

TRANSACTIONS
of the
Society of Fellows
of Dyson College



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The editor and faculty board of the Society of Fellows welcome comments on articles that have appeared in Transactions of the Society of Fellows of Dyson College.

DYSON COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

The Dyson College of Arts and Sciences offers a robust and innovative liberal arts education distinguished by its emphasis on faculty mentoring, experiential learning, and small classes. Through instruction in over fifty majors and minors across the disciplines of the arts and sciences, Dyson College prepares its students for graduate and professional schools, and the twenty-first century workforce. Students develop their potential for achievement through both academic and co-curricular programs and activities, and outstanding among these is the Society of Fellows of Dyson College.

SOCIETY OF FELLOWS OF DYSON COLLEGE

HISTORY

The Society of Fellows began in the fall of 1980 with a weekend seminar devoted to questions in applied ethics. The first class of members inducted at the formal inauguration of the society in December 1981 was named after distinguished philosopher and Pace faculty member William Barrett. Since then, a new class is inducted annually and named after a fellow who has made a significant contribution to the ideals of the Society of Fellows. To date, more than 700 students, faculty, and alumni hold the distinction of being a fellow, and the Society of Fellows has become the premier honors organization in Dyson College.

FOUNDING CHARTER

Charles H. Dyson, Edward J. Mortola, Joseph E. Houle, M. Teresa Brady, R.D.C, John H. Buchsbaum, Louis V. Quintas

Being bound by ties of friendship and dedication to the ideals of liberal education, do hereby constitute themselves and their successors, forever, as fellows of the Dyson College with the duty of promoting undergraduate scholarship among the members of said college and admitting into its society and fellowship only those students, faculty, alumni, staff and friends of the Dyson College who advance in a noteworthy and exemplary fashion the purposes of the society as expressed in its constitution.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to students, faculty, and alumni of Dyson College who meet eligibility requirements and contribute to the goals of the Society of Fellows.

Enrolled students of Pace University who demonstrate excellence in scholarship or in artistic creativity will be invited to become fellows if they meet the following criteria:

1. Minimum 3.3 QPA (cumulative quality point average); exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. Participation in at least two Society of Fellows-sponsored events; one of these events must be presentation of research or artistic projects at the annual meeting.
3. Submission of an outstanding signature work of scholarship or creative expression; to fulfill this requirement, the candidate may use a full-length paper or artistic project submitted for the annual meeting.
4. Letter of recommendation from a faculty member attesting in detail to the quality of the academic work and achievements that are being submitted for the candidate's advancement to fellow.
5. Attendance at the initiation ceremony held annually during the spring semester.

All completed applications meeting eligibility requirements will be reviewed and voted on by the Faculty Executive Board of the Society of Fellows of Dyson College.

Faculty qualify to become fellows when they serve two or more times as mentors of research papers or artistic projects presented at the annual meeting. Faculty also are recognized for sponsoring student works accepted for publication in Transactions, and for serving as weekend seminar leaders. Faculty and alumni of Dyson College who share and further the aims of the society in other outstanding ways also may become fellows.

ACTIVITIES

The annual signature activities of the fellows are the weekend seminar, the annual meeting, and the initiation ceremony. The weekend seminar provides opportunities for students, faculty, and alumni to discuss issues of contemporary significance under the leadership of teacher-scholars. The annual meeting is a one-day student conference where undergraduate students present their research or artistic projects completed under the supervision of faculty mentors. The event also is open to graduate students, several of whom annually apply to participate. At the initiation ceremony, qualified applicants are recognized as fulfilling the eligibility criteria and are inducted as fellows. Transactions of the Society of Fellows of Dyson College is the official journal of the society. Peer-reviewed by Dyson faculty, the journal publishes the work of Pace University undergraduate students completed under the sponsorship of faculty, who often are fellows.

GOVERNANCE

A faculty executive board that reports to the Dyson College dean governs the Society of Fellows of Dyson College. The board facilitates the achievement of the society's goals by planning activities, organizing seminars, and overseeing special recognitions and awards.

