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## Margin of Error

Aubrey Felty  
*Utah State University*

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# MARGIN OF ERROR

by

Aubrey Felty

**Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for graduation with**

## **University Honors**

with a major in  
Theatre Education (K-12 Certification)

in the Department of Theatre Arts

### **Approved:**

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**UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Logan, UT**

**Spring 2022**

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## ABSTRACT

According to Utah State University's Office of Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation during the Fall semester of 2020, about 18% of students enrolled were students of color. About 2.5% of students enrolled identified as two or more races. *Margin of Error* is a docudrama that elevates the voices of multiracial college students and promotes a better understanding of multiracial individuals. The project involves actor portrayals of interviews with multiracial college students who discuss navigating their multiple racial identities at often predominantly white universities. It also features reactions and commentary on the students' experiences from faculty and students at Utah State University. This project was crafted through the devised theatre process. Devising is a subgroup of the larger genre, Applied Theatre, which intends to promote social change through theatre. In this form, "the audience is challenged to explore multiple possibilities within a given oppressive situation, and to actively engage in the theatrical process to attempt to overcome that oppression" (Boal as cited in Mesner, 2018, p. 256).

The specific goals of this project were to:

- Elevate the voices of multiracial students.
- Provide space for multiracial individuals to discuss and share their stories.
- Promote a better understanding of multiracial people.

The research questions that I investigated are as follows:

- How do multiracial individuals perform their self-identity in different social contexts?
- Do multiracial individuals feel obligated to perform particular racial identities, or aspects of those identities, to perform? Why or why not?
- How do university demographics affect multiracial individuals' educational experiences?

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my faculty mentor, Dr. Matt Omasta for guiding me through this project. This was a great endeavor that would not have been possible without his unwavering support and encouragement. Throughout my time at Utah State University, Matt has also served as an academic advisor, director, teacher, and co-author. I would like to thank him for talking me off many ledges and believing in my abilities as a researcher and creative artist.

I would like to also thank my second committee member for this capstone, Dr. Amanda Dawson. In the short time that I have known Amanda, she has helped me in numerous ways. Amanda is a professor that leads by example. She has made me feel safe and heard at USU. I appreciate her efforts in making spaces for me and her continuous support.

This project would not exist without the research participants. Their voices make up the heart of this project, and I feel honored that I get to share their stories. I would also like to thank the actors who portrayed these stories. Their drive to amplify these stories has been inspiring and uplifting. I value the time and effort these individuals put into this project.

Thank you to the USU faculty members and students who served as respondents in this project. Their thoughts and insights truly completed this project and made me hopeful about the future of inclusivity and equity in higher education.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the research assistants who helped me interview the research participants and transcribe the interview recordings. I am grateful for their contributions and support in creating this project.

My appreciation extends to the Caine College of the Arts Summer Research Fellowship, the USU Undergraduate Research and Creative Opportunities Grant, and the University Honors Program for funding my research. Because of the endorsements of these departments, I was able to create a fully funded creative research project.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank my close friends and family for believing in me, wholeheartedly. There were times when I wanted to give up, and I know that if it were not for their support and trust in me, this project would not have been completed. I am grateful for their kind words, caring hearts, attentive ears, and advice throughout my time at USU. I am so fortunate to know and work alongside many of these people.

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## SIGNIFICANCE

As the number of multiracial students rises, schools must reevaluate their initial single-race approach to curriculum. Multiracial individuals often feel alienated in society. Educators are called upon to work towards acknowledging the shortcomings of traditional practices. Wardle (2000) states:

Although many school books and classes include contributions by all the diverse groups of people... there is no evidence of the existence and contributions of people of mixed racial and ethnic heritage.

Additionally, multiracial students often lack communities. Many race-oriented student services in schools cater to monocultural groups. Ingram et. al. (2014) recommends that colleges offer more supportive services for multiracial students.

Conscious or not, racial microaggressions and stereotypes litter educational institutions. Aurora Chang-Ross (2010) retells her experience being dissected solely for her name. Stereotypes are often coupled with academic expectations (i.e. Asian individuals excelling in mathematics). She was encouraged to change her appearance to better fit the cultural standards of beauty. Multiracial people find that they are often “othered.” Chang-Ross proposes that her academic position can be a platform to emerge and heighten awareness. How do we use the platform and creative outlets we are given to activate this?

Applied theatre requires a careful approach because there is a gray area in staging personal experiences. An autoethnography study was conducted “by asking people of color to share their narratives of racism in the presence of Whites, teachers, facilitators, and diversity trainers” (Wahab & Gibson 2007). Researchers found that these dialogues continue to privilege the White community often at the expense of people of color. Biracial subjects in the study felt the need to rationalize their vulnerability and were obligated to voice their trauma. This is a factor that we must keep at the forefront of our minds. While this process can be therapeutic for many, it is not therapy by any means. We must be respectful to ourselves and our participants throughout this process.

Our society must confront our shortcomings and recognize that underrepresentation and the use of microaggressions alienate multiracial individuals. Multiracial people may experience marginalization due to their physical appearance and sometimes experience hostility when attempting to associate themselves with a monoracial community.



## METHODOLOGY

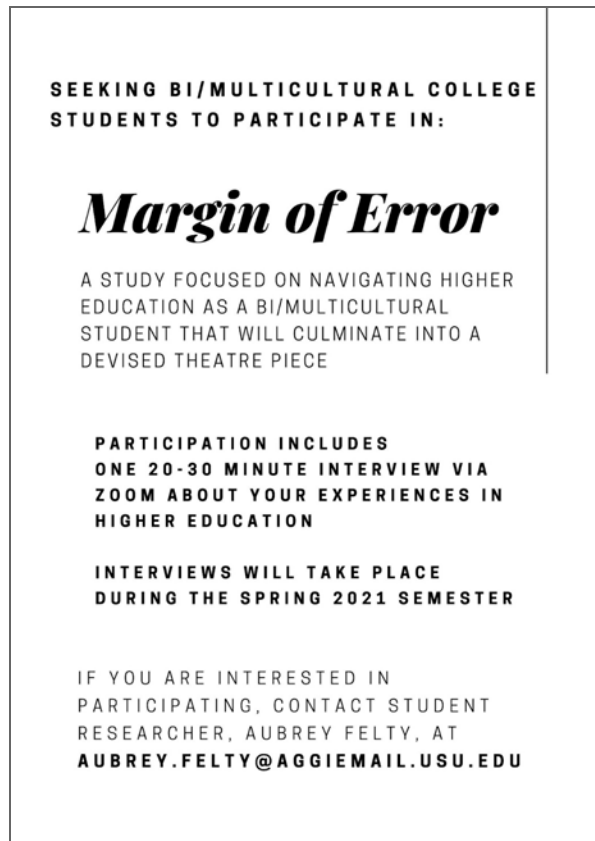
### *Phase 1: Interviews and Data Collection*

#### *Research Team*

In addition to myself, my research team for this project included research assistants with experience in devised and applied theatre (primarily drawn from USU's Theatre Education Program). We worked closely with Dr. Matt Omasta, who served as a mentor for this project. All Research Assistants completed CITI training as required by the University, including training in maintaining the confidentiality of participants, etc. [Research Assistants' involvement in the project is described in the appropriate sections below.]

