Editors' Note

It is our pleasure to present the eighteenth issue of the *Undergraduate Journal of Humanistic Studies*. While a primary goal of the *UJHS* is to highlight work from diverse areas of study, we as editors are also interested in the qualities that might connect the papers we select. Accordingly, we see this issue not just as a collection of individual pieces, but as a snapshot of recent undergraduate work. The five papers selected for this issue challenge dominant perspectives in their respective areas of study, and traverse four different continents and disciplines. Notably, several featured papers center cultural artifacts—from adaptations of classic American hymns, to post-partition Irish art—in their research, and all pay close attention to the ways in which individuals engage with the spaces—physical and cultural—that they inhabit. The questions our authors ask, the perspectives they bring, and the themes that resonated most strongly with us as editors together offer a window into the direction of future scholarship in these authors' fields.

In "Exit Through the National Gift Shop: The Not so Black and White Issue of the Black Neighborhood Museum Movement, 'New Integration,' and the Paradoxes of the National African American History and Culture Museum," James Danziger considers the "impossible" task undertaken by the Smithsonian's NMAAHC. Situating the museum within both the legacy of the Black neighborhood museum movement and its public-facing location on the National Mall, Danziger argues that the process of founding a national African American museum introduces a paradox: in order to make Black history more visible and palatable within White America, the NMAAHC must prioritize narratives of "healing and unification" over confronting historical violence. Ultimately, Danziger's detailed account of the NMAAHC's evolution—from its origins in curatorially separatist early Black neighborhood museums, through its later efforts to secure federal funding and recognition, to the influence of "new integration" on its final design—exposes the "limits, compromises, and ongoing tensions in representing a community's truth."

Taking readers to coastal Chile, Kerin Debany's work in "Non-Migration and Contamination: Understanding Why People Are Not Migrating From the Quintero-Puchuncaví Sacrifice Zone" investigates the port town of Quintero and neighboring Puchuncaví, one of the most polluted regions in all of Latin America. Highlighting the "mobility bias" of existing literature on environment-related migration, Debany instead interrogates why residents of this "Sacrifice Zone"—as the United Nations characterizes it—have largely refused to leave despite severe environmental degradation and declining quality of life. Her analysis incorporates resident interviews, newspaper articles, and reports from both NGOs and the Chilean government as a means of illustrating the myriad reasons for Quintero-Puchuncaví residents' voluntary "non-migration," including employment insecurity, attachment to place, and a desire for retribution against polluting corporations. She then provides a review of Chile's constitutional and international duties vis-à-vis the environment, convincingly arguing that the Chilean state is indeed obligated "to address the pollution in Quintero-Puchuncaví [and] tread a path of more sustainable economic development." Concluding with an overview of Chilean government reports and activist perspectives, Debany ends with her own suggestions for how Chile could feasibly make right on its obligations to Quintero-Puchuncaví and bring an end to the region's story of sacrifice and degradation.

Continuing to problematize mobility—in this case across the colonial-era Congo river—is "Across the Malebo Pool: Imperial Borders, African Mobility, and Urban Life between Léopoldville and Brazzaville," in which Anya Nyman explores the ways in which Africans in the twin capitals of Léopoldville (modern Kinshasa) and Brazzaville "challenged, subverted, and refused successive state attempts to control their mobility, economic activity, and dynamic cultural lives." Resisting narratives that center state leaders or characterize Congolese history as solely one of traumatic rupture, Nyman highlights the cultural dynamism and economic exchange that flourished through cross-border interactions despite French and Belgian attempts to limit African mobility. She presents the Malebo Pool—the navigable, lake-like segment of the Congo River that separates the two cities—as a site of refusal and resistance for the region's inhabitants, centering stories of trans-Pool mobil-

ity in the face of severe racialization and policing on the part of colonial authorities. Ultimately, Nyman's work provides a compelling case for scrutinizing "any singular narrative about the social and cultural lives of people across the Malebo Pool and the cities on its shores."

In "From Hymn to Americana (and back again): The Productive Practice of 'Amazing Grace,' " Alek Pochan takes up three 1970s revivals of John Newtons "Amazing Grace." Pochan considers these recordings alongside recent scholarship on Christian-folk-art-turned-Americana, challenging arguments that such movements into popular space necessarily entail secularization or reinforce a "White Protestant hegemony." Pochan instead proposes a less neat, more experiential understanding of the transition from hymn into song. He suggests that folk revivals of Amazing Grace notably allow performers and listeners alike to engage with "legible" Christian themes outside of an institutional context; thus, Pochan argues, these performances enable both parties to productively scrutinize the religious versus the secular in America. Pochan's work serves as a pertinent reminder that in the American cultural milieu—where it is all too easy to exploit desire for familiarity—the scholar's most important job is to study people's experiences of sensory authenticity with precision and critical empathy.

Finally, readers of Jasper Wilcox's "A History of Loss: Colonial Imaginings and Reimaginings of Jack Butler Yeats' *Morning After Rain* and *The Liffey Swim*" will encounter similar questions of how works of art are continuously reinterpreted across different contexts. Analyzing two works of the Irish painter Jack B. Yeats (1871-1957)—one housed in the National Gallery of Ireland, the other in London's Tate Modern—Wilcox interrogates the fluid characterizations of Yeats' work as "Irish" or "British." He argues that Yeats' body of work—once seen as a "radical, nationalist, and deeply political depiction of post-war Ireland"—is now imagined as a "facile and defanged representation of everyday subjects." This, he notes, is inextricably linked to both the physical spaces these works occupy, and the nation-building projects of the United Kingdom and Ireland alike. Echoing Edward Said's calls for a postcolonial interpretation of Irish history and identity, Wilcox concludes with an appeal for "a history that resists the crushing weight of the dominant cultures postcolonial vision." Such a history is advanced, even if only in part, by Wilcox's analysis of the metaphorical lives lived by Yeats' works.

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