknowledge racial and financial divides in the world around him. Dr. Facilier has a conversation with Lawrence, Naveen's butler, in which he says, "You and I both know the real power in this world ain't magic, it's money. Buckets of it… Aren't you tired of living on the margins while all those fat cats and their fancy cars don't give you so much as a sideways glance" (00:32:00-00:32:25). He blames the wealthy – and implicitly white – people for preventing him from moving up in society. These critiques are framed as complaints that lead the audience to view Dr. Facilier as bitter, jealous, lazy, and ultimately villainous.

The clear delineation of Tiana as a hero and Dr. Facilier as a villain through physical characteristics and aspirations makes an implicit judgment on their respective rhetoric. For example, when Dr. Facilier points out that it is unfair that Big Daddy has all the wealth and implies that Big Daddy has that money in part because he is white, this is framed as a negative commentary that highlights his evilness. Thus, Disney undermines critiques of racial and social divides in the United States. When Dr. Facilier makes arguably accurate statements about the racial and financial divide, his commentary is easily dismissed because he is the villain. In contrast, when Tiana makes a statement about the value of hard work, this is has positive framing because she is the attractive hero. The contrast in their rhetoric and the way their rhetoric is framed
perpetuates a harmful *pull yourself up by your bootstraps* narrative. The film suggests that people who are facing social or financial struggles are in that position simply because they did not work hard enough. This ignores very real factors that prevent people from improving their situation in life. In addition, Disney makes the judgment that people who blame authority or who criticize the wealthy elite are doing so for sinister reasons and are complaining without valid points. Overall, Disney suggests that marginalized people should ignore the forces that are holding them back and whistle while they work.

Disney perpetuates a myth that there are good marginalized people and bad marginalized people through *The Princess and the Frog*. Good marginalized people like Tiana do not complain when they face hardship, do not blame others for their misfortune, and do not cause problems within their society; instead, they work hard to improve their situation. Bad marginalized people, like Dr. Facilier, complain, refuse to work hard, and dare to blame the oppressors for their misfortune. This myth implies that some people deserve to move up in society more than others. In *The Princess and the Frog*, this narrative perpetuates a version of model minority myth within the Black community.

The model minority myth is the narrative that some minority groups are excessively more successful than others, and thus they must not be as marginalized. In academic and cultural contexts, the “model minority myth” usually refers to a myth surrounding the Asian community, which promotes the idea that Asian Americans “have overcome all barriers of racial discrimination and are more successful even than whites” (Suzuki 23). In his article, “The Model Minority and the Inferior Minority Myths: Understanding Stereotypes and Their Implications for Student Learning,” Samuel D. Museus, a professor of Education Studies at UCSD interviews an Asian student in order to ascertain the personal effects of the model minority myth on her. The student explained that “because of the stereotype of the model minority, she believed that her instructors and classmates held excessively high expectations for her academic performance” (Museus 4). The inferior minority myth is the other side of the coin, stating that some minorities are naturally inferior. Dr. Museus also interviewed a Black student who had been affected by the inferior minority myth, and she said “the moment she enters a classroom, she feels that her white peers believe she is academically inferior” (Museus 5). She internalized the inferior minority myth, leading her to believe she was inferior.

While the model minority myth typically refers to Asian Americans, *The Princess and the Frog*’s good versus bad marginalized people message mirrors a model minority versus inferior minority myth relationship within the Black community. The film sends the implicit message that Black people like Tiana who avoid critiquing or even acknowledging race and class divides are thus more deserving of improving their social station if they can work hard enough for it. In contrast, those who criticize harmful power structures that perpetuate racism and poverty are threats like Dr. Facilier. These people do not deserve to reach a more comfortable social status or financial stability, and if they do, they may be dangerous. Thus, there are good and bad members of the Black community, those who may be allowed to work for social improvement and those who deserve their lower social standing, delineated only by how comfortable they make people with more social and financial power feel. If society deems a Black person as undeserving of an improved social status because they call out injustice, then that message may be internalized as it was for the Black student Dr. Museus interviewed. For those who are assumed to be deserving, their experience with discrimination may be invalidated. *The Princess and the Frog* perpetuates larger social stigmas that cause harm to marginalized people, inhibiting success for some and invalidating experiences for others.

While Tiana diverges from Disney’s traditional hierarchical narrative by not being privileged or of noble birth, the effect is not as positive as one would have hoped. Unfortunately, the reality of the relationship between the physical appearance, aspirations, and rhetoric of Tiana and Dr. Facilier communicates a harmful message that overshadows any positive message that could have been sent by Tiana’s race and class.

Tiana’s social status appears to challenge Disney’s
traditional hierarchical narrative not only in the beginning of the film, but also at the end. Tiana marries Prince Naveen, becomes a princess, and finally acquires her dream restaurant. In the traditional hierarchical narrative outlined by Artz, Tiana should retain her social and financial status from beginning to end, and any social mobility should be frowned upon as a sign of greed. Tiana's social mobility, which is celebrated in the film, contradicts the aspect of Disney's traditional hierarchical narrative that challenges the morality of social mobility. However, just as further inspection of the relationship between Tiana and Dr. Facilier revealed a harmful narrative, further inspection of Tiana's social mobility reveals that she does not truly challenge any traditional power structures.

While Tiana does become a princess and a business owner at the end of the film, which is a significant increase in social and financial status, the effect of that social mobility is dampened by the presence of the La Bouffs. Big Daddy and Charlotte La Bouff are rich, white socialites who essentially run New Orleans. Big Daddy is benevolent and slightly clueless, and he falls over himself to please Charlotte, a spoiled but generous southern belle who desperately wants to be a princess. Tiana's mother, Eudora, is a working-class seamstress who created beautiful princess dresses for Charlotte when Charlotte and Tiana were younger. Charlotte and Tiana are still friends as adults. While the La Bouffs do not have official titles, they are highest up on the social ladder within the world of the film — they are the wealthiest characters, they are white, and there is nobody with more power. Even though the La Bouffs are not nobility, they serve in Disney's predetermined role of benevolent authority much like King Triton in The Little Mermaid and Mufasa in The Lion King.

Tiana's relationship with the La Bouffs, the authorities, is representative of The Princess and the Frog's reluctance to address race and class within the film. The obvious racial and financial divides between Tiana and the La Bouffs are brushed aside and minimized as Disney attempts to lessen the extent to which Tiana's social status is the source of her problems. The film never explicitly says what Big Daddy La Bouff does for a living, although a critical eye can reasonably assume that he is a plantation owner. In the opening song, "Down in New Orleans," the line "stately homes and mansions of the Sugar Barons and the Cotton Kings" is sung over an image of Big Daddy and Charlotte pulling up in front of their extravagant house. The film takes place in 1920s New Orleans, but Disney's attempt to gloss over how the La Bouffs became wealthy is one way the film erases the racism that was part of Louisiana at the time.

