Expose

The journal of interdisciplinary inquiry for Connecticut College.

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Table of Contents

4
From the Editors

6
Faculty Contribution: The Exciting Golgi Aparatus
by T. Page Owen, Jr.
Professor of Botany

8
Faculty Contribution: Novel Predictions
by Derek Turner
Professor of Philosophy

Personal Discovery

14
The Album
by Dan Cayer, 2004

19
Overcoming Stigma: A Personal Inquiry
by Rick Gropper, 2004

28
What Brought Us Here
by Maggie Bennett, 2005

29
Revolution in Modern Drama: The Use of Theatre Within Theatre
by Ken Brown, 2006
Social Progress

36
What’s Justice Got to Do With It?
by Noah Silverman, 2004

44
Women’s Rights Are Human Rights: A Measure of Progress, Unification, and Freedom For African Women
by Andrew Imbrie, 2006

52
Conservation Terrorism
by Alice B. Kelly, 2004

68
Only Human
by Jared Tester, 2004

Scientific Discovery

74
Carbocaine: Comparison to Other Anesthetics Based on Structure, Toxicity and Potency
by Alissa Agnello, 2005

78
Laws of Nature: Why No Lawyer Can Save Us
by Drew Beebe, 2007
t is the sixth of August, 1945. The morning sun has just risen over the island of Japan, and the city of Hiroshima is coming to life. At 8:15 an apocalyptic flash cuts across the sky – America has dropped the bomb. The fateful mission of the *Enola Gay* was the most revolutionary exercise in modern science. But we must ask ourselves: did discovery result in progress? Have Einstein’s relativity and Oppenheimer’s atomic theory, undoubtedly great discoveries, brought us progress or regression?

The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki cuts to the core of discovery and progress. The general antidote to prevent falling back seems to be a blind struggle to move forward. But this constant fear of standing still, of descending down the evolutionary ladder, may be preventing us from taking the time to analyze the consequences of our steps “forward.” The discovery of America led to the pilgrim’s progress, but also to the downfall of the American Indian. Would further analysis of the effects of our actions, making use of our ability to reason, be more effective than perpetuating forward movement for the sake of leaving others behind?

One can choose to ignore the implications of progress, but one cannot control the momentum of discovery. Discovery arrives in a flash of inspiration; progress is actively sought and deliberately perpetuated. Though mankind may discover a revolutionary scientific concept unexpectedly, progress consciously brings that discovery a step further. This deliberate action is reflected in the definition of progress: a beneficial advancement. To validate our chosen steps forward, we would like to believe that progress results in only positive change. However, as evident in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, progress clearly manifests itself in negative ways. Similarly, the word discovery has a positive connotation based on its association with progress. But in reality, mankind ignores discoveries that are disruptive to what is culturally accepted by society.

Whether society deems a discovery to be beneficial or threatening, a discovery by nature reveals truth, progressing toward better understanding of universal truths. In order for this understanding to take place, we must transcend the cultural limitations imposed by society and pursue the advancement of discoveries in many ways, realizing that our actions may result in both positive and negative change. Only then will discovery and progress according to their definitions truly arise.
Exposé owes its continued success, and its very existence, to a large group of faculty and staff across this campus. Though too numerous to name here, we would like to thank all who have supported this project and undergraduate scholarship at Connecticut College. We should, however, mention one individual who contributed much to the intellectual life on this campus: to Dean Ammirati, our gratitude.

This semester, four of our five founding editors will graduate. We congratulate them, and we will miss them. We would like to thank them for all of their hard work, and for sharing their humor and intelligence. The remaining editors are honored to carry on their legacy. Congratulations.
The Exciting Golgi Aparatus

By T. Page Owen, Jr.
Professor of Botany

Inquiry and discovery seems innate in most children. It’s typical for my two young boys to instantly stop in mid-step to closely scrutinize, in that flexible squat that only youngsters can manage, a lively worm jiggling across the driveway after a spring storm. As a scientist, I have never lost that urge to discover how living systems work; rather than prodding worms with sticks, I have the opportunity to use more precise tools. This semester, through a grant from the National Science Foundation, I oversaw the installation of a $300,000 digital transmission electron microscope. That price tag comes as a shock to most – that sum could buy a comfortable house in most of the country – but visualizing the ultrastructure of a cell requires a resolution less than a nanometer.