INFORMATION FOR TRANSACTIONS CONTRIBUTORS

Papers published in Transactions are the work of Pace University undergraduate students under the sponsorship of Dyson College faculty members or faculty fellows of the society. Student submissions originate as faculty-sponsored papers or artistic projects that have been presented at an annual meeting of the society. Recent alumni of Dyson College also may submit a paper or a revision of a paper that was presented at an annual meeting. The call for proposals for submission to Transactions is announced in the spring at the annual meeting. Papers or correspondence may be submitted at that time to the editor. Each submission will be refereed and considered for inclusion by the editor and associate editors. Papers must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document using 12-point font and double-spaced, with a maximum length of twenty pages. The citation style of a submission's discipline must be followed with respect to footnotes, endnotes, and works cited. For general guidance on the preparation of submissions, consult the Society of Fellows pages on the Pace website.

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FROM THE EDITOR

The past year marked yet another productive period for students and faculty in the Society of Fellows. The Annual Meeting, held on the New York City campus in February 2023, and the Weekend Seminar that took place off-campus in Connecticut in October 2023, spurred Pace students to engage in more of their best research and creative endeavors, all made possible by the mentorship of Dyson faculty and fellows, who are passionate sponsors of undergraduate research. This issue of Transactions features exemplary work presented at both events, including a noteworthy piece that was created not *for* but *during* the Weekend Seminar, which will be elaborated on below.

The 42nd Annual Meeting of the Society of Fellows of Dyson College kicked off with a morning plenary panel, showcasing the work of four students from programs as far afield as English Language and Literature, Biology, Philosophy, and Psychology. These students delivered papers on a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from original poetry evoked by life in Harlem to the ethics of superheroes, the ecology of invasive and native plants in the Hudson River, and the strength of cross-party relationships between Democrats and Republicans. Guided by the faculty moderator from Economics, the discussion that featured thoughtful questions from the audience challenged us to think harder about critical issues that concern our civilization and the planet.

Following the plenary session, science students presented their research posters, and art students exhibited their creative works, providing a rich display and ample opportunity for other students, faculty, family, and friends to hear about bacteria, antioxidants, and co. All this new knowledge was based on hours and hours that students had spent in the lab working with tea samples, pollen samples, supplement samples, water samples, and more. In one corner, a student was unraveling the mysteries of mathematics, while in another corner, another student was exhibiting original photos of bodies at work.

This session was followed by something new we tried over lunch: roundtable discussions hosted by faculty covering topics from how to become a fellow to undergraduate research opportunities at Pace, prestigious awards and graduate fellowships, public scholarship & community-based knowledge, and lastly, one designed also to tease us, how to make a lot of money with economics or business economics as your major. There was talk *at* the lunch tables but also *about* them, afterwards, and I agree, interdisciplinary experiments can and should provoke us to communicate across disciplines even if some conversations don't go as expected.

This program chair also had fun mixing and matching different fields for the concurrent afternoon panels that were moderated by faculty, for example, art *and* social science, history *and* psychology, economics *and* public administration, and, as in a double-double, film and screen studies *and* peace and justice studies. The juxtaposition of seemingly disparate topics generated intrigue and drew larger crowds. In one such panel, the faculty moderator from philosophy initially puzzled over the presence of student panelists in the sciences: How could papers on the Cretaceous terrestrial ecosystem be scheduled alongside papers on Spinoza and Kant? Observing that this science-and-philosophy panel drew one of the largest crowds that day, however, just may have sparked the idea for the theme of the fall seminar later in the year.

The awards ceremony provided a joyful conclusion to the student conference as we celebrated the achievements of the plenary speakers, the winners of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary awards; the latter being a new category recommended by the faculty board this year to emphasize our interdisciplinary work. One award deserves special mention because it was embarrassing to this program chair to have neglected to call the student's name for receiving their award that day. Luckily, we were able to recognize the student at the initiation ceremony a few weeks later, and we are especially pleased that the student's article also appears in this issue of Transactions.