Disney also takes every chance to remind the audience that the La Bouffs harbor no racist sentiments. The La Bouffs treat both Tiana and Eudora kindly, without racial prejudice. In the beginning of the film, Big Daddy comes into Duke's, the restaurant where Tiana waitresses, to eat some of her beignets in celebration of his election as King of the Mardi Gras Parade. Charlotte tags along to talk to Tiana about the masquerade ball they are throwing. By having the La Bouffs visit a smaller restaurant where both Black and white patrons are eating, Disney demonstrates that the La Bouffs do not feel superior to others. At the masquerade ball, Tiana gets covered in powdered sugar and Charlotte brings Tiana into the La Bouff mansion to give Tiana a new dress, demonstrating that despite Tiana's role as a server at Charlotte's party, Charlotte sees Tiana as an equal. Considering the historical context, it is unlikely Charlotte would give Tiana a dress or invite Tiana into her room. The colorblind friendship and kindness Charlotte shows Tiana is a significant erasure of historical race relations. Throughout the film, the La Bouffs are generous and kind, embodying Artz's ruler archetype. The La Bouffs can do no wrong. In this way, Disney sanitizes the racial and financial divides from Tiana's relationship with the La Bouffs.

While Tiana does experience social mobility at the end of the film, her new social status does not challenge the La Bouffs' position as the benevolent authorities. Tiana becomes a princess but does not leave to rule Maldonia and thus does not receive tangible power. If she had received the power a princess would wield, she would have been more powerful than the La Bouffs and would have risen above Charlotte and Big Daddy on the social ladder. Tiana finally gets to achieve her dream and own a restaurant, but she still does not surpass the La Bouffs. During the final song, "Down in New Orleans (Finale)," she stops by the La Bouffs table at her restaurant to say hello and see how they are doing.
No words are exchanged as Tiana is singing, but Big Daddy waves a beignet in the air and winks, showing that he approves of her success and her cooking. This moment mirrors one from the beginning of the film, when Tiana is working as a waitress and serves Big Daddy beignets (00:10:25-00:10:47). Although she now owns a restaurant instead of working as a waitress, she is still serving the La Bouffs. Tiana's social status in relation to the La Bouffs has not shifted.

The implicit message is that Tiana can move up in the world, but only insofar as she does not challenge Big Daddy and Charlotte. Tiana, a Black woman, would not be allowed to move socially or financially ahead of the wealthy, white La Bouffs. In the end, the hierarchy established at the beginning of the film remains. The Black character does not supersede the powerful white characters, the divides based on race and class established in the beginning are not broken, and Tiana does not truly experience social mobility. The traditional power structure of authority, power, wealth, and whiteness is upheld. In the end, the presence of the La Bouffs ensures that Disney's hierarchical narrative is not challenged by The Princess and the Frog.

Disney films traditionally follow a similar hierarchical structure that rests on three archetypal characters: the attractive, privileged hero; the scheming, social-climbing villain; and the benevolent authority. The combination of these three characters results in a narrative that challenges the morality of social mobility and depicts a world that favors the wealthy and powerful. Disney’s The Princess and the Frog breaks tradition by featuring a Black, low-income, working woman as its hero. In the end, Tiana becomes a princess and restaurant owner, entering a higher social and financial class. Unfortunately, when put in context with the characters that represent the other two archetypes, the villain and the ruler, Tiana’s characterization and storyline fail to challenge Disney’s traditional narrative and instead send a harmful message about the lower class.

Towards the beginning of the film, the shrunken heads on the wall of Dr. Facilier’s lair chanted, “You got what you wanted, but you lost what you had” (00:21:50-00:22:00). After thorough analysis of the hierarchical structures in the film, what was a warning against Prince Naveen’s greed and gullibility becomes a more insidious chiding of Dr. Facilier. As the villain, or as someone in a lower social and financial class, Dr. Facilier is not allowed to end up with more power or wealth than his socioeconomic status allows. In challenging Disney’s hierarchical narrative, Dr. Facilier invited fate to strike him down.

The villain of the film, Dr. Facilier, is a shadowman who made a deal with his “friends on the other side” in exchange for mystical powers. Like Tiana, he is also Black and struggling financially. Disney usually separates the heroes and the villains with racial or social boundaries, but Tiana and Dr. Facilier are from the same racial and social background. Disney signals the hero-villain dynamic between Tiana and Dr. Facilier through their physical appearance, aspirations, and rhetoric. Unfortunately, the juxtaposition of Tiana’s rounded features, desire for a restaurant, and rhetoric focusing on hard work with Dr. Facilier’s angular effeminacy, desire for money and power, and rhetoric centered around jealousy and social divides creates an underlying message about the good marginalized person versus the bad marginalized person. The relationship between Tiana and Dr. Facilier leads to a version of the model minority myth within the Black community and discredits critiques of racial and financial inequalities.

The rulers of the film, Charlotte and Big Daddy La Bouff, are wealthy, white socialites who are friends with Tiana. They patronize the restaurant where Tiana works as a waiter and then later the restaurant Tiana opens. The La Bouffs’ presence in the film makes apparent Disney’s sanitization of the 1920s New Orleans setting. By not acknowledging the obvious financial and racial divides between Tiana and the La Bouffs, Disney glosses over the racial and social barriers Tiana faces. In addition, because the La Bouffs’ social position is unaffected throughout the film and Tiana does surpass them in status, Tiana’s position in relation to the La Bouffs remains functionally unchanged from the beginning of the film to the end. Thus, the social mobility Tiana experiences does not challenge any of the existing power structures of Disney films.

Unfortunately, all of this means that The Princess and the Frog does follow Disney’s traditional hierarchical narrative, and the film is not as subversive as one might initially believe. Towards the beginning of the film, the shrunked heads on the wall of Dr. Facilier’s lair chanted, “You got what you wanted, but you lost what you had” (00:21:50-00:22:00). After thorough analysis of the hierarchical structures in the film, what was a warning against Prince Naveen’s greed and gullibility becomes a more insidious chiding of Dr. Facilier. As the villain, or as someone in a lower social and financial class, Dr. Facilier is not allowed to end up with more power or wealth than his socioeconomic status allows. In challenging Disney’s hierarchical narrative, Dr. Facilier invited fate to strike him down.

