Editors’ Note

The Undergraduate Journal of Humanistic Studies is pleased to publish our fourteenth issue, presenting two papers that demonstrate the power of field research and place-based study. The following papers consider the construction of identities under varying conditions in a multitude of ways, and cover a broad range of geographical experiences; from creating conceptions of fate in modernizing China to identities of place in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In “Modernity as a Moral Experience: Articulation of Mingyun in a Chinese Country,” Yicun Min explores how people articulate the notion of mingyun (fate) in a rapidly urbanizing and modernizing China, focusing on the experiences of people from Jinzhai County in Anhui Province. Drawing information from semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the study tries to delineate the semantic web woven around the notion of fate: what are the determinants of fate in people’s eyes? What is the moral condition this notion is responding to, and how? Min emphasizes one theme especially: wealth. In reform-era China, wealth has become increasingly seminal to ‘the good life.’ However, the uncontrollable aspects of wealth have posed a moral challenge to his interlocutors. In response to this challenge, they use the notion of fate both to explicate the existing pattern of wealth distribution in society and to affirm the significance of self-determination on the direction of one’s life course.

In “Reflections in the Water: Placing Salt Lake Valley’s Warm Springs in History,” Katie Rose Kimball constructs a place-based history of Warm Springs in northern Salt Lake City from around 1850 to 1950. By carefully considering the overlapping influence of colonialism, religion, industrialization, and changing conceptions of health, she shows how a location’s history can only be done justice with a deep understanding of how different populations have competed to leave a particular story on the landscape.

We appreciate all the submissions we received in anticipation of this issue and the work of our editorial board. We are also especially grateful for the ongoing guidance and support of Professor Jessica Keating, our faculty advisor, in the creation of this issue. Additionally, this publication would not be possible without the expertise and patience of the Digital Humanities Team, who consistently take a collection of papers and turn it into the journal we bring you today. On behalf of our entire team, we hope you enjoy reading the Spring 2023 issue of the Undergraduate Journal of Humanistic Studies.

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