The Weekend Seminar, themed "Indigeneity and Invasiveness in a Multispecies World," was co-led by faculty in Biology and Philosophy. Over three days, participants engaged in discussions bridging the humanities and the sciences. We came to realize that the boundaries between the disciplines that define modern universities did not exist in ancient philosophy when Aristotle wrote on physics *and* metaphysics, biology *and* ethics, animals *and* society. Nowadays, it can be difficult to understand or even plain know what is going on in other fields because we are being driven to specialize so much. We have to make an effort to share our research with each other. Some of the time, we actually hear each other and can see and appreciate other viewpoints, but other times, we talk past each other, and not everyone even notices, and so we feel there is more work that needs to be done to communicate effectively.

The seminar included several more faculty who gave guest talks inside (while it rained) and nature walks outside (while it still rained), a field lab that literally popped out of a suitcase, a family of toads that had to be rescued and set free in nature, as well as a collaborative theater workshop that yielded another, unexpectedly interdisciplinary piece, a play that was co-written with all the seminar participants. Our playwright-in-residence, a Dyson faculty member from Peace and Justice Studies, who compiled the play, called it "Indigeneity and Invasiveness in a Multispecies World," in honor of the seminar theme. It features

material from interviews conducted with students, faculty, and alumni from across the different majors and departments, and as such was another exercise in interdisciplinarity that weekend. We are pleased that the present volume of Transactions contains this collaborative play written in the fall alongside the usual selection of papers presented during the student conference that took place in the spring. Together, all these works offer a glimpse of the exciting research and writing (and performing) that undergraduate students have engaged in across the fine arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences at Pace in the past year.

Special thanks are due to the faculty, who diligently reviewed proposals and papers submitted to the Annual Meeting and Transactions. We also extend our gratitude to the faculty mentors who dedicated considerable time to guiding students through their research projects as well as serving in various roles, including poster judges, panel moderators, roundtable discussants, weekend leaders, guest speakers, bus chaperones, generous donors, etc. We appreciate the enduring support of Dean Tresmaine Grimes and Associate Dean Charlotte Becket. Thanks are also due to Amanda Ghysel (now Delfino), our capable staff assistant, for her assistance in organizing the events last spring. We missed her dearly in the fall, when she had to take a break to write her master's thesis, but we are glad to know that she will be back with us next spring. As we rush this editorial to print, we eagerly anticipate distributing fresh copies of Transactions at the upcoming Annual Meeting that will take place in less than three months. We look forward to seeing you there and hearing about your new research and creative projects!

Judi Pajo, Ph.D.

December 2023

Folklore From Harlem

By **Felicity Flores**

Sponsored by **Eugene Richie, Ph.D.**
English Language and Literature, New York

*My mother raised me on Celia Cruz, Erykah Badu, and Ella Fitzgerald.
This is an ode to Holiday.*

BILLIE HOLIDAY SINGS A CHURCH HYMN

a former friend told me i was a writer because i liked playing god
jesus forgive me, but control over the narrative
is a power i couldn't deny
i didn't need a song to tell me i never had a prayer
i knew this black body and spanish tongue of mine wasn't deemed holy

i didn't need a song to tell me i never had a prayer
i knew this black body and spanish tongue of mine wasn't deemed holy
Holiday, do you believe in forgiveness?
do you offer forgiveness?
watch them carry the cross
kneel down at the altar
beg for your communion, these crumbs of affection
when they love black woman in church hymns
and never after mass

This is a preview of select pages only.