#### *Participant Recruitment*

I identified and recruited participants who were interested in contributing to this project. I reached out to campus organizations concerned with multicultural issues (e.g., the Access and Diversity Center, SCED 3210: Multicultural Foundations) to advertise and recruit. I also expanded my search for participants across the country. We used a recruitment flyer to invite people to participate in the project.



*Figure 1: Research Participant Recruitment Flyer*

Participants were able to work with the project in multiple ways. (1) They may be interviewed and share their stories without performing in the theatre piece, (2) they may participate in the theatre piece without being interviewed, or (3) they may both participate in the interviews and the performance. *Participants in the project were NOT to be members of the research team in that they did not conduct or transcribe interviews. They were not aware of the identities of participants interviewed (they only viewed data using pseudonyms) and did not have access to any research documents other than the interview transcripts (with pseudonyms).*

The researchers were transparent in all written materials and pre-show talks about the way materials were gathered and the fact that some people may be sharing stories that are not their own.

### *Interviews*

Researchers conducted the interviews with participants. All interviews were audio-recorded, and these recordings were destroyed after the interviews were transcribed (during the process of which, participants were then assigned pseudonyms).

Given the nature of such interviews, each may have been unique as they follow the trajectory participants take them on. However, the standard interview protocol is described below.

First, participants completed a demographic form in which they indicated (if comfortable doing so) their college/university, gender identity, and race/ethnicity. The researcher assigned a participant ID number to be included on this form. The researcher also stated the participant ID number at the beginning of the interview so that the demographic forms could be linked to participants.

Second, participants participated in a virtual interview using the questions below.

1. How do you identify in terms of race and ethnicity?
  - a. Do you identify more with some aspects of your racial identity more than others?
2. Are there circumstances in which you change how you identify racially?
  - a. Please explain.
3. How does your racial identity intersect with other aspects of your identity (such as age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)?
4. Can you tell me about a time where you were conscious of being bi/multiracial?
5. What about your racial identity do you wish others knew?
6. What are the racial demographics of your college/university community?
  - a. How do your college's racial demographics affect your experience as a student?
7. What role, if any, do racial stereotypes play in your everyday encounters with others?
8. Researchers have defined microaggressions as "a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a

marginalized group” (Merriam-Webster 2020). Have you ever experienced microaggressions?

- a. Please give me an example.
9. Has your college experience thus far made you rethink or change how you identify racially?
- a. How so?

Hi Aubrey,

Thank you so much for including me in this project. It was a sobering experience where I learned a lot more about my feelings towards growing up in a multicultural environment. I can't wait to see it!

*Figure 2: Message from a research participant*

### *Transcription and Condensation*

Each interview was transcribed fully. Then, the transcripts were condensed (see Saldaña & Omasta, 2018, pp. 117-120). The condensed interviews served as the data corpus from which the devised theatre piece was drawn (see next sections).

### ***Phase 2: Performance Devising***

#### *Script Writing*

The lead researcher will review all interview materials and transcripts. They will then discuss the material, identifying potential themes and recurring topics. The script includes monologues, realistic and abstract scenes, moments of direct address, and/or other content that builds the project’s artistic credibility to share information about the participants’ lived experiences.

### ***Phase 3: Filming***

#### *Performative Piece*

Actors from all over the world were recruited primarily through social media groups. The researcher distributed scripts to the actors and filmed their respective lines over Zoom. The footage was edited and put together to create a performance piece.

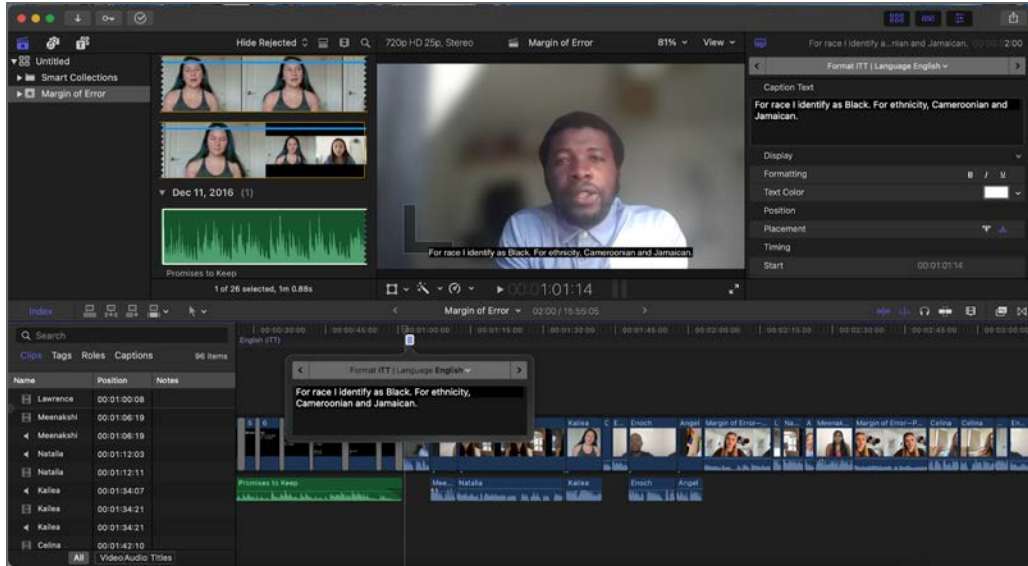


Figure 3: Screenshot of editing the actors' portrayals

### Respondents

The performance piece featuring actor portrayals was presented to USU students and faculty members to record reactions and receive commentary on multiracial students' experiences in higher education.



Figure 4: Filming with respondents

## *Docudrama*

Selected respondent reactions and comments were edited and added to the initial performance piece to create a documentary drama (docudrama).