The harmful hierarchical narrative and messaging about
the lower class is not unique to *The Princess and the Frog* or Disney films. It is concerning, however, that within a movie where Disney attempted to break out of their traditional mold, the company ultimately failed to do so. Disney’s failure with *The Princess and the Frog* does not inspire confidence for future films and franchises where they may attempt to undo some of their previous harmful messaging. Because Disney is a leader in children’s entertainment, this does not bode well for films from other companies either. Whether children’s media improves messaging or not, it is important for society to pay attention to the messaging implicitly communicated in children’s media. When children receive messages about the upper class being better than the lower class, or some lower class people being more deserving than others, those messages are likely to be internalized (Museus 4-5). Children’s media should be scrutinized to identify biases and harmful narratives that individuals and companies can work to eliminate.

**Works Cited**


Crisis Makes the Identity, Identity Makes the Crisis

Lilia Qian
Writing 101: Last Night a DJ Saved My Life
Instructor: Michael Dimpfl

Disco was a child of circumstance. It had one parent in the postwar fifties’ legacy of repressive norms and another in New York’s agitated body of repressed creative energy, each of which was desperately trying to divorce the other. As wartime manufacturing subsided in the fifties, the scramble to deindustrialize New York City led to an exodus of workers. Without the frantic industrial clutter, a vacancy opened for artists, musicians—all manner of creative and disillusioned—who brought with them a generative energy and a genuine hope for societal change. There was a feeling that the “non-capitalist, democratic, utopian” forces might actually win, and the “computerized world might be a utopia, not a dystopia” (Lawrence & Gilbert, 2021). By the early seventies, these energies had combined to create the club spaces known as discotheques. Socially and sexually progressive, these spaces broke away from traditional gender roles and gave voice to New York’s long-disenfranchised minorities. Yet our modern memory of disco reflects nothing of this progressive excitement. In fact, modern Americans have collectively turned up their noses at what they perceive as disco’s shallowness, overindulgence, and artifice. It is not surprising that disco strayed from its origins; a child seldom becomes exactly what its parents hope for it to be. But the nature of that journey—how it becomes what it does—is surprising. In this paper, I uncover disco’s identity transformations as it grew out of the uncertain conditions of its birth and became a named, recognized entity, and ultimately an inadequately remembered cultural phenomenon.

Like any newborn, early disco was malleable. It didn’t know what it was, only what it was not: part of the mainstream. Thus, disco’s first action in the world was protest; it resisted convention in every way it could, and this began on the dance floor. Disc jockeys tended toward not what records sold best but rather unfamiliar sounds “whose defining criteria was their functionality, not their profitability” (Lawrence, 2003, p. 155). There were no rules, except that the tracks needed to sustain a constant, almost-dizzying dance pace on the floor. As a result, early disco was not itself a genre but a synthesis of many genres, all of which had either been deemed too feminine or too sexual for the cultural moment. Songs with heavy Afro-beat influences such as Jingo Lo Ba were especially popular on the floor.
held no pretense about their masculinity, modesty, or social appropriateness. At the same time, the increasingly diverse identities that populated the floor ousted the dominant dance arrangement of the time: heterosexual partner dancing. The influx of gay men dancing together in discotheques was a clear assault on social norms that, until the 60s, had made it illegal for two men to dance together (Lawrence & Gilbert, 2021b). Prior to disco, men of every sexual orientation were tethered to women: “if you wanted to go dancing you had to have a girl with you. Women were very much a part of the picture, whether you wanted them or not” (Lawrence, 2003, p. 189). It goes without saying that this also worked the opposite way. Women were tethered to men. But the progressive tides of disco made quick work of this, too. In the 1960s, popular and sexually provocative dances like the Twist could be done as single dances, no partner needed (Brewster & Broughton, 1999).

A key feature of the early 70s discotheque was a rare mix of racial, social, and economic backgrounds. In places like The Loft, one of New York’s earliest disco scenes, the mix of identities present in the club was a fundamental part of how the space operated. The Sanctuary, another highly influential early discotheque, was “the first totally uninhibited gay discotheque in America” (Brewster & Broughton, 1999, p. 146). As Andrew Holleran once put it, “[The crowd] lived only to bathe in the music, and each other’s desire, in a strange democracy whose only ticket of admission was physical beauty—and not even that sometimes” (1978, p. 40). The operative word here is democracy. Disco did not always know what it was or what to call itself, but through a largely unspoken democracy formed between DJs and clubbers, it eventually found some loose language to describe what it wanted to be: sexually free, barrier-breaking, sonically inventive, and at its core, pleasurable.

To anyone present in the disco scene at its inception, the discotheque experience was multifaceted. It was the site of a burgeoning revolt against—and liberation from—the oppressive economic and social conditions of the period. It is puzzling, then, that disco is remembered primarily for its simple, reckless hedonism. But one must remember that disco was conceived in resistance to the mainstream—it was not for the masses, it was for escaping them. It should then be no surprise that disco, which intentionally operated under the radar, was misrepresented: the disco that met the public eye was the disco the public eye wanted to see. In 1977, the big-screen release of Saturday Night Fever set off disco’s meteoric rise. Set around a Brooklyn disco, the movie stripped disco of anything that might’ve made it unpalatable for conservative middle Americans. The movie “deleted any trace of the downtown night network: out went Manhattan’s ethnic gays, black funk, drugs, and free form dancing, and in came suburban straights, shrill white pop, alcohol, and the Hustle” (Lawrence, 2003, p. 307). What resulted was a saccharine distillation of disco, a feel-good story wrought with all the best-selling tropes sidelined by an ego-centric dance style not even slightly representative of actual club experiences.

But how does it go again? Art imitates life? No. Life imitates art. Saturday Night Fever sent out the first “mass-market template for disco,” and with that, “an impassioned audience left the cinemas, headed toward their local discotheque, and did their best to imitate Stephanie and Tony, blissfully unaware that their moves had been choreographed in fantasyland”
The ‘disco’ that sprang to popularity following *Saturday Night Fever* was not truly disco, but a weak imitation that had adopted disco’s name. Nevertheless, disco’s newfound fame afforded it extraordinary money-making potential, and business owners scrambled to open their own ‘discotheques.’ By 1978, there were an estimated fifteen to twenty thousand discotheques operating in the United States (Lawrence, 2003, p. 315). Unsurprisingly, it was impossible for every one of these to devote itself to crafting the rich, democratic atmosphere of early discotheques. Thus, the discotheques birthed in this boom were numerous, but bland and formulaic. The same could be said for the music they played. *Saturday Night Live’s* film soundtrack went on to become one of the best selling albums of all time, selling over sixteen million copies. Its sugary, cohesive sound was a poor representative for the diverse genres that early disco used, but it was nonetheless replicated and mass-produced to the delight of movie fans. Whereas the original taste-making DJs had taken advantage of unregulated creative freedom to produce genuinely inventive tracks, new DJs suddenly adopted the previously-nonexistent Disco Bible, a publication dedicated to evaluating records solely by rhythmic pace. These DJs mixed records “not for their lyrical or sonic compatibility but their beat-on-beat mixability—an all-but-irrelevant criterion according to earlier DJs” (Lawrence, 2003, p. 335). This new generation of DJs adopted increasingly arbitrary standards in a space that had once been intentionally unregulated. Disco emerged from this period with the confidence of a well-marketed consumer product.