I am interested in the formation and trafficking of membrane vesicles in the cell. While my background is specifically on the cell biology of plant cells, published discoveries about cellular pathways typically come first in animal or bacterial cell systems. Consequently, I usually have to read the literature for new information for all systems and adapt it to my area of specialty. The human genome project has translated into an upsurge of information, some of which can be linked to cell structure data in the cell. Vesicular traffic in cells is important for many biological processes, such as the secretion of enzymes, the control of insulin receptors, and the uptake of LDL cholesterol. Plants require vesicle fusion for the synthesis of new cell wall materials. This is difficult to study in intact plants, as it typically occurs in interior cells in relatively low frequency. By extracting leaf cells from a Zinnia cultivar, placing them into a sterile tissue culture medium with a particular hormone ratio, I can experimentally turn on the genes that regulate the expression of proteins that synthesize the cell wall. Thus, I can directly access a vesicular
pathway in a large synchronous population of cells. A tissue culture system has an additional benefit, that inhibitors of a pathway can be directly added and observed. In this way, the students working with me in the lab have added a fungal metabolite, brefeldin A, to the cell cultures and found they block cell wall synthesis. Observation of the treated cells in the electron microscope revealed that the key organelle in the vesicle secretion pathway, the Golgi apparatus, is disrupted by the addition of inhibitor. This response was predicted as it also occurs in animal cell cultures, but it also demonstrates an underlying commonality to fundamental biological process in cells.

Golgi vesicle products can be manipulated by molecular biology techniques. I have had the opportunity, through collaboration with researchers in industry, to examine the cell ultrastructure of transgenic plants that use the Golgi pathway to synthesize biodegradable plastic or vaccines. Basic biology research is exciting, as one can never predict the potential application of one’s work. Camillo Golgi, for whom the organelle is named, would be astounded at the implications of his short 1873 publication on brain gray matter.
Novel Predictions

By Derek Turner
Professor of Philosophy

Intuitively it seems that the greatest success one can have in science is to make a novel prediction that comes out true. For example, when Mendeleyev first formulated his theory of the periodic table of the elements, the table had gaps in it. He predicted that those empty places should be occupied by elements having certain atomic weights and other properties. At the time, nobody knew whether such elements existed. Some years later, the elements gallium, scandium, and germanium were discovered to have the properties Mendeleyev predicted.

During the early nineteenth century, Newton’s mechanics was confronted with some serious anomalies. Astronomers had observed aberrations in the orbit of Uranus that no one knew how to explain using the Newtonian account of motion. Then scientists predicted, from a knowledge of Newton’s laws of motion together with the observations of Uranus, that there should be another planet, having such-and-such a mass, and such-and-such an orbit. When astronomers aimed their telescopes in the direction that was predicted, they found the planet Neptune.

What’s so special about a novel prediction? That’s the sort of question that philosophers of science worry about, and it is by no means an easy question to answer.

What if Mendeleyev had waited until after the discovery of gallium, scandium, and germanium to formulate his theory of the periodic table? And what if nobody had bothered trying to explain the aberrations in the orbit of Uranus until after Neptune had already been discovered? It seems that the only difference between these imaginary cases and the real life cases—i.e., the cases in which scientists made novel predictions—is one of timing. But suppose we ask how well a theory is supported by the evidence. Why should the timing make any difference at all? Doesn’t the evidence support the theory of the periodic table equally well in either case, regardless of whether Mendeleyev formulates the theory before or after the discovery of gallium, scandium, and germanium?

Some philosophers who consider themselves to be scientific realists make the following argument: Suppose Mendeleyev had waited to formulate his theory until after the discovery of the three elements. And suppose we then ask: Why does the theory fit the data so well? What explains the fact that the
theory is so successful? Clearly, the simplest explanation is that Mendeleyev tailored the theory to fit the data. This is sometimes called the “tailoring explanation.”

In real life, however, Mendeleyev made novel predictions. Suppose we ask the same question about the real life case: Why does the theory of the periodic table fit the data so well? Now we can no longer give the tailoring explanation, because Mendeleyev didn’t know what the data were at the time he formulated the theory. So it looks like the only way to explain why the theory is so successful is to suppose that the theory of the periodic table is true—or if not wholly true, then nearly true, or approximately true. And that is what realists believe: They hold that our best scientific theories are true or at least approximately true, even in what they say about things we can’t observe. Realists think that they are the only ones able to explain what is so special about novel predictions in science.