Enclosed Ambiguities in Jane Austen's *Emma*

By **Cailyn Mickelsen**

Sponsored by **Sid Ray, Ph.D.**

English Language and Literature, New York

In *Cruising Utopia* (2009), José Esteban Muñoz theorizes a radical hope for a queer utopia, casting queerness as “the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality” (Muñoz 1). Throughout the text, Muñoz reexamines artistic and literary projects from the past in order to reach towards this queer future, enacting “a critical deployment of the past for the purpose of engaging the present and imagining the future,” or, put more simply, utilizing “a backward glance that enacts a future vision” (Muñoz 116, 4). The reexamination of canonical texts—particularly in the “queering” of these texts—allows for a reframing of history and futurity in the same way. Jane Austen’s work has often functioned as a romanticized ideal of heterosexuality, and, as is the case with many works of the so-called literary canon, this ideal has been utilized to enforce heteronormativity and erase or decenter queerness. Yet, when examined through Muñoz’s theorizing, we see that Austen is less heteronormative romance and more dystopian critique. This paper considers Jane Austen’s *Emma* through Muñoz’s prism—allowing this examination of a highly canonical, overly elegized text to show us a queer future through traces of both heterosexual disorder and queer potentiality. In the novel, Emma Woodhouse acts with a peculiar ambiguity in many of her closest relationships, an ambiguity that works to destabilize the heteronormative Austenian world of popular culture. Within the endogamous¹ society of Highbury, Hartfield functions as a microcosm, wherein relationship boundaries and rules are blurred and rewritten so that each individual can fill the multiple roles required of them. The dysfunctional power dynamic evident in Emma’s relationship with her father, necessitated by the early loss of her mother, dictates many of her other relationships. Through her portrayal of Emma’s ambiguous relationships with her father, Mrs. Weston, Harriet, and Mr. Knightley, Austen demonstrates how the enclosed nature of Hartfield, coupled with the vacancies left by the death of Mrs. Woodhouse, leads to a confusing ambiguity in Emma’s relationships; the lack of clear lines dictating relationship rules and boundaries leads to the repetition of harmful cycles, begets miscommunication and misconduct, and shows the heteronormative structures of Highbury to be isolating and harmful. By critiquing these endogamous, heteronormative kinship structures, the romanticized heterosexuality of Austen’s world is fractured, allowing us to acknowledge the existence of queerness in the past, and pointing towards a queer future.

1 “Endogamy” is used herein to mean “the obligation to marry within an objectively defined group” and the tight-knit, exclusive community that this obligation creates (Levi-Strauss 45).

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Rethinking Kantian Ethics in Light of Contemporary Discussions on Race

By **Kenady Brown**

Sponsored by **Eddis Miller, Ph.D.**

Philosophy and Religious Studies, New York

One of the most well-known and influential Western philosophers is Immanuel Kant, who is praised for famous works such as the *Critique of Pure Reason* or his famous essay, "What is Enlightenment?" These writings firmly support pure rationality as the key to morality, and while one may find in his writings a rational and pure morality, Robert Bernasconi notes that "one also finds within his philosophy expression of a virulent and theoretically based racism at a time when scientific racism was still in its infancy" (Bernasconi 145). This paper argues that Kant's race theory is intimately related to his moral theory and that Kant is only interested in a racially exclusive "universal" morality. I will establish this through an analysis of his racial hierarchy and its relationship to the concepts of personhood, absolute worth, and respect as they appear in Kantianism. Within his racial hierarchy, Kant argued that each race had different levels of moral and rational character, with the white race being the only race possessing full moral and rational character. This moral and rational character defines a person's radical autonomy that allows them to participate in Kantianism, meaning that Kant's writings on a racial hierarchy influenced and were taken into consideration in his moral theory.

While this paper sets out to establish the racial exclusivity of Kantianism, it also explores how to apply Kantianism in today's world. This paper will argue that it is not enough to incorporate all races under a colorblind Kantianism. Instead, it is necessary to reform Kantianism as a race-conscious moral theory that recognizes the social positioning and differences between people. A colorblind Kantianism would not discuss or include race in the theory ultimately removing the nuances race plays in society and the original moral theory. Through discussing Charles W. Mills' concept of "Black Radical Kantianism," this paper argues that Kantianism needs to be rethought to apply to all, arguing that just including people of color in the universality of Kantianism does not work because the original universality of Kantianism was not created with people of color in mind and therefore ignores the differences in moral obligations that race requires. Therefore, the categorical imperative's universality must be rethought to mean different things for both white people and people of color, where white people have a moral obligation to de-center their whiteness, and people of color have a moral obligation to nurture self-respect. Black Radical Kantianism asks people to consider

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A Spatio-Temporal Analysis of Invasive *Trapa Natans* and Native Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Distribution in the Hudson River