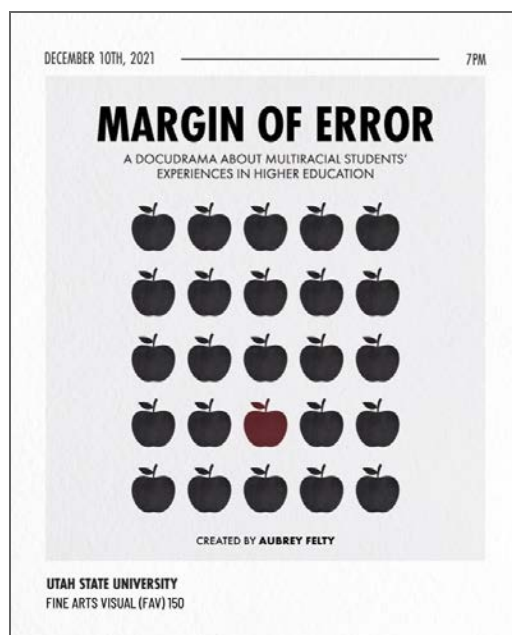


*Figure 5: Screenshot of editing respondent footage*

## ***Phase 4: Dissemination***

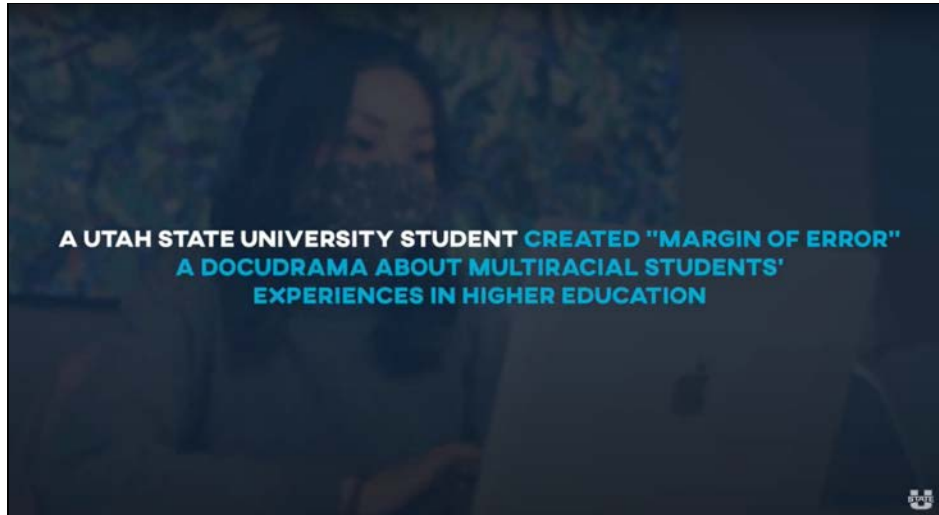
### *Publicity*

A graphic designer was recruited to devise publicity materials for the docudrama. Posters, yard signs, and digital graphics were posted on the USU campus and various social media platforms.



*Figure 6: Social media graphic, designed by Emily Ha*

The project was also featured in a Utah State Today [newsletter](#). USU digital journalist, Taylor Emerson, created a video story previewing the film. The story was shared with USU faculty and students and the local community.



*Figure 7: Screenshot of Utah State Today video, created by Taylor Emerson*

### *Screening*

The docudrama premiered on December 10, 2021, in the USU Fine Arts Building. The screening was followed by a brief Q&A session to further engage with the audience. This session was mediated by research mentor, Dr. Matt Omasta. The questions that were posed are as follows:

- *Are there any words or phrases or moments that resonated with you?*
- *Was there anything brought up in the film that you haven't thought about before or something that you will think about differently?*
- *What questions did this film raise for you?*
- *Do you have any questions for Aubrey, who created this project?*



*Figure 8: Q&A with the audience following the screening*

*Online Release*

After the screening, the docudrama was released to the public on YouTube to promote accessibility beyond Utah State University. Here is the link to the [docudrama](#).

**MARGIN OF ERROR**

FADE IN:

AUBREY

In the Spring of 2020, I attended a multicultural education conference. In a workshop, I engaged with working professionals and confided in them that I was struggling to navigate my racial identities at a predominantly white university. I had experienced varying degrees of racism, and I struggled so much that it often rendered me silent in my classes and made me feel powerless. A woman in my discussion group turned to me and said, "then who's going to speak up for you?" I rushed to the bathroom and cried. I cried because I didn't know what to say. I cried because I wanted to say "me," and I didn't know how to. This kind of story is not uncommon. According to Utah State University's Office of Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation during the Fall semester of 2020, about 18% of students enrolled were students of color. About 2.5% of students enrolled identified as two or more races. Because of numerous encounters with discrimination and racism in college, and specifically, in the classroom, I created this piece.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM. The lights are off. Beat. Lights turn on.

CUT TO:

*"Flower in Hand" (Loop 3) by Mocha Music fades in as...*

Text reads: Utah State University faculty and students were invited to respond to a research-based performance film.

Disclaimers: The piece that they are about to watch consists of interviews with multiracial college students. The stories told in this piece are all true. Some details have been altered to maintain confidentiality. These stories are portrayed by 8 actors from around



the world. The racial and/or ethnic identities of the actors may not exactly align with those who were interviewed.

Content warning: This video contains discussion of or reference to racism and sexual and verbal harassment.

CROSSFADE:

*"Flower on Hand" (Loop 3) by Mocha Music fades out.*

AUBREY

*(Off-camera)* So what is your role at the university?

STEPHEN

I am an assistant professor... in sociology.

ANNE-MARIE

I am a student in the acting program.

DALLAS

I am a lecturer. I'm the Director of Opera in the music department.

KYDEN

My current role at the university is as a student.

LEO

Same.

AMANDA

I'm an assistant professor and head of the B.A. Theatre Arts Program in the Department of Theatre Arts.

CANON

I'm a student. I'm studying mechanical engineering.

AUBREY

*(Off-camera)* And what comes to your mind when you hear the phrase, "margin of error"?

KYDEN

...Statistics.

CANON

Statistics. How off something is from its true value.

DALLAS

Results are valid within a certain range of numbers.

ANNE-MARIE

The room that you have to make a mistake...?

AMANDA

A gap. Like a permitted gap.

STEPHEN

We have like these best ideas of what something might be, but then we create like a little confidence interval around it that allows for... well, we could be wrong, but we're confident it's somewhere in here.

AUBREY

*(Off-camera)* So whenever you're ready, you can press the spacebar to start it.

CROSSFADE:

*"Lament of the Past" (Loop 1) by Taizo Audio fades in.*

"Margin of Error" appears. The title fades leaving the word, "margin." Several definitions for "margin" appear one at a time (in order). The underlined words/phrases remain onscreen for a few seconds longer after the definitions fade out.

Margin: the space between a block of text and the edge of text

a comfort allowance, cushion, range, provision for enlarged or extended action

a sum deposited with a broker to cover the risk of loss

"Margin of Error" appears. The title fades leaving the word, "error." Several definitions for "error" appear one at a time (in order). The underlined words/phrases remain onscreen for a few seconds longer after the definitions fade out.

Error: a deviation from truth made through ignorance or inadvertence, a mistake

offense against morality or justice; transgression, wrong-doing, sin

the difference between the observed value and true value

*"Lament of the Past" (Loop 1) by Taizo Audio fades out.*

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

LAWRENCE

For race, I identify as Black. And for ethnicity – Cameroonian and Jamaican.