But consider once again the imaginary case in which Mendeleyev makes no novel prediction, but waits to formulate his theory until after the discovery of the three elements. Why does the theory fit the data so well? In fact, there are two possible answers:

(a) Mendeleyev tailored the theory to fit the data.

(b) Mendeleyev tailored the theory to fit the data, and the theory is true or approximately true.

Which of these is the best explanation? They cannot both be the best explanation. If we say that (b) is the best explanation, then we are stuck with the original puzzle, because it is no longer clear why making a novel prediction is better than merely accommodating the data. The scientific realist’s answer to the question why novel predictions are so special will no longer work. If on the other hand we say that (a) is the best explanation, then we have to ask why accommodating the data carries any evidential weight at all. And clearly it carries some weight. If Mendeleyev formulated his theory after the discovery of scandium, gallium, and germanium, that would still count for something. But if Mendeleyev just tailored the theory to fit the data, why should the fact that it fits the data give us any reason at all to think that the theory is true or approximately true? After all, if (a) is the best explanation, then we don’t need to suppose that the theory is true or approximately true in order to explain why it fits the data so well.

So what is so special about novel predictions? I don’t know. There are a lot of questions like this in philosophy of science—questions that seem like they should have easy answers, but don’t.
The following essays are into sections entitled

**Personal Discovery, Social Progress, and Scientific Discovery** to highlight the varied approach of each author. Each speaks to the same fundamental concept: our discoveries of the past and our progress into the future.
STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS
PERSONAL DISCOVERY
The Album
By Dan Cayer
Class of 2004

Each of us, at one time or another, has stopped to ask - “Who am I?” This is the ques-
tion of self-discovery. But in a sense, our identity is not entirely our own. Who we are comes from who our parents are and who their parents are. The Album is a bit-
tersweet narration of Mr. Cayer’s experience of self-discovery through interactions
with his father and French-Canadian grandfather.

My grandfather is awake before dawn, called from sleep by a restlessness that he cannot name. It translates as the urge to rise, turn on lights, and brew coffee. Under a hanging lamp in the kitchen, he eats a breakfast of buttered toast and Sanka as if to build a small fire in himself. Soon, he will awaken the television or radio and leave them talking all day.

I call him Papiere, the appropriate name for my French-Canadian grandfather. This distinction, however, is the sole ingredient of international flavor between us. I’ve learned almost nothing about the farm where he grew up in Canada, other than the food is better here, or at least there’s more of it. Perhaps he was once a garrulous Frenchmen, but now he is quiet and reluctant to use the appendage of English. Papiere’s autobiography, were it ever to be confessed, would be a revelation to me.

He is a 76-year-old man with a large moustache and thick grimy glasses. He has lived in the same apartment in Bridgeport, Connecticut for almost 15 years, the last seven by himself. I’ve visited it dozens of times, but my dad would usually prompt us to leave shortly after arriving. Even as a child, I got the feeling that my father and his father don’t have much to talk about.

Though now, even if there is still nothing to talk about, they are getting together in greater frequency. The urgency is clear. A few months ago, my dad and I were in the garden, picking shriveled leaves from vines when he didn’t stop plucking to tell me Papiere has cancer. The tumors are small and are sitting in his lungs, the vengeful accumulation of too many unfiltered cigarettes. I tell my dad that I’m sorry. He glances at me and I get the feeling that he could easily be crying, were he alone. But I am his adult son and to me, he says nothing. When he’s finished trimming the vines, he decides to make a hot dog and bring it to Papiere. It is loaded with ketchup, mustard, and relish, and I realize it is one of the most
sincere gifts I have ever seen from my father.

In the lobby of his building, my grandfather waits with hands in his pockets. His shirt is unbuttoned down to his slack chest and he’s wearing a netted baseball cap that reads, “World’s Number One Grandpa!” My cousins bought it.