By Christopher Rafaniello
Sponsored by Wei Fang, Ph.D.
Biology, New York

Abstract

Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) is a crucial component of the Hudson River estuarine ecosystem, providing habitat and food for fish, macroinvertebrates, and waterfowls. It has been widely assumed that SAV is negatively affected by invasive *Trapa natans* in recent decades, but it is not clear whether this is true and at what spatial and temporal scale this is true. In this study, we analyzed the spatiotemporal changes in vegetation cover of native SAV and invasive *Trapa* in the Hudson River (between Hastings-on-Hudson and Troy) from 1997 to 2018 using publicly available data and partial ground truthing in 2022. We found that the coverage of *Trapa* did increase by 51.23% while that of SAV decreased by 41.27% from 1997 to 2018. However, most SAV loss happened between 2007 and 2014 due to hurricane damage, and this trend appears to be reversing, with a net increase of 119.45% in SAV coverage between 2014 and 2018 and a stagnation in the coverage of *Trapa*. There was no evidence that *Trapa* induced the decline of native SAV. In addition, the dynamics of SAV and *Trapa* were heterogeneous across the Hudson River, suggesting active management efforts on *Trapa* may have varying degrees of success and ecological consequences: Esopus town used mechanic removers to remove the surface biomass of *Trapa*, which facilitated the spread of *Trapa* in recent years (2014 to now). Norrie Point removes its *Trapa* manually every year, which reduced its *Trapa* coverage steadily. Gays Point had a failed attempt to control *Trapa* via opening a canal adjacent to a *Trapa* patch, and its SAV was almost wiped out after the 2011 hurricane season. Tivoli South Bay experienced a sudden *Trapa* invasion during 1997-2002, however, its *Trapa* population stabilized afterward. These results may provide support for effective management of both *Trapa* and SAVs in the Hudson River Estuarine.

Introduction

Wetlands and estuaries, where rivers meet the sea, support a high degree of ecological diversity, including vegetation, invertebrates, fish, and waterfowl (Carrol, 2019). They connect the land and water, and possess incredibly dynamic physical, chemical, and biological processes

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Bitcoin: The Emergence of Global Investment Asset

By **Quang Huy Nguyen**
Sponsored by **Todd Yarbrough, Ph.D.**
Economics, New York

Abstract

This article attempts to answer the following questions: How closely are bitcoin, the US stock market, gold, and the US dollar interconnected in times of global crisis? Moreover, what do the magnitudes and directions of their interaction tell us about their relationship? This research paper examines flight-to-safety behavior triggered by COVID-19 in early 2020. The methodology used weekly return covariance between bitcoin, the stock market, gold, and the USD. Did investors' confidence affect these assets' relationship as investment assets? This paper aims to identify potential patterns and trends between investment assets and discuss these findings' implications for investment strategies. The study controlled for bitcoin volatility (GARCH (1,1) model), global bitcoin popularity, and short-term US Treasuries. The result suggests that, at a 99% confidence interval, market volatility has a statistically significant impact on the relationships between bitcoin and other assets. Faced with extreme market uncertainty, most investors considered bitcoin a risky investment rather than a safe hideout during market turmoil. Furthermore, to hedge against bitcoin during a negative market shock, gold is a better safe haven for bitcoin than the US dollar. Overall, the analysis provides insight into the benefits and risks of investing in bitcoin and may inform future research on this topic.

1. Introduction

The debate around bitcoin mainly discusses bitcoin as digital money and investment asset. Theoretically, if Bitcoin primarily pays for goods and services, it will compete with fiat currencies. If, on the other hand, it is mainly used as an investment, it will compete with investment assets such as stocks, gold, or currency. The least discussed scenario is when investors no longer have interest in bitcoin, and bitcoin will go into oblivion as investors move to a new speculative asset. Since 2017, discussions revolved around what kind of investment asset bitcoin is – a risky speculative asset or a risk management tool for investors. Market shock in early 2020 offered an opportunity to observe the relationship of bitcoin with gold, the stock market, and the US dollar during a market panic. The findings suggest bitcoin is considered a risky asset rather than a safe haven during market turmoil. An asset's risk characteristic profoundly concerns investors, and bitcoin volatility hinders its viability. Bitcoin's volatility GARCH (1,1) model measures bitcoin's volatility, considering

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Politics, Relationships, and Moral Foundations

By **James Kennedy**

*Sponsored by **Courtney Gosnell, Ph.D.**
Psychology, Westchester*

Abstract

In the United States, the divide between the two major political parties, Democrats and Republicans, has increased. This difference in views between parties makes cross-party relationships between close individuals difficult to maintain. The goal of our study was to explore factors that might explain why people are able to maintain cross-political party close relationships (and why those relationships sometimes dissolve). In particular, we were interested to examine if certain moral foundations predict whether an individual will be more open to cross-political party relationships.