This watered-down version of disco is what Americans have retained in popular memory. There is no misunderstanding about what this version of disco was; to call it shallow and disconnected would not be entirely incorrect. A problem only arose when the disco name still tried to bear the weight of the social movements it previously represented. With its commercialization, disco was in an awkward stage: it had become a powerful social force, but for several competing interests. It began as a loud, musically explorative expression of gay liberation, women’s liberation, and sexual exploration. With its popular reimagining in *Saturday Night Fever*, it also began to operate as an “acceptable dating agency for straights” (Lawrence, 2003, p. 307). Disco had awoken as a protest to mainstream norms, but with the ever-widening umbrella of groups it claimed to serve, it faltered.

As disco reached the masses, the ever-present mass of quiet critics that had always existed became not-so-quiet. Appalled suburbanites denounced disco as “superficial” and “artificial,” which, according to Lawrence, also happened to be derogatory euphemisms for gay. In 1979, popular talk radio host Steve Dahl led the Disco Sucks movement composed largely of “middle-class white suburban boys and families with their kids” in blowing up a twelve-foot pile of disco records chanting “disco sucks.” For Lawrence, a question hung in the air: “Disco sucks...what?” (2003, p. 377).

Just as collective action had emboldened disco to expand, embrace, and project its values outwardly, the growing distaste for the sexually-tinted proclivities of the now-dominant subculture became similarly vocal.

Once the Saturday night fever had somewhat subsided, disco had to deal with the question of how to exist in an economic environment hostile to its principles. The song “YMCA” by the Village People, an upbeat anthem of generic hope, is an
interesting case of this struggle. Although the group had found its initial success by playing up macho-gay stereotypes, they were hard-pressed to admit this to a new demographic, an audience hostile to any signs of sexual liberation. To skirt this problem, “[the Village People] subtly sidelined the risky subject of sexuality as they moved into the spotlight;” in other words, they dodged the issue altogether. “I’ll tell the gay press I’m gay,” said Felipe Rose of Village People. “If the straight press asks, we tell them it’s none of their business.” Disco had gone from targeted expressions of support for particular marginalized communities to nondescript dance tracks that told its listeners to simply “pick yourself off the ground” (Village People, 2008). With money at stake, “disco had become artificial, stylized, disengaged and apolitical, emphasizing texture, sensuous surface, and style at the expense of content” (Lawrence, 2003, p. 333). In its late age, disco grew weary of the shiny ideals it had so self-righteously championed in its youth. It became, like many late in life, detached, cynical, and, as Lawrence writes, apolitical.

Disco had always been inherently political; it was born as a response to an undesirable political reality. What happened to the “non-capitalist, democratic, utopian” forces that would change the world? The easy answer would be to say that capitalism quashed them. But disco did change the world, in a sense. Perhaps the changes that occurred didn’t live up to the radical upheavals its early participants envisioned, but little by little, disco helped edge in a new cultural paradigm. Just after the release of Saturday Night Fever, Truman Capote expressed admiration for Studio 54: “this is the nightclub of the future. It’s very democratic. Boys with boys, girls with girls, girls with boys, blacks with whites, capitalists and Marxists, Chinese and everything else—all one big mix!” (Lawrence, 2003, p. 309). Still, it’s fair to express disappointment. Some of the critical elements that had allowed disco to exist vanished together with our optimistic memories of disco’s early promise.

References


The Minority Problem: The Effect of My Racial Ambiguity on My Adolescent Identity Development

Maya Todd
Writing 101: Coming of Age & Happiness
Instructor: Sheryl Welte Emch

Prologue

I have spent my whole life grasping at different racial identities. My mother is a Chinese Jamaican immigrant, whose parents died before I could remember them, and my father is a midwestern white man. Being second-generation mixed race and holding few cultural ties to any part of my extended family, I have never been able to fully identify with one racial, ethnic or cultural identity. Identity development often hinges on the ability to find an ingroup and a natural choice for this group is race. I am Chinese, Jamaican and White, yet I do not feel that I have a true claim to any of these identities.

The concept of racial identity appears to be rooted in community. Therefore, it translates that any monoracial member of that group has the perceived power to tell me, “No, you don’t belong here.” This power comes from the fact that they have a “full claim” – a more established community membership – to their racial identity, whereas mine is deeply fragmented. Even throughout writing this case study, I have been wary of crossing these poorly defined lines. I feel a constant anxiety that whatever race I find myself identifying with, because society often demands that I pick one, will be taken away from me and there is nothing I can do about it because they are right. I do not share all the cultural and societal experiences of any racial group and perhaps it is not my place to speak on their behalf.

As of this moment, I’m not sure if I am allowed to identify culturally with any of these identities. The exploration I did regarding this case study for me to recognize that it was already impacting my life without my acknowledgement.

The topic discussed in this essay is one of great personal significance, however, it is not one I had ever taken the time to investigate. My racial ambiguity has always played a role in my life, but I simply had other things on my mind such as grades, sports, or friends. I am grateful for the opportunity to dedicate the necessary time to this topic. While it is cliche, college is a time of defining one’s own identity and processing my racial identity is crucial to my ability to do that. Throughout middle and high school my racial ambiguity was something I thought I could ignore; I would tell myself, it’s not like it really matters anyway. I believed that by ignoring what made me different I could pretend it didn’t impact my life. It took the reflection of this case study for me to recognize that it was already impacting my life without my acknowledgement.

The exploration I did regarding this case study also provoked new thoughts on how I perceive and interact with society. I find this topic to be especially interesting when looked at through the lens of modern culture. I remember, years ago, seeing a cover of National Geographic with the face of a woman who looked more like me than any other magazine cover I’d ever seen. The cover article stated that this is what the majority of Americans born in 2050 would look like. However, I saw this article in 2013, and to this day have never met another person whose racial background is as mixed as mine. They are certainly out there, yet few and far between. Interracial marriage was not legal until 1967 in the U.S., meaning that my parents, born in 1971, were the first generation to grow up in a society where interracial relationships were normalized. Therefore, Gen Z is the first generation to see a large spike in interracial babies, with most of these children being the product of two monoracial parents. These mixes are often fetishized and claimed, to some degree, by both racial groups. However, as a society we have not started to ask questions about what we will do with our children. Even further down the line, what will I tell my own children? Given that my mother is mixed, Chinese-Jamaican, and I was born in 2002, I fall a bit out of the usual boxes for racial identity. My face may be the future, but during my lifetime people have been unsure what to do with me. Can the child of someone who is already mixed still identify with any of the groups that make up their race? Or are they too far removed to be afforded this connection? The answer based on my personal experience has been a lifetime of mixed signals.