MEENAKSHI

I identify as mixed, half white, and half South Asian or Indian.

NATALIA

My mom is Columbian. And my father is Puerto Rican but I was born in Puerto Rico. So, it is weird to identify as a specific race because Puerto Ricans, somos todos mezclados [we're all mixed]. So we're white, Black... colores entremedio [and everything in between]... so I just consider myself Latina.

KAILEA

I am half Filipina, half white or American, but I identify more with my Filipino heritage.

CELINA

I just say "I'm half Asian."

ENOCH

I am Kenyan, Tanzanian, and American. There are parts that I haven't really gotten the chance to explore. Sometimes it feels like I'm not as connected to those cultures. But, I still claim them.

ANGELIQ

For race, I identify as Black for ethnicity I identify as Latino.

HANA

I consider myself a Southeast Asian, Hispanic, Caucasian woman. Like mathematically I am 3/5s Caucasian, a quarter Vietnamese, and a quarter Cuban.

CANON

*(Laughs)* I like how she brought in the "mathematically" part. I always do that too. I think when I introduce myself, I describe where my parents are from rather than identifying with a certain race. But I do definitely look more white than I do anything else, so I do relate to a lot of these people... I would say.

AMANDA

It's funny how we take identity and turn them into numbers. Like we want to know the amount that we are of a certain thing.

STEPHEN

It just makes me think of the census and what a nightmare the census is and has become.

LAWRENCE

My school is very conservative.

NATALIA

I can assume it's almost 95% Puerto Ricans at my school...

ANGELIQ

My school is not racially diverse.

MEENAKSHI

We have about 2,500 students enrolled at my school, and I'm pretty sure it's 8% are of students of color.

HANA

I go to a very liberal college. I'm lucky enough to be at a campus that is majority-minority so it's very diverse. It is really open to viewpoints and opinions and it makes you more comfortable being yourself and expressing your heritage.

CELINA

My school is so diverse and so welcoming to different cultural backgrounds, so it's made me embrace each part of my culture and really find my place in each one of them.

KAILEA

The population at my school is very largely female.

ENOCH

My school is a majority white institution with a really low retention rate when it comes to Black and African American people.

LAWRENCE

So sometimes when certain groups want their voices to be heard they're not, so people just leave.

AMANDA

Even just these couple folks are making a really clear distinction between the diversity of the place they're at and the atmosphere. So diverse equals welcoming. And lack of diversity equals isolation.

CELINA

I get the really awesome opportunity to meet people of all different backgrounds there, and I think that's really helped me just realize a lot about being bicultural.

ANGELIQ

The majority of professors, faculty, and students are white. I mean there's some diversity here and there but I'd say like 96-97% white.

NATALIA

Some people have internados [internships] or they come to Puerto Rico to study because here the university is really, es bien economica [it's cost-effective]. But I know of... 5%... 1% of the students who are from other places.

MEENAKSHI

I can tell you from personal experience that there are usually 1 or 2 students of color in any given class I'm in.

CANON

Exactly. I feel like the first person I actually met that was not white that is- had any like role of like a teacher is you... Aubrey (*laughs*).

ANGELIQ

Once, at an old congregation that my family and I used to go to when I was little, there was a woman there with very traditional values and beliefs. She said that she didn't believe in biracial marriages because she thought they were wrong and confusing for the child. And just hearing that... I mean that was something I never noticed growing up. I just saw my mom as my mom and my dad as my dad, but I didn't realize that that was something that might seem unusual. Hearing that as a child, that was probably one of the first times I became conscious of my race.

LEO

I've never faced that.

KYDEN

Your dad's white, right?

LEO

Yeah.

CANON

I feel like one of the first times I actually became conscious of that was when I entered high school because that's when you kind of start having these conversations about critical race theory.

CELINA

I grew up in very white-predominant neighborhoods, and I remember in elementary school I had some friends that were Chinese across the street. Both of their parents were Chinese and so they had a very strong tie to their Chinese heritage and me being biracial just made me realize I was kind of confused about where I stood. Even today, at 20 years old, I sometimes feel guilty about choosing one heritage or the other — feeling like I have to choose one or the other.

AMANDA

That's interesting, that idea of like, guilt or shame of not having the knowledge or access to language or cultural practices.

MEENAKSHI

I feel like I'm not able to completely identify as a woman of color because I'm mixed... Whenever I have to... I identify myself as a person of color, I think that I am self-conscious in general because I'm not fully able to claim that title if that makes sense. I grew up in America, so I feel like there's another layer being multiracial as an American. And you feel like there's a part of you that's lost, you're always... you're not always whole.

CANON

Listening to these stories, I feel guilty claiming that one-quarter of Thai... but at the same time it's like, I recognize that's part of who I am, but no one else sees it that way.

DALLAS

I don't have any like mixed heritage or racial background... and I've never really thought about, you know, kind of, how that might affect your life.

KAILEA

Being in a bicultural household, there are some things that I never grew up learning. I never learned Tagalog which is the language that my mother and my grandma grew up speaking. I know some words and phrases but other friends of mine that are Filipino, with both parents that are Filipino, they are bilingual and so they know it. Sometimes I feel guilty not knowing that stuff and not having a stronger tie to that part of my heritage.

CANON

Yeah, same. I never learned my grandma's language.



ANGELIQ

When I was a sophomore in high school, I was really always insecure about my curly hair especially growing up around white and Asian people who had naturally really pretty wavy or straight hair.

DALLAS

Her hair is super cute.

ANGELIQ

And I would always put my hair up in a bun. And these jocks in my class, they were mostly white, started sticking pens and pencils in my hair to see how long it would stay, and I pretended it was a joke because I was nervous that if I said anything they would think I was uncool or too sensitive but they were testing what would stick in my curly hair.

KYDEN

Man, that's kind of messed up.

ENOCH

There's not a lot of representation at my school, so there's an odd pressure to feel like – I know this isn't just me – there's an odd pressure... like if you're a Black student, you have to be doing everything to show other Black students that you can do something. There's a spotlight on you- a lot of underlying pressure to succeed.

KYDEN

Do you feel that?

*(LEO shakes his head.)*

MEENAKSHI

I took a theatrical lighting class, and I tended to volunteer to go up and be the model for whoever was doing the lighting. And the professor would make a lot of comments about olive tone skin in comparison to

everyone else in the class and it did not need to be brought up that often. It could be like "Ok let's have three people with different skin tones come up and we can see how the lights affect them," that would have been fine with me. There was another girl in class that would also get comments like that of "now be careful, remember you're lighting on a different skin tone," and it would be every time. That's a little frustrating. It had to be mentioned every time that I was up in front of them.

DALLAS

Yeah, that's bullshit.

