Honors College 2020 Application Essay Question

The essay is an important part of your HC application and should represent your polished writing. While many college admissions essays invite you to share a personal story, the HC essay has a different focus: it asks you to demonstrate your critical thinking skills. In 450-500 words, provide your perspective on the issue raised in the prompt. The essay as a whole should address the specific and substantive question(s) posed. In evaluating your response, we will consider your writing skills and ability to think deeply and creatively.

“It is failure that guides evolution; perfection provides no incentive for improvement, and nothing is perfect.” –Colson Whitehead, The Intuitionist (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), p. 38.

Whitehead invites us to think of failure as a positive influence because it drives progress. Perfection, on the other hand, does not exist, so there is always “incentive for improvement.” For example, there might be ways to improve cell phones, self-driving cars, social media, presidential elections, or the final season of Game of Thrones.

Identify something specific (not a person) that could be improved. Then, write an essay in which you:

1. Briefly outline its failures or limitations.
2. Explore how those might guide its evolution.

Do not select yourself, a personal anecdote, or any of the above examples as the topic for your response. The best response will offer a unique and specific example that will stand out among the many essays the admissions committee will review.