I want to thank Sheryl Welte-Emch for the incredible class, Writing 101: Coming of Age and Happiness, which produced this work and for her mentorship throughout the publication process. Without you Sheryl I would never have been comfortable sharing this work, thank you.
“No, you’re not,” Dominick snaps.
“Yes, I am,” I reply, nodding my head and smiling assuredly at my classmates.
“You don’t look Chinese,” he retorts.
“Yes, I am. My grandma is from China. She’s dead, but I’m still Chinese!” I respond, sounding more petulant than I intended.
“I don’t believe you. You shouldn’t lie. Lying is bad!” he shouts back. At this I get up and run to the hallway to cry.

***

The next morning, I arrive at school with a picture of my grandma in hand. This will show him. My eyes search the playground and immediately find my target. I make a beeline for Dominick across the basketball court with fierce determination and shove the picture in his face. Ha!
“See, I am Chinese,” I say proudly, punctuating my words by pointing at the distinctly Chinese woman in the photo.
“No one likes a liar,” he says before turning and walking away. My heart falls.

Age 13:

I look just like Anne Hathaway. I tell myself while giving one last twirl to the fingerprint blurred mirror in the corner of my painfully-7th-grade bedroom.
I look just like Anne Hathaway in the Princess Diaries. I repeat while my heart swells with pride and satisfaction at the glide of my fingers through my freshly straightened silky hair.
I look just like Anne Hathaway in the Princess Diaries after her princess makeover changes her from a curly-haired loser into the straight-haired Princess of Genovia. I echo while grabbing my bag and running towards the daily middle school carpool. It is impossible to control the smile spreading across my face as I climb into the Honda Pilot and greet my friends. I didn't tell them that I was going to get my hair straightened over the weekend, so I find myself rushing through the pleasantries eager to get to the part where they compliment my new look. The words “it's permanently straight this time” are practically bursting from my lips. They're finally going to think I'm pretty. How can they not? I look like them now.
My heart sinks a little bit when I receive nothing more than a passing comment tossed back from the front seat by Hailey's mom. They're just jealous. I'm sure everyone will be talking about it when they see me at school. I don't participate in the conversation going on in the car. Instead, I focus my eyes on the trees out the window filled with anticipation.

***

My math class is at the top of the stairs on the 4th floor, so I arrive out of breath and tell my friends to walk in ahead of me while I recuperate against the wall to the left of the door. I replay the vision of my entrance in my head. I arrive just as the bell rings. All the heads turn towards me as I walk through the door, eyes comically large with appreciation for my shiny, flowing, straight hair. I let it fall into my face and flash a small smile at my peers – just like Anne Hathaway in the Princess Diaries. I sit down and spend the class bashfully responding to compliments. I run through it again. It's a foolproof plan.

The bell jolts me out of my thoughts. Show time. I push past the door and the only head that turns is my teacher who has already begun the lesson and spares a
moment to shoot me a disapproving look. I take the hint and move quickly to my seat. The class continues with no eyes wide with appreciation and no compliments to respond bashfully to.

Maybe I don't look like Anne Hathaway.

Age 15

I had been confused hen I read the invitation announcing that the bat mitzvah was going to be at the University of Michigan Basketball Stadium, but now that I’m on the court-sized dance floor the genius of the idea is becoming clear. The circle of my friends bounces, albeit slightly offbeat, to the 10th y2k throwback of the night. My face hurts from smiling for so long, but it's a feeling I wouldn't wish away.

The DJ changes the song and with it the genre from Pop to Rap. I don't know this song, but my friends seem to. I mumble while they rap along pretending to know it too. While the song plays, my mind floats back to the pictures we took in the bathroom mirror. I looked great, just like Beyonce in this dress. I remember the way that my friends’ pale skin and blonde hair created a flattering contrast with my sunkissed glow, and I smile. Those are going to look great on Instagram.

My attention snaps back to the present as my friends begin to cheer and sing louder in response to the MC who just appeared at our group. He is a large black man, with a large flat brim hat worn at an angle, which I assume is part of the themed 2000s persona. His voice booms across the crowd hyping up my small circle of friends, and soon he is pointing the mic towards our group. I pretend to know the words again as we crowd around the outstretched hand. Suddenly, the mic is yanked away—

—“Ope, almost caught ya there!” he says, looking directly at me. Huh? His smile is wide, but uneasy and his eyes are hard. An unexplained feeling of nervousness washes over me as I replay the last few seconds in confusion. Shit. He thought I was going to say the n-word.

My mind grinds to a halt as he moves on to the next group. Two thoughts rise simultaneously. Firstly, of course I wasn’t going to say it! Secondly, and far more destabilizing than the first, he thinks I can’t say it.

The first emotion is accompanied with a feeling of embarrassment that this man was given the impression that I planned to say it. However, that embarrassment is put on the backburner as the implications of the second hit me. If he thinks I can't say the n-word, then that means he doesn't think I'm light skinned. Black people usually assume I’m light skinned. Am I light skinned? Can that mean mixed? No, those are different. Am I even mixed? Yes. I'm mixed, just not in the traditional black and white sense of the word. He thinks I’m white. My heart rate rises as these thoughts give way to a wave of shame, rejection, and a sense of being found out. I’m drowning in it.

Age 16

The bell cuts through the raspy voice of my English teacher’s lecture on Animal Farm. He sighs, “Well, I guess that’s it for the day. Remember to read chapters 3 through 5 by Monday. Also Maya, can you come to my desk when you are finished packing up?” My heart speeds up in my chest as I quickly shove my books into my bag and walk up to the front of the classroom. Did I do something wrong? I stand in front of his desk for about 45 seconds as he shuffles papers, unaware of my presence, until he finally looks up when I clear my throat.

“Congratulations, you’ve been selected for the Rising Scholars Program! I highly recommend that you consider joining, it can be very helpful for students like
you.” He smiles, and despite not knowing what this program is I find myself feeling proud. Sensing my confusion, he casts his eyes about the disorganized desk between us searching for a paper which he then holds out to me.