ANNE-MARIE

That's interesting specifically within the theatre department- you know, in stage makeup classes or when we're doing designs... No one really knows how to handle it. Everybody just kind of dances around it.

LAWRENCE

My school is super big on traditions. So there's this statue of this man. A long time ago, this dude did a lot to contribute to the university... But he was also a confederate general. People have brought up a lot of the words that he's said about women and Black people and you know, it's not great, not ideal. There's this really really long debate about whether or not we should remove the statue because it's literally in the center of our campus. But now things are really just... I mean the statue's still there, but there were protests and stuff. And just under half of the university said that it should be taken away which I feel like if just under half of your students are like "yo, get rid of this," you should. If it's making that many people uncomfortable, I feel like that's pretty good cause for you to take it away-

AMANDA

Yeah, it seems like a pretty high percentage even if it's not the majority. And it's also just a statue.

DALLAS

We can hold place for someone's contributions. I don't think we also should ignore any injustice or terror that was- that was done. It's sad to hear.

ANNE-MARIE

It's interesting as a student, just not feeling like you have like power.

LAWRENCE

-but it's still there. And things got... messy. People vandalized it one night, and ever since then, there is a 20-foot radius fence, mind you this is the academic plaza for our school, there's a fence that sits around the statue now. And there are signs around the statue that are like "if you jump this fence or vandalize this you could get expelled. Blah blah blah blah blah" - right? But for what? You know? For what?

DALLAS

Is this true?

STEPHEN

I'm having a tough time not just screaming stuff out.

CANON

It's crazy that the university went through all that trouble with building a fence just to protect something that wasn't very popular at the school, clearly.

LAWRENCE

I don't know, people vocalized what they wanted, some things have changed, I mean it's all "we've started a diversity council where

we'll do some intense research about this and that." Which you know, for, to a certain extent it's like, yes. It is necessary. Clearly.

DALLAS

Yeah, you don't need to research something that's clearly offensive.

LAWRENCE

But at the same time stuff like this should be simple. But here it's not.

ANNE-MARIE

Such attachment to just physical things. They're saying "oh, it's just a statue. What does it matter if it's there?" Why doesn't it go the other way? "It's just a statue. Why can't you just get rid of it?"

KAILEA

I get a lot of stereotypes about being smart. It was more so in high school and middle school than it is now in college, but I didn't really notice them until I reflected on it. And hearing comments like "oh, of course, you made that grade, you're smart," at first, I would think "oh, that's a compliment, they think I'm smart."

AMANDA

I think students make a distinction between stereotypes- that they are inherently good or inherently bad. I think they're all problematic. There's no circumstance- like "well it's a nice thing, I'm telling you you're smart."

KAILEA

...No, they just assumed I was smart because of my background. And sometimes I would feel bad, thinking that I couldn't fail or I couldn't even make a B because of that Asian stereotype and having to make A's.

*(KYDEN and LEO look at each other, knowingly.)*

CANON

Yes. I felt so much pressure to do well in school for my grandma. That is so true.

KAILEA

And you know, my mom never put that kind of pressure on me. Being an Asian mother, she never put any kind of pressure on me or my siblings that way..

KYDEN

My mom put that kind of pressure on me (Laughs).

KAILEA

it was more internalized.

NATALIA

The flight tickets are really cheap right now to come to Puerto Rico. So in this time of coronavirus, Puerto Rico has been really crowded with American people. And *si los turistas y la economía* [Yes, the tourism, the economy], it's all really good. But here, we are obligated to use our masks in every place we go and at 10, everybody has to be in their houses. It's really restrictive here. But in the United States, it's a little bit different. You don't have to wear your mask in some places. So people from the United States come to Puerto Rico and think it's the same thing. There have been a lot of problems here with American people. Like people fighting the police in hotels and stuff. My cousins all live in the United States and I don't have a problem with that. I love the United States but now in Puerto Rico, there is a stereotype of being an American; they all think they are... they don't follow the rules, they do what they want because they see us- they see Puerto Rico as a vacation. Like 'let's party and don't care and don't respect the community or the people here.'

ANNE-MARIE

It's funny because she's not American, but she's like, "I love America." And I'm like, girl, you don't have to, like, say that. It's like "oh no no no, you're supposed to love America." Like America's about loving America.

HANA

Being an Asian woman right now is very hard especially during the pandemic. I haven't experienced any sort of hate crime, but a lot of my family who looks visibly Asian, it's a very scary time to be living. When COVID happened all of a sudden everyone who's from Asia is treated as a virus. There are some microaggressions when you say you don't want to go somewhere or hang out in public. All of a sudden it's now based upon your race. It's because you're Asian that you don't want to do those things. So I definitely had some falling out with a couple of people I know because of that. They just assume something is the way it is because of your race.

ANNE-MARIE

I remember- like I went to- I went to pick up takeout from Formosa, my favorite Chinese restaurant in the valley. I remember going in and I was talking to one of the employees. I was like "have you guys had like much business?" And they had had to shut down for like a month just because they were getting like a lot of microaggressions and things. And they were like "we just don't feel comfortable with it.

DALLAS

I spent some time in Turkey since the pandemic started and there was a lot of antagonism towards Chinese people in general- they called it, you know, like Donald Trump, the Chinese virus or whatever (scoffs) or the Chinese flu, and it's just- I don't know. That's- that's a stupid thing to do.

ENOCH

The floor that I'm on right now is the academic success floor in one of our administration buildings. So people who work or do tutoring-type jobs have access to this floor. And there used to be times where I would be up here and people would look at me with a really weird look in their eye. Like I wasn't supposed to be here. And people will ask me questions like "what are you doing back here" and I'm like "I work here."

MEENAKSHI

There was one time a guy said to me, "come over here baby, I've always wanted to visit the Taj Mahal--"

AMANDA

Ugh.

LEO

That's very odd.

MEENAKSHI

-and that was the worst comment I've gotten in my life. I'm grateful that that's the worst thing I've gotten but that was weird... that was just weird. I just don't like that. Why do you do that? I just don't get it.

HANA

I wish that people knew or could see that I was Vietnamese or Cuban... For what reason? I don't really know. I feel like sometimes, especially in today's society, there are people, specifically white people who... I don't know, just. I'm trying to find a correct way of saying this...

ANNE-MARIE

Doesn't that suck? It's always like, "how do you say this? How do you say this?" You, yourself, have to like moderate even on like issues you may be an expert in.

HANA

There's the concept of white guilt. And survivor's guilt. And so, at some- at some points I wish that people knew more about that. But at the same time, it's having to acknowledge my privilege too. 'Cause, I mean everybody else who looks similar to me definitely benefits from white privilege in their life.