I bend down to kiss him and his stubble rakes my cheek. I am eager to touch his shoulders and back. He mumbles hello and leads us to his apartment down the hall. He opens the door and shuffles into the musky light. The dingy yellow walls are covered with homemade cards from his grandchildren. The majority of his cards are obviously from my home-schooled Baptist cousins. Though, in the democratic affection that grandchildren receive, their post-apocalyptic visions of lions lounging with children hang alongside my drawings of stick figures dunking basketballs.

My dad clears the kitchen table of tabloids and Reader’s Digest’s, putting the hot dog in front of Papiere. My dad tells him to eat, which he begins to do with a fork, bit by bit. The hot dog barely passes under the screen of his moustache, the relish dangles like seaweed. My dad, who has been characteristically quiet around his father, asks if Papiere understands how to take all his medicines. My grandfather continues to mash up the hot dog like it was tunafish, bananas, or anything else he has to eat. He answers my father, “yep, yep, yep,” and puts down the fork with half the meal uneaten.

It’s hard to believe that five hours sleep or half a hot dog is enough nourishment, but Papiere’s motor is winding down. Unfortunately, I’ve lost out on the significance of his life. My dad never broaches the subject of his parents or childhood. So when Papiere, either filled with nostalgia or seeking a distraction, pulls out an old family album, I’m thankful. Photos are the only witness of my dad’s youth.

It is painful to sit between these two reservoirs of memory and still not be able to access their stories. I can’t ask. A few years ago, I was rooting through my father’s car when I found a box of audiotapes. The tapes are prerecorded counseling for the children of alcoholics and the mentally ill. These tapes do not belong to me, they are my father’s investment. Apparently, his past still hurts him, so I stifle my curiosity and let him be.

The photo album, though, is the first glimpse into the unspeakable. Papiere opens the creaky album and suddenly he’s 17 years old, and healthy again. In the yellowed photograph, he is working on a farm in Canada and smoking a hand-rolled cigarette from the corner of a grin. Despite a thick, crooked nose that he’d later bequeath to his sons, Papiere radiates a confidence that makes him handsome.
My dad smiles at the young man he never met and Papiere says it was hard work on the farm. A few pages and years later, he’s off the farm and heading south to America. On the way down, he meets my grandmother, a church singer and orphan from Canada. They marry in Maine in what looks like a happy, festive ceremony.

The couple then continued southward, following work. Papiere was a carpenter and he settled in Connecticut where houses were springing up all over. They took a small place for themselves and started the business of having children. Papiere must have bought an early camera because the album is filled with pictures of his four kids. Paul, my dad, Bernice, and Valerie are frozen in games and in mid-shout throughout their new, modest house.

Optimism pervades these initial photos; the family was moving up in the world. My grandfather had entered this country with nothing, not even the English language. But with hard work, he put a smooth, long car in the driveway and for the camera, he placed his smiling family in front of it. They were packed for a vacation, the opportunity to cruise up the East Coast into Canada, surging in the powerful grace of that car. As little as they were, the four kids would still have had to cram into the back seat as Mamiere took the place of honor next to her husband. To my dad and his poor siblings, these vacations must have seemed like conquering the world. For Papiere, he had returned to his home up north with a wife, kids, and car – the convincing decals of success in America.

During the thick of their epic summers (my father around the age of 12), the periods between photos became greater. Snapshots of impromptu parties and dress-up in the living room no longer appear in the album. Except for birthdays and Christmas, the camera had conspicuously fallen into disuse.

As the picture of my family grows more incomplete, I am left with only the back story my mother has told me, which is one of disintegration. It begins with the eyes of my grandmother.

The early marriage photos, now curled around the edges, show a clean-shaven Papiere holding the hands of his pale, dark-haired wife. His hair is
greased back against his scalp and he smiles effortlessly into the flash of the bulb. Inside the halo of the camera flash, my grandmother's dark eyes suggest desperation. In the wedding party photos, among the carousing guests in that church basement in Maine, she has the uneasy look of someone trying to understand the joke that everyone else gets.

When I knew her, as an old woman, her face had quit this nervousness and she looked haunted and exhausted. Though, by this time, she had spent much of her life in mental institutions, taking shock therapy, and living under the harrowing leadership of her mental illness. This is the woman my father encountered before he could even raise a hand in defense. She had been released from the institution and was mumbling in a wheelchair when I met her: the wreckage of her madness.