“Thank you!” I say with a nod, “I’m excited to look into it.” I smile while I retrieve the paper and head out the door to the left. When I get into the hallway I finally look down at the paper, which turns out to be an acceptance letter.

Congratulations!
You have been nominated by a teacher to participate in the Rising Scholars Program! This is a prestigious program aimed at giving exclusive tools and resources to promising students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds. Our program includes college counseling, free SAT prep and unique leadership opportunities.
Please contact Risingscholars@aps.k12.us to accept this offer.

The excitement I had felt in the classroom slowly melts away and my mind bounces back to my teacher’s words, “students like you.” I don’t think this was meant for me.

I’m proud of my multiracial background, and I don’t feel disadvantaged.

***

“I don’t think I should take this,” I tell my mom as I watch her eyes skim over the invitation.

“Of course, you should. This program was made for students like you,” she finally responds with confusion. There it is again, “students like you.”

“But… I just don’t think that I fall into the category of people who are disadvantaged. I mean, you and Dad are educated. He is a doctor and professor, and I’ve always had access to the tools I needed. I don’t understand how this program applies to me.” I say the last part with slightly more frustration than warranted.

“Maya, you are my daughter. That means that you are a minority, which I’m sure you are aware of. I didn’t even go to school until 4th grade because my parents were afraid someone would notice that we were in this country illegally. You do not come from a line of college graduates. And physically, you are obviously not just white. Let these people help you. Do you see many people that look like you around? Representation matters. Just accept that you are being given the opportunity to be on an even playing field, and take it,” she explains. I don’t think she understands what I’m trying to say. Do I even understand what I’m trying to say?

“Okay,” I reply, more confused than before and unable to shake the feeling that I was doing something wrong.

Age 19

The world whirls around me as I propel my spinny desk chair across my dorm room, trying to distract myself from the barrage of questions coming from my mom. “It makes me sad that you are sad,” she finally says, her voice coming across the speaker phone.

“Well, I’m not really sure what to say about that. I am also sad that I’m sad. I just don’t have anything to do. I haven’t found a good extracurricular group, and it’s a bit too late to join things at the end of October,” I reply, resigned to the consequences
of my choices not to join any social based organizations.

“Why don’t you join a cultural organization?”

“I can’t.–” I respond automatically. “I wouldn’t belong. We wouldn’t even have anything to talk about,” I confess. The weight of the statement making me feel raw and lost.

**Analysis**

My experience of racial identity development has been characterized by the moments of recognition surrounding a fragmented claim to one racial group or another. The times that I tried to claim a racial identity and was rejected were pivotal in my exploration of my racial identity. Sarah Townsend et al., authors of *My Choice Your Categories: Denial of Multiracial Identities*, describe rejection from the group by members of the ingroup as “identity denial”. They define the term as the “general experience of having one’s group membership challenged by others” (Townsend et al.). The impact of identity denial continues to shape, and confound, the way in which I perceive my own identity. While my identity was challenged in many instances from the elementary school playground to the bat mitzvah dance floor, these experiences have, historically, been inconsistent with the experiences in which my identity has been affirmed.

The inconsistency in others’ reactions to my racially ambiguous features caused confusion in adolescence. While I may be accepted by some members of a group, I have my identity denied by others. The denial of this part of my identity produces feelings of, “shame, rejection and a sense of being found out” which I experience on many occasions (Townsend et al.). However, beyond the overwhelming sense of shame there is a lasting confusion on how to reconcile the interaction with others of a similar nature. I was once told that when people look at me they see a black girl, but others have told me that they couldn’t tell that I was a racial/ethnic minority. This dichotomy of perception is the reality of my lived experience. I am left in a state of constant self-doubt, fueled by the fear of identity denial, that leads to questioning if I have a claim to any racial group at all.

Perhaps I do have claim to my white, Jamaican and Chinese heritage in a general sense, but I will always stick out of a homogenous group of white people; I do not share the same experiences of oppression or culture as a monoracial Jamaican, nor was I raised with traditionally Chinese values nor do I wrestle with stereotypes based on a distinctive Asian appearance. The emotions surrounding racial identity denial can also be associated with a term coined by NPR’s *Code Switch* as, “Racial Imposter Syndrome [which] refers to a feeling where someone of ‘mixed race’ doesn’t believe they have the right to truly claim any of the ‘races’ within them” (Donnella). The use of the word “believe” in the above definition implies that these feelings of not belonging are not reflective of the actual veracity of their claim to any race. I would counter that my experiences have yet to lead me to the same conclusion.

The presence of Racial Impostor Syndrome is clear in my bat mitzvah experience, where I was faced with the rejection of an identity I had previously been assigned by an external source. For years, when classmates proclaimed me a light skinned African American, I simply accepted the perception and moved on. My personal definition of my own race was, and remains, convoluted, so I was not deeply bothered that others attempted to label me. I noted that the Black demographic was most likely to label me as Black, so, after years of reinforcement, the message I received was black people perceive me as light skinned. When that notion of others’ perceptions of me was shattered, I felt the fear on which Racial Impostor Syndrome is founded: the fear of being discovered as a fraud.

The particularly jarring aspect is that in this instance it was true to some degree. I am not African American, I am Jamaican. The dividing line between the two groups is ethnic as opposed to racial, with ethnic pertaining to language and culture while race is a combination of physical appearance and aggregate behavior (Bryce). I still do not know if my claim to my Jamaican heritage is more racial or cultural due to growing up isolated from both communities. The colloquially ill-defined line between the two has been a contributing factor to my confusion. Educated reflection can illuminate my Black identity but compounding Racial Impostor Syndrome and identity denial can cloud understanding of past experiences. However, I do know that I experience a large degree of privilege which separates me from the unified racial struggle faced by darker members of these two groups.

I grew up in a predominantly white area with no
Jamaican community and a community of people of color (POC) which was dominated by the African American demographic; therefore, if you were a POC, you were probably African American. These were the circumstances under which I matured to the age that I learned about the concepts of race and ethnicity. It follows that without anyone explicitly explaining to me what I was the way I identified myself was unclear. All I knew was that I stood out because I looked different. My existence provoked questions. Eve Willadsen-Jensen and Tiffany Ito provide context for this lack of clarity in a study comparing the responses to racially ambiguous faces in conjunction with Black or white faces. They found that, “a contrast effect was observed, with racially ambiguous faces perceived as more prototypical of Blacks and eliciting more negative implicit evaluative associations when viewed within a context of White faces” (Willadsen-Jensen & Ito). My sense of not blending into the predominantly white community comes from the observed effect: The more others looked the same the more I stood out. While I never considered myself an African American, I had internalized the idea that I was perceived that way based on the collective status as ‘other’ in a predominantly white community.