CANON

This is a topic that really... hits close to home. I feel like when people look at me, they always just see another white kid. And I mean, to some extent, they're completely justified. I- you look at me, and you don't think that I have any other racial identity. I-I understand what she's saying. Like I wish that people could just look at me and just see it, so I wouldn't have to keep explaining to everyone I meet. It's hard trying to like- I don't know- believe that, myself because I find myself explaining it and then I keep having to explain it. So maybe, it's not... true. I don't know. That's completely... illogical, but I feel it on a very deep, emotional level so... That's- that's so hard ]. Like I can totally relate to that.

DALLAS

I definitely think a lot of inequality still exists in our society. And you know, in our- not just society but like culture, kind of expectations of people, our understanding of different... "people from different backgrounds than us" I think is probably the best way to say it. I mean- and I think that everyone has some sort of implicit bias and it may be impossible to ultimately get over that *completely*. But I think being aware of it- and maybe I'm wrong, but I don't feel a lot of guilt for being who I am because it's not something I chose and I



feel like what my actions are is that I'm not being, you know, offensive or harmful to people who have had different experiences.

ANGELIQ

When I transferred to this university from a community college. I wanted to be a part of all of these different groups, so I tried to find a Hispanic organization and a Black organization. I had found the Hispanic organization first, and I got to meet some of the people but a lot of them were speaking in Spanglish – like Spanish and English. But I wasn't taught Spanish. I feel like there's this expectation that if you're Hispanic, you know Spanish. And when I went to the BSU – the Black Student Union – I felt a little more accepted because there were a lot of Black people like me. But when I first went to that Hispanic organization, that's when I realized that I'm really mixed! I didn't know what that meant until I got to college. I actually met another girl who is my exact same mix, the same country where my mom is from and everything. It was a beautiful thing because I became more accepting of who I was and I felt I reinvented myself but because I accepted who I was and the identities that make up me. And for once I was proud to be different. It made me feel proud of who I was and special in a way. Before when I was trying to blend in growing up, so I was really happy to stand out.

CANON

That's so cool. I wish- that hasn't happened to me yet. I still continue to believe that it will. But it is definitely hard finding someone with like your exact background. I think as soon as you find that one person, you do make an automatic connection. When I find someone who's a quarter Thai, I'll- I'll let you know.

CROSSFADE:

AUBREY

*(Off-camera)* What moments surprised you or stood out to you? And how did they impact you?

ANNE-MARIE

I think that I've grown maybe some sort of like "the grass is greener on the other side though, right?" Like maybe this is just Utah. Like maybe I can, you know, leave the state and go somewhere else, but you know, this is- it's everywhere. It's literally everywhere, so I think I just- I just think that I'm brought back to reality a little bit as far as like... extent and progress.

STEPHEN

I thought that the- one of the most compelling people to just listen to was the Puerto Rican woman. She was not in American but had ties to America, right? And was talking about the Puerto Rican experience- how it relates to Americans coming to Puerto Rico and how they acted. I guess it's surprising and not surprising, right? Americans have an international reputation as being sort of selfish and self-absorbed. We go places to appreciate it, mostly to tell other people back home about it as opposed to value the culture, itself, that we're immersed in. The other thing that stood out was the discussion of the confederate... sympathizer or general or whatever he was- his statue being in the middle of the university that he obviously did quite a bit to help kickstart and fund and get established. And so somehow, stuff like that is reverent, right? Because it's our culture. It's not... we can go to Puerto Rico and trash it, but people can't come to the United States- and even its own citizens can't question what our cultural heritage should be moving forward.

LEO

Being mixed, I think it's a very different experience. Like my dad is Caucasian, and he was able to speak English. From what I see, parents that's able to speak English fluently get treated differently even though they have a different race. For me, I feel I'm discriminated the most when I'm... not speaking English properly. I feel like some people don't treat me like a legit person.

KYDEN

Really?

LEO

I feel like I'm stupid. Like I'm treated as a stupid- a stupid person even though I'm not. But...

KYDEN

Dang, Leo. I'm sorry to hear that.

LEO

Yeah.

KYDEN

It's like "where do you fit in?" I just realized that there's things that you *can* change and you can't. It's a gravity problem, but you learn how to work around it. And I don't know- I haven't had an issue with it. I think Junior year is when it came to a head, and I was just really annoyed because I kept getting cut from stuff.

LEO

Cut?

KYDEN

Yeah, 'cause like 'Asian's can't run' and I'm like "nah..."

LEO

You're fast. You're a fast runner.

KYDEN

If there is someone that's on top, like someone has to be on the bottom. But also like... progress and especially improvement stems from the differences between us.

AMANDA

I think it's always discouraging to hear some of the moments of folks talking about like the things that were said to them. Like the half Caucasian, half Indian woman who was talking about like that gross comment that someone said to her. I don't understand where- like I wish I had a better understanding of like where these things really start. That's a sexual comment. Like regardless of race, that's an inappropriate comment. And then to add the racial component on top of it, it just feels extra gross.

DALLAS

I think that story about that statue. It's hard to think that that is happening, actually, today. I mean I know there's been some discussions about confederate statues in the news but to see kind of a college double down like that on it... I thought we were doing better than that.

CANON

The moments when people brought up their stories of discrimination stood out to me. I feel like although I can't relate to that on a personal level, I've never been called out for my race in a derogatory way. I definitely have stories of relatives who have been. Just this last month, I had to write a personal narrative for my English class, and I decided to write about this one specific instance where my grandma went to a grocery store, and she was with all her grandkids, and we were picking out pomegranate. And... we got a pomegranate, and we took it home, and it was just completely rotten. And so we took it back to the store, and my grandma- she's so precious. But she- she has such a big personality- she goes up to the... the service desk and she's like shouting at the people (*laughs*). And all of us, grandkids, we were just standing behind her and just laughing. And... I feel like because all of my cousins are mixed as well, and we all look generally... white... I don't think anyone really realized that we were related to her upon a first glance. So this one man behind her came up to her and said- she called- well, I won't say it, But he- he called

her a slur, just to her face and that was one of the most heartbreaking moments of my life. I felt like... less than a person, almost. And it wasn't even *my* experience so... Hearing these stories, it makes me kind of just reflect on those moments in my life. And it's just heartbreaking. It's awful. And I wish it would end, but like it's an issue that's gonna keep going.

AUBREY

*(Off-camera)* Did any stories resonate with you and how so?

AMANDA

I think that story about the lighting project. That one also just stuck with me. I mean, I'm not a light designer. That's a thing I've *literally* never thought about is like how might lights might be different on different bodies. But also like... I feel like it's gotta be minimal. And so for it to be highlighted more than in one brief moment... seems inappropriate. Like I think it's a valuable lesson to say like just like you would if you were talking about any other sort of design component. It's like we have to consider these things when dressing a certain type of person or the dialogue we give to a certain person to perform. But like address it once in a positive way that's like "sometimes people with different skin tones look different under different light." And that can be like- that can be sufficient.

