

Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up this inaugural volume of *Inter-Text: An Undergraduate Journal for Social Sciences & Humanities*. The following pages mark this journal's exciting journey from a passing idea to a publication a full year later. Although you are joining us here at the end of the production process, this first issue also celebrates the beginning of what we hope will crystalize into a lasting campus endeavor, whereby assumptions are tested and knowledge is shared.

Our aim in publishing *Inter-Text* is to rescue fascinating arguments from the depths of the classrooms in which they originate, be they in the basement of Buchanan or on the fifth floor of Young Hall. Too often, we confine learning to the classroom, where only course members participate in the learning process. Thus, ideas steeled in discussions seldom transcend the classroom and important conversations more often than not die silently upon the submission of a paper. Because we want these conversations to continue, it is our hope that *Inter-Text* will serve as a vehicle to drive them onwards.

Out of over forty submissions, we have chosen the most compelling twelve. We were thoroughly impressed by the level of interest that this first issue sparked and by the high quality of the submissions, which testify better than this first issue ever could to the intellectual prowess of Lake Forest College students. Your appetite for rigor signaled to us that we were doing something meaningful, and we would hence like to thank everyone who fearlessly offered their work for scrutiny and reciprocate with words of encouragement. We are proponents of learning and improvement rather than perfection and stagnation, and we would be pleased if you, the reader, considered submitting your work to our future issues. It is, after all, the support we received from you that reinforced our commitment to the *Inter-Text* mission statement. On this note, it would only be fair to clarify our selection process.

It was no easy task, but we selected the enclosed pieces for publication through a rigorous blind peer review, where each submission was evaluated by at least three independent editors. We devised a weighted grading rubric and scored each submission based

on its clarity of argument, use of evidence, structure, and language and grammar. Each submission was hotly discussed by all the editors, at times resembling trench warfare. But we would have it no other way, as this was an invaluable learning process for everyone involved. The text you now hold in your hands is the culmination of difficult choices, collaboration with authors, and many meetings and rewrites. Here, we deliberately celebrate the spirit of intertextual dialogue and extend it to you, the curious reader.

Our selection sails across history, religion, education, philosophy, sociology and anthropology, communications, women's and gender studies, politics, and art history. Even across so many disciplines, a cohesive theme of identity still emerged organically from among the accepted papers.

The first piece in our collection is Ayana Bankston's "Seeking Representation," which explores how students at Lake Forest College in the 1960s campaigned to bring more Black faculty to our campus, laying bare two of our main themes: struggles over education and the significance of identity. In line with focus on education, Sarah Coffman's quantitative study examines the impact of parental involvement on student achievement in a Chicago high school.

From students to political leaders, Hannah Gurholt offers a philosophical critique of Betsy DeVos, the current Secretary of Education, as a "modern-day Lysias." Expanding the issue's philosophical reach, Casey Duel provides a Hegelian critique of Kantian ideals of international law, thus questioning the possibilities of perpetual peace amidst the fragmented global order. In contrast, Rhyan Shanker suggests China as an optimistic example of international environmental politics, placing it at a crossroad of development.

Moving back into the sixteenth century, Ani Karagianis explores the epidemiological consequences of European colonization of the Americas in her essay, "Dying to Meet You." Similarly, Benton Ludgin analyzes the effects of disease on culture in "The Pope, the Plague, and Popular Religion," which discusses the existential and religious crisis caused by the Plague.

Broadening the temporal scope of the pre-modern search for identity in a religious world, Tubanji Walubita challenges our modern

assumptions about individualism. Continuing the theme of religious identity, in “Discrediting the ‘Other,’” Zoe Walts looks at how interreligious strife shapes an understanding of the self.

Gender is also an important topic in the discussion of identity. Through Mary Cassatt’s painting, “The Child’s Bath,” Eliska Mrackova affirms the experience of nineteenth-century women in everyday domesticity. In a similar vein, Jennifer Cerer conducted an ethnographic study in which she interviewed Lake Forest College students about the connection between gender identity and perceptions of adulthood.

Our final piece is “Environmental Justice and the Racism that Spawned a Movement,” by Margaret Lenkart. Her essay returns to issues of race and identity through the lens of environmental sustainability.

At the end of this selection of student essays, you will also find three feature articles contributed by our editors.

While it was not our intention to have a themed issue, this discovery reinforces the mission of *Inter-Text*, which is to pave connections across the humanities and social sciences at Lake Forest College. With this in mind, we ask that you question and consider what identity entails as you read on.

Thank you for your interest in our effort. We hope that you enjoy reading this journal as much as we enjoyed curating it.

Sincerely,

The Editors