As a POC, I was happy to accept the label, but more than that I was using “racial malleability [...] as coping strategy for experiences of identity invalidation” (Newcomb, 39). This phenomenon of racial malleability means presenting and accepting racial labels based on the surrounding circumstances. Since I have spent much of my life being misidentified by others, I have grown tired of justifying my existence and facing the anxiety of identity denial. Instead of fighting the miscategorization, I have fallen into the more passive role characterized by racial malleability. The authors of another paper investigating this phenomenon concluded that, “race is a dynamic and interactive process [that] changes across situations, time, and depending on a number of top-down factors (e.g., expectations, stereotypes, and cultural norms)” (Pauker et al. 2). I feel that this accurately describes my personal relationship with race. The way that I present, or the group with which I feel the most closely identified, changes constantly based on surrounding circumstances. Defining a multiracial identity can be a very confusing and turbid path to navigate, but for me it has been the inevitable result of being simultaneously everything and nothing.

Bibliography


Over Our Heads: The Hidden World of Bird Communication

Sophie Cox
Writing 101: Primate Play & Growing Up
Instructor: Kerry Ossi-Lupo

At home in South Carolina, I spend a lot of time listening to birds, watching them, and even, I'd like to think, communicating with them. For the past two years, I've been hand-feeding a pair of Carolina wrens in our yard. My relationship with the male is on-again-off-again, but the female is comically brazen. She corners me when I go outside. She lands on me when I'm talking on the phone or standing on our porch. Sometimes she even perches on a windowsill and stares at me until I step outside with a handful of mealworms. Interactions like that leave me with the uncanny impression that she's communicating with me, that she's anticipating and even manipulating my actions.

Birdsong is so commonplace that it can seem like background noise. Their songs and calls are easily heard everywhere from forests to beaches to city sidewalks. But if you pay attention, you can witness the rich world of bird communication. On a rainy morning in May, I walked into a dark forest shortly after 6 A.M. and sat down under the drippy canopy. I was eagerly awaiting the dawn chorus, an eruption of birdsong that fills the air every day around first light. One of the first performers to under the drippy canopy. I was eagerly awaiting the dawn chorus, an eruption of birdsong that fills the air every day around first light. One of the first performers to

Sophie Cox
I've wanted to study the natural world for as long as I can remember. For years I assumed research in ecology or a related field would be my dream job, but when I started college, I was starting to question that. I never liked writing lab reports or reading scientific journal articles, though I loved science articles targeted at a more general audience. I wanted the sort of science that had drawn me to science so long ago—flipping over stones to find frogs and worms underneath, talking to people who loved wildlife and hearing their enthusiasm in every syllable, and reading books and articles meant to inspire curiosity, not kill it. I was tired of scientific jargon and dense, formulaic writing that I had to read three times to understand, and I was starting to think scientific research might not be the right path for me. Then I took "Writing 101: Primate Play and Growing Up" with Dr. Ossi-Lupo. We read a lot of scientific journal articles, APA-formatted and all. Yes, a lot of them were tedious and mind-numbing. But some of them were very interesting. Before taking that course, I had taken science classes and English classes, but I'd never taken a class specifically designed to include both writing and science the way this one did. I'd always loved both subjects, but in high school at least, I usually dreaded assignments that incorporated both—lab reports in science classes or research papers in English classes. Writing 101 took the best of both worlds. Our class read everything from peer-reviewed scientific papers to news articles written for the general public. We debated the pros and cons of storytelling and anthropomorphism in science writing and of doing research in the field instead of just in controlled laboratory settings. We also wrote our own research papers—first as a group project written in more traditional scientific language, then as an individual project designed to appeal to a non-scientific audience. That was the assignment I submitted to Deliberations. It gave me a chance to take a subject I cared deeply about and do my best to make it interesting to people who don't spend their free time meandering through the woods at dawn with binoculars in hand. Throughout the semester, I was also writing articles for the Duke Research Blog. Writing for a science blog and taking "Primate Play and Growing Up" introduced me to the world of science writing, particularly science communication targeted at readers who may not have a background in science. At this point, I don't know what I'll be doing in ten years, but I've realized that I don't just want to study nature. I want to do my best to make others care about it, too. Scientific issues don't just affect scientists. Covid-19 is a stark example of that. Climate change is another. Science isn't confined to laboratories and research papers. To solve some of our world's most pressing issues, we need to make scientific knowledge accessible to everyone.

I want to thank everyone who helped me with the writing and editing process. I especially want to thank Dr. Sheryl Emch for all her help with editing and Dr. Kerry Ossi-Lupo, both for her thoughtful feedback during the editing process and for teaching "Writing 101: Primate Play and Growing Up."
the raindrops and the gurgling stream nearby. As the dark woods slowly lightened, the eruption of birdsong reached a crescendo. Even familiar voices became harder to identify as their songs overlapped with countless others, becoming a flood of sound, a cacophony of music.

We may hear birdsong as music - the meaning going over our heads, so to speak - but what do birds hear? What emotions and information do all those squawks and warbles and trills and chirps convey? Researchers are working to decode them. According to Irene Pepperberg, who has studied bird communication and cognition extensively, “In the early 1960s... the term ‘avian cognition’ was considered an oxymoron.” Birds have not generally been associated with intelligence, but as Erich Jarvis, Duke University Medical Center neurobiologist, explains in ScienceDaily, “We have to get rid of the idea that mammals—and humans in particular—are the pinnacle of evolution.” In humans, our capacity for language is one trait that demonstrates our intellect as a species. Language allows us to discuss every aspect of our world, invent stories about things that don’t even exist, and pass on knowledge to future generations. Birds might not discuss the possibility of alien life or write instruction manuals, but they’re smarter and more expressive than many of us realize.

Research on bird cognition and communication has traditionally taken a backseat to studies on supposedly “smarter” animals, but that’s starting to change. Scientists are discovering that complex abilities like singing, migrating, and nest-building that might once have been attributed solely to instinct can also involve learning. For instance, the process by which young birds learn to vocalize can vary between species but often involves both instinct and learning.

This doesn’t surprise me. On one memorable occasion, when I was sitting on my back steps early in the morning, just a few feet from a recently fledged young wren, he began to sing. It was quieter than the ringing “Tea kettle tea kettle tea kettle!” song that I heard so often from his dad. It seemed almost tentative, and I had the distinct impression that he was practicing.

Birds are well known for their songs, but what can that tell us about their minds?