LEO

I lived in Japan for a long time and they- like there's only one race, so moving to America was a different experience because there's so many races. You have to take the topic sensitively.

KYDEN

Mmhmm.

LEO

But in Japan, I didn't think... like I didn't have to be sensitive about racial topics, but here, it's really sensitive, so like I had to like kind of adjust.

STEPHEN

My father is like just like the whitest man alive. And my mom is like 60% Asian is what she determined with her 23 and Me. So we've always been... a household that is not 100% *anything*. Like where do you sort of like- where do I and my brother sort of specifically fit in, right? We basically present as... I mean, we're white people. But you know, just in terms of how we grew up. It was always one of those things where it's like "well, do we say we're Asian on college applications based on percentages?" Do we say that we're this, that, or the other thing? How do I identify? Growing up, there was a part of me that wanted to sort of have that part be a little expressed more. But, as I've gotten older, I just have started to realize more and more that it's- I... I had a white- a privileged white experience growing up.

CANON

I want to talk about the- the one girl with the lighting. Again, what I was saying about the... perpetual instances of... maybe not like overt discrimination but just like casual... You know, it's like things will happen like that over and over again, but they're not perceived as a big problem. So I feel like multiracial people will just generally dismiss it. I was taken aback by the fact that someone like- a *teacher*- would do that.

KYDEN

It was the man who's from Cameroon and he went- he was like "I work here" and people were asking "oh, what are you doing here?" Like that's definitely happened to me before.

LEO

Really?!

KYDEN

Yeah! People ask and then you respond- you're polite. But also, I think if you have a negative attitude, it's just gonna exacerbate the problem. People are genuinely curious like if they ask me where I'm from, I love to educate them, but yeah.

LEO

You're super positive about those kinds of stuff.

KYDEN

There is a clear difference between being different and for... being intolerant, I guess.

AUBREY

*(Off-camera)* Do you have any idea about how students, faculty, and staff should respond to the types of issues that were brought up in this piece.

DALLAS

I think every individual has a responsibility whether you're faculty, staff or student to... to just be decent. To listen and if someone comes to you and says, you know, "you said something that was offensive" or... what's the word? Like making someone feel like an outsider... or... you know, just harmful, I think there should always be space for hearing that and then reassessing... your actions.

LEO

I actually live in Oregon, and they talk about racial topics a lot- like a lot, and it kind of made me really nervous because they talk to an extent that was pretty severe. It kind of took me into a spot-spotlight because I'm the only Asian person in there- in the classroom. There's- it's all white. I remember one teacher asking me, "do you feel like a stereotype being Japanese?" I'm like "yes."

KYDEN

"Well, now I do."

*(KYDEN and LEO laugh.)*

LEO

I told her that... a lot of people ask me if I watch anime.

KYDEN

Do you watch anime?

LEO

Yeah.

*(KYDEN and LEO laugh.)*

I feel like it should not be taken really seriously- just brush through the topic, so we don't like focus on that too much.

AMANDA

I think that as faculty, we need to be more cautious of our language because I like to believe that- and maybe this is not true- but I like to believe that faculty are trying to assume goodwill. But I think that sometimes, intent doesn't matter... If the result is harm... regardless of intent, there needs to be some sort of action- an apology, a changing of language and addressing it- whatever sort of circumstance it might be and I think that's hard for some people to like kind of swallow- like that idea of like "but, I didn't mean to!" Like as a kid, I used to get in trouble. Like, I'd like hit my sister or whatever, and I hit her too hard and my mom would be like "don't hit your sister" and she'd be like crying hysterically. And I'd be like "oh, I didn't mean to hurt her." Well, I still did! That action still resulted in harm.



CANON

Obviously, there's need to be some form of- I don't know- consequence for people who do these things, but again, it's hard to like locate that problem and like apply it to a general community- like how do you even stop something like that? Discrimination. So for like specific policy, I have no idea. Your guess is as good as mine. I feel like, generally, just like being a good person... just teaching... teaching teachers to recognize maybe some of their internalized thoughts and behaviors.

ANNE-MARIE

And I also just think that it should be more of a priority as far as like diversifying our department. How do we make sure that people of diverse backgrounds can afford and want to come here?

AMANDA

I don't know like I am no expert in this stuff, but I still continually do research about it. Like I continually read books and go to conferences and join Zoom calls that are like having these conversations because even though I'm aware of those things, I think there are still things I could do better. And so I think like having some sort of continuing education for faculty... I think that's an idea that is easy- like that's a practical thing that we can do. Say "everybody, read this book." "Everybody, go to this training." "Everybody, join this conversation." But I think it starts with the faculty. I mean, I really do. I think that it's our responsibility to make students feel safe in a space. It's our responsibility to cover diverse playwrights and be conscious of like what- the language we use in our class- like that's entirely our responsibility.

KYDEN

We have our heuristics, like our snap judgments, and I think that a lot of times, we rely too much on what we think we know. I feel like, honestly, the biggest thing that holds society back or ourselves is just- it is ourselves. We knock ourselves up into this box, and we

don't ever attempt to break out of it. And so it's all about the growth mindset, I think. Just attempting to understand- if you don't, that's okay, but I think there's value in the attempt. And if people like genuinely did that, then it would be really different.

STEPHEN

I mean, we- I teach at a majority white campus. We have... a bit of a tough time with discussion around race and ethnicity. And not because I think people are unwilling. But I think because folks here just don't know what they don't know. And so I think what we, at the university, need to do is basically open up more spaces for people that bring diversity and have more diverse voices to sort of share those experiences and whatnot moving forward. And I think we try to the best of our ability, but I do know that there- there are times when things might be too challenging, and it might be difficult for this community to sort of take that on. In this place, we have a lot of othering. When I talk about like a predominantly white campus, I mean that anything that stands out in contrast to that is in that "other" category. But I also think that that can be applied to a whole bunch of different things in this community as well. I mean this is a very heteronormative... This is a very, you know, binary gendered culture in the state of Utah, and so sexual identity being non-heteronormative or gender identity being non-binary... these are- these are challenging things. It's interesting. You asked me like what "margin of error" means in the beginning, but I think you did a nice job of highlighting what margins are. And... there... we talk about it in other contexts where there are people on the margins, right? Those that are marginalized- that are sort of pushed out of the main space in the center there. And I think what we're trying to do is- is open up more doors so there's a little less of a continuum of us versus them and more of just like a continuum of all of us.

CROSSFADE:

LAWRENCE

For race, I identify as Black. And for ethnicity – Cameroonian and Jamaican.

MEENAKSHI

I identify as mixed, half white, and half South Asian or Indian.

NATALIA

My mom is Columbian. And my father is Puerto Rican but I was born in Puerto Rico... so I just consider myself Latina.