In the album, the photos had stopped because the vacations did too. As I’ve said, I know little about the specifics of my dad’s youth, although my mom told me that my grandmother had developed paranoid schizophrenia. And while my grandmother wrestled with her disease, Papiere retreated and started to drink. The children endured his delusions until they decided that no parents were better than this one. My father, having moved out in high school, returned to the need of his younger sisters and briefly committed his father to a mental institution. He was 21 years old, the age I am today.

The silence of everyone involved bespeaks how horrible it must have been. It’s understandable why no one had reached for a camera. Though, to those of us on the outside, it is as if someone draped a blanket over the scene of my father’s youth.

During the tour of these ghostly photos, Papiere and my father say nothing of the drama they shared. It’s an unspoken rule of the family to leave all that behind. Though, the fact that we’ve stayed for over an hour and a half with Papiere implies that even my father may have found that impossible.

Papiere closes the album and in the suspended silence, I notice him. He has gained a few pounds and become stooped in his old age, but the character of his face and hands are that of the same hero grinning in front of his car over fifty years ago. Faced with the image of that enterprising young man, Papiere must feel something like the distance of time.

My father too, surprises me with the advance of every birthday. This June, he turned 53 years old. In my mind, I’ve always pictured him as he was when I was in grade school. Back then, he was an unbeatable wrestler and parking lot racer. When I look for him in the crowd today, I search for the gray head of hair.
When my father was a boy, there was a catastrophe in his home. It was a familial Big Bang that has since sent every person involved hurtling away from every other. Even in this time of urgency, it seems like there is an unrecoverable distance between Papiere and my dad.

Now, with death inside Papiere’s body, I’ve come to see my father differently. I want him to slow down, to actually stop changing altogether. It’s how he must have felt as I was growing up, as if he wanted to halt the process somehow. Then, he was giving me up to independence and adulthood. Now, I feel him sliding away.

This is how my dad must feel watching Papiere hobble, with effort, around the corner and into the kitchen. My father and I make eye contact for a moment and then it is broken by the noise of Papiere coughing as he struggles to open the refrigerator door. Off the page, he is beginning to disappear.

A few weeks after we visited Papiere, I stop by my dad’s house on the way to a summer writing program. I have only a short time to talk with him before it is best to get on the road. But my dad is relaxed and greets me with a hug in the kitchen. We sit across from each other on the high table, picking cashews from a jar.

“What, me worry?” he jokes. “Just don’t speed,” he wags a finger at me. “And buckle your seatbelt.”

“Alright, dad. I’ll call you when I get there. I promise.”

He gets up quickly and bear hugs me. In the confusion of all this emotion, I feel myself being carried towards the door. He moves next to me, stuffing candy in my pockets. I hug him again at the door, kiss him on the cheek, and walk towards the car. Actually, it is his car. I’ve been borrowing it since high school. I get inside, start the engine, and find some music.

My father stands on the porch for a moment too long. This is a good sign.

“Do you know how to get there?” he asks.

“Yeah, I’ve got maps, dad. Don’t worry.”
Overcoming Stigma:
A Personal Inquiry

By Rick Gropper
Class of 2004

The discovery of one’s self is among the oldest and most complex human endeavors. Many of the clues we use to understand who we are come not from the self, but from the people and world around us. Mr. Gropper reminds us that negative feedback from society presents danger to the individual. Mr. Gropper’s writes from a deeply personal perspective and elucidates the relationship between societal perception and self-discovery.

As a person grows and interacts, a myriad of experiences shape his or her self-identity. Everything from the people with whom one is friendly, to places of residence, to the books a person reads has the ability to directly impact the self. Even though it is not always apparent, a major part of identity formation involves interaction with society and the beliefs and values projected from this entity. The intrinsic side of the self, including morality, dignity, self-worth, and self-esteem is heavily dependent on society’s definitions of acceptability. In other words, it is impossible for one to develop the underlying values inherent in the self without being affected by society. We constantly learn who we are and what we should be through our work alongside friends, family, peers and loved ones. All of our activity occurs in close relationships, groups, communities, and associations, which are rooted in society and can be judged against cultural standards. Individuals are able to further develop their own identity through interaction on many different levels. This concept can be emphasized through examination of a study involving