To explore this, we surveyed college students from Pace University regarding their moral foundations and cross-party close relationships. Prior work suggests that more liberal individuals tend to score higher in the Harm/Care foundation as well as the Fairness/Reciprocity foundation compared to In-Group/Loyalty, Authority/Respect, and Purity/Sanctity, whereas more conservative individuals tend to score more equally across all five foundations. In our data, we found that Republican individuals are more likely to display conservative foundations. These conservative foundations are associated with being more open to having cross-political party close relationships. The same was true for more liberal individuals as the foundations associated with liberal individuals are more associated with being more reluctant to attempt cross-political party close relationships. This may have implications in allowing psychologists to better understand the interaction between people of opposing political views. Within clinical practice, this may be useful in understanding and assisting with cross-political party close relationship functioning.

Introduction

Throughout the United States, the political divide between parties (particularly Democrats and Republicans) and political opinions has been increasing at a rapid rate. While 81% of people from both parties have negative views of those identifying as the opposing political party, 67% of Democrats, and 57% of Republicans report that the majority of their friendships are now with those who share their political views (Struyk, 2017).

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Transcending Binaries: Queerness, Attachment Theory, and the Matrix of Intimacy

By Emily Wernick

Sponsored by Roger Salerno, Ph.D.

and Amy C. Foerster, Ph.D.

Sociology and Anthropology, New York

Abstract

There has been a plethora of misleading information on the ability of LGBTQ+ people to engage in intimate relationships and to have psychologically healthy, fulfilling, and emotionally rewarding relationships. This study seeks to disengage these inaccuracies; beyond this, it seeks to view the quality and character of emotional relationships among the LGBTQ+ population. In America, the establishment of autonomy occurs during the essential shift from adolescence to emerging adulthood, which happens through primary attachment with family transitioning to intimate friends and partners. There is limited access to supportive spaces to explore sexuality, gender, intimacy, and relationship building for Queer youth. Emerging LGBTQ+ adults are met with a societal structure of heterosexism, within the understanding of platonic and romantic relationship building. This social repression of Queer identity is concretely illustrated by limited scholarship on LGBTQ+ intimacy, attachment, and relationships, along with inconsistent legal recognition of LGBTQ+ relationships in western society supported by centuries of Queer repression and erasure.

Introduction

This project was aroused by a text message in early 2022, which kickstarted my fixation on intimacy. The text read: "Do you think queer friendships are destined to be a little romantic?" In early February, I began questioning notions of intimacy when confronted with contrasting definitions, labels, and experiences from class discussions and personal conversations. A year later, researching, writing, and theorizing informed my approach to Queerness (it's intimacy) and created a new understanding of my gender (non-binary) in a more objective sense.¹ I hope to instigate a form of reflection, emotion, or thought on sexuality and gender and the broader social implications.

¹ Understanding it within social contexts, intersectionality, and its manifestations within intimacy (interpersonally, with the social world, nature, etc.), rather than just as an individualistic knowing.

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Indigeneity and Invasiveness in a Multispecies World

A Dyson Society of Fellows Play

Written by **the 2023 Weekend Seminar Participants**

Compiled by **Emily Welty, Playwright-in-Residence**

Voice One: How did we begin?

Voice Two: Even a beginning has a beginning.

Voice Five: Every story starts somewhere.

Voice Seven: Entangled and intersectional.

Voice Three: Messy and complex.

Voice Four: Science and Philosophy.

Voice Six: Day One.

Voice Eight: We were on the bus forever, driving through rivers, like a flood.

Voice One: The grid of Manhattan went on forever.

Voice Four: We thought we might miss dinner.

Voice Five: There was a quiz on the first night.

Voice Nine: There was a surprising debate between professors about corn.

Voice Two: What did you expect from the weekend?

Voice Six: We prepared a really fun game for the night, but then we skipped it.

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