KAILEA

I am half Filipina, half white or American.

CELINA

I just say "I'm half Asian."

ENOCH

I am Kenyan, Tanzanian, and American.

ANGELIQ

I identify as Black for ethnicity I identify as Latina.

HANA

I consider myself a Southeast Asian, Hispanic, Caucasian woman.

AUBREY

I am Asian and Pacific Islander, specifically Korean and Guamanian. This project is for any person of color who has felt small or alone in the classroom, especially for those who are multiracial. For those who feel confined by the census. For anyone who has felt pushed to the margins because of the color of their skin. Multiracial identity is complicated. In the past, I tried to distance myself from one or both of my racial identities because I wanted to fit in. Now, I feel immensely proud to embrace my heritage, and I

realize that a constant in my life is my family. They are at the center of my cultural identity.

My dad is from Korea. My mom is from Guam. Both sides of my family are so different, yet to me, they've always felt harmonious.

Today, I think more critically about the problematic ways inclusivity and equity are addressed in higher education. Yet, I also feel more hopeful that people in our society are moving toward a greater understanding of people who are different from them.

I'm hopeful that we will center multiracial students because they don't belong in the margins.

CROSSFADE:

INT. CLASSROOM. The lights are on. Beat. Lights turn off.

CROSSFADE:

*"Flower in Hand" by Mocha Music fades in.*

Roll Credits.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF FILM

## REFLECTION

My Honors Capstone is a culmination of many of my interests and passions throughout my time at Utah State University. It blends devised theatre work, navigates the nuances of multiracial identity, and explores inclusivity and equity in educational settings. This project is the most impactful journey I have taken during my undergraduate career. Being a multiracial student at USU has been difficult, eye-opening, and thought-provoking. I wondered if other multiracial students' experiences were similar to mine. Being a part of a predominantly white university has felt isolating at times. Through this project, I have faced a challenging reality, but ultimately, I feel empowered to strive toward a better and more inclusive world.

For this project, I drew upon the knowledge that I have gained about the devised theatre process and reimagined the output. In devised theatre work, there is usually a talk-back session with (i.e., Q&A) the audience after the performance. This is a chance for the audience members to engage with the performers and/or the production team to inquire about the creative process and share their thoughts and ideas about the piece. For my project, I wanted to include voices of people from all over the country, so a live performance was not feasible. I also wanted to be safe and mindful of COVID-19 precautions. Consequently, I decided to include a talk-back element in the film. This was done by recruiting respondents (USU faculty and students) to watch the film and comment on the ideas that were brought up. This project involved nearly 30 people - research participants, research assistants, actors, and respondents.

I met numerous challenges throughout this process, but the majority involved tackling my harshest critic, myself. Since this project has meant so much to me, I often battled myself on seemingly small details because I wanted to do my best to serve the participants in this project and make my family proud. Throughout the process, I practiced creating healthy boundaries and sought support when I needed it. All in all, this project has given me a stronger sense of self: in my identity and in my abilities as a researcher and creative artist.

Another challenge was keeping track of all of my participants' information and schedules. As I was scheduling times to film with actors, I was simultaneously revising the script and sending out information like photo release forms, filming guidelines, logistics, etc. I found that organizing all of the information in multiple spreadsheets helped a lot. Additionally, the actors live all over the country, one of which is on the other side of the world. I had to be especially careful about all of the different time zones when scheduling. I also found that flexibility was crucial throughout this process. Rescheduling and canceling filming times occurred, but in the end, it seemed to all turn out well. Clear and immediate communication was key throughout the filming stage of the project.

The editing process was largely new territory for me. I had some experience editing projects for classes before this project, but this was the most complex film that I had tackled. Film was initially an alternative medium that I explored due to COVID-19. However, I have

found through this project that filming and editing are skills that I enjoy and could see myself employing more in the future. I can also see its strengths in wider accessibility and the increased amount of possibility. Because I opted for a film instead of a live performance, I was able to include participants from all over the world.

It is no secret that the Honors Capstone is an endeavor that takes a great amount of self-motivation and self-determination. I am a person who thrives off of validation from others, but a Capstone is not necessarily designed for regular outside encouragement to take place. For that reason, I gained more reassurance in myself because of this project. I also learned to be patient with myself. This project brought up a lot of complex feelings about my racial identities and the experiences that I have had with racism and discrimination. At many times, these were difficult feelings to navigate alongside this project. For those reasons, I practiced a lot of self-regulation throughout this process.

I have learned that this project is more important to others than I realized. As I spoke to the actors that I filmed for this project, many of them informed me that they were grateful that the stories that I retrieved from interviews were being shared. Some actors completely aligned with the identities that they portrayed. Those actors found that much of the script resonated with them because they could easily connect with the stories that they were telling. One of the actors informed me that she had said the same words before. I did not expect how humbling this process could be. Many actors thanked me for being brave and creating a project that amplified a specific group of voices that are not heard enough. It was through the filming process with the actors that I discovered that the project was not just mine anymore. This was very encouraging.

As an educator, I want to make sure that I am creating a safe space for all of my students. I know that systemically, the public school system is flawed. I know that racial inequity takes place regularly, and I know that I am limited in my abilities as an incoming teacher. There are, however, things that I can control. I can provide a platform for my students to discuss issues that are important to them. I can be aware of my personal biases and readjust how I teach accordingly. I can be culturally responsive in my teaching practices. I can center my students in my classroom. I can be reflexive in my teaching and always seek ways that I can improve. This project has urged me to consider pursuing a graduate degree. There are many things that I would like to do, and I have a feeling that this project is just the beginning.

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## **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Aubrey Felty is graduating from Utah State University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Education (K-12 Certification) and a minor in Family and Human Development in Spring 2022. Aubrey entered USU as a Caine Scholar and member of the Honors program in 2018. She has since received numerous scholarships and recognitions for academic achievements and artistic excellence. She is on the Dean's List, is a recipient of the "A" Pin Award, and was named the Scholar of the Year for the Caine College of Arts for the 2020-2021 academic year. During her time at USU, Aubrey has pursued various scholarly and artistic endeavors such as co-writing and implementing an original arts-integrated lesson, serving as a Peer Mentor for the Connections program, facilitating two courses as an Undergraduate Teaching Fellow, co-creating an immersive ghost tour experience, and assistant directing a USU mainstage production.

Aubrey has participated in undergraduate research that spans from contemporary practices in Theatre for Young Audiences to ethnodramatic devised theatre. She has worked in various schools in Cache Valley as a guest teaching artist and continues to seek ways to serve her peers and her community through arts education. Upon graduation, she plans on returning to her hometown, in Texas, to pursue her passion to teach theatre at a secondary school. Aubrey is passionate about expanding access to the arts, student-centered and innovative educational approaches, and research-based devised theatre work.