Bird vocalizations can vary widely, even within species. For example, Carolina wrens produce many different vocalizations. Two terms often used to describe bird sounds are “songs” and “calls.” Songs are generally more complex, often used to defend territory and attract mates, and may require more active learning by young birds than calls do. In many species, only males sing, though scientists are discovering more and more examples of female songs. Calls, meanwhile, are usually shorter and simpler, but that doesn't mean they aren't used for communication. Birds may use several types of calls for different purposes, such as when begging for food from their parents or to communicate in flight. Alarm calls are another common type of call. Some birds, including Siberian jays, chickens, and black-capped chickadees, alter their alarm calls to convey information about the type of predator and the intensity of the threat. And while birds are closely associated with sound, some birds also use visual cues. Australian magpies, for example, will “point” to a predator to alert other flock-mates to its presence.

Scientists have even found evidence of heterospecific communication, or communication between different species. Some birds, including Siberian jays, chickens, and black-capped chickadees, alter their alarm calls to convey information about the type of predator and the intensity of the threat. And while birds are closely associated with sound, some birds also use visual cues. Australian magpies, for example, will “point” to a predator to alert other flock-mates to its presence.

In my own experience with cross-species communication, it often seems like the wrens are training the humans more than we're training them. When I hear the purring-chittering call I associate so closely with the female’s advances, I scan my Behaviors like nest-building, song acquisition, and migration can be influenced by both instinct and active learning. Pictured here is a hummingbird nest. “Friday’s Hummingbird Nest: Feeding Time” by Mike’s Birds is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0
surroundings, instantly alert. When my mom hears the begging calls made by young, recently fledged wrens, she promptly goes outside and sits patiently on the steps while the family of wrens gathers around her. At times our interactions almost feel like conversations. If I tap on the glass, will you come feed me? If I show you the bag of mealworms before I open the door, will you wait there long enough for me to put my shoes on? Other times, though, our interspecies communication falls short. When a wren lands on my mealworm-less hand and looks at me expectantly, how do I explain that I don’t have any with me? When the female wren sneaks inside and takes a tour of my house, how do I get her to leave? And what about the wrens? What’s going on behind those stunning amber eyes when those little birds fly toward me instead of away, when they wrap their toes around my fingers and brush their feathers against my skin, when they willingly and literally place their lives in my hands?

In moments like these, I can’t help wondering what they’re thinking, feeling, saying.

Some scientists would warn me against this sort of thinking. They would argue that anthropomorphism, or ascribing human characteristics to other animals, can make research less objective. However, acknowledging that we are not the only species with minds of our own can also lead to new insights and discoveries. From conveying complex information about predators to using tools, birds engage in many behaviors that suggest they may not be “bird brains” after all.

Studying birds and other animals through the lens of communication and cognition encourages us to reevaluate certain long-standing assumptions. According to Gisela Kaplan, an ethologist (or animal behaviorist) who focuses on birds and primates, “small brains may not mean small cognitive capacity.” Kaplan believes the discovery of echolocation was an important step toward the growing awareness of other animals’ worlds. As she explains in a detailed review article on animal communication, “the discovery clearly indicated that humans cannot… see, hear, feel, or touch everything other species might be able to perceive.” This human-centered view of science and the world at large could be clouding our sight more than we realize. As Robin Kimmerer tells us in “Learning the Grammar of Animacy,” a chapter in her book Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants,

*We American people are reluctant to learn a foreign language of our own species, let alone another species. But imagine the possibilities. Imagine the access we would have to different perspectives, the things we might see through other eyes, the wisdom that surrounds us. We don’t have to figure everything out by ourselves: there are intelligences other than our own, teachers all around us. Imagine how much less lonely the world would be.*

Sometimes, new discoveries and ideas can leave us with more questions than answers, but that is the nature of science. While anthropomorphizing animals and trying to read their minds can’t always give us the answers, it might help us start to ask the right questions. As for the wrens at my house, I’ll always wonder what’s going on behind those beautiful, amber eyes. And maybe, when their eyes meet mine, I’m not
the only one left with questions. Maybe instead of just asking, What are they thinking? I should also be wondering, What do they think I'm thinking? I might never entirely understand their language, but that doesn't mean I can't listen.

Next time you step outside, I hope you'll open your eyes and ears a little wider. You never know who might be watching or what sorts of conversations they might be having right above our heads.

Citations


First-Year Writing at Duke
Writing 101, Duke’s one-semester, first-year course in academic writing, is the only course taken by all Duke undergraduates and offers a seminar environment with no more than 15 students per section. Writing 101 faculty have doctorates in a variety of disciplines—including biology, English, history, literature, anthropology, ecology, and philosophy—and have expertise in the teaching of writing. From gothic literature to religious mysticism, militia movements to bioethics, students have a rich array of courses from which to choose. While specific reading and writing projects vary, students in all sections learn how to engage with the work of others, articulate a position, situate writing for specific audiences, and transfer writing knowledge into situations beyond Writing 101. All sections offer students practice in researching, workshopping, revising, and editing.

Deliberations Online
Visit our online Deliberations site at http://twp.duke.edu/deliberations

The Thompson Writing Program (TWP)
Writing and research are the cornerstones of the Duke undergraduate curriculum. The TWP helps students advance as writers from their first through senior years, and supports faculty who teach writing in a wide range of courses across the curriculum. We do so in three main ways:

- Writing 101: Academic Writing, an intense introduction to critical thinking and writing;
- Writing in the Disciplines (WID), writing-designated courses designed and taught by faculty across all departments; and
- TWP Writing Studio, which offers undergraduate and graduate students an opportunity to meet with trained writing tutors to discuss works-in-progress.

For more information about the TWP, please visit our website at http://twp.duke.edu/
Colophon
The text of Deliberations is composed in Minion Pro with the display set in Myriad Pro and Helvetica. All photos and images not credited were purchased from gettyimages.com. All student photos were submitted by the students. We would like to thank Denise Sharpe, who is primarily responsible for the layout and graphic character of Deliberations.

Acknowledgments
Thanks to Denise Comer, Ph.D., Director of the Thompson Writing Program, and Dean of Academic Affairs of Trinity College, for their continuing support of this publication. Appreciation also goes to this year’s Editorial Board, the Thompson Writing Program Staff, the Duke University Libraries, and the students, and faculty of First-Year Writing who provided such a diverse and interesting set of essay submissions this year – and every year. Special thanks to the TWP Writing Studio tutors and Director Eliana Schonberg, who immeasurably enhance the quality of projects produced in First-Year Writing courses. Finally, thanks to Van Hillard and Elizabeth Kiss who launched Deliberations in 2000.

Editorial correspondence should be addressed to:

Deliberations
Thompson Writing Program
Box 90025
Duke University
Durham, NC 27708-0025
writingprogram@duke.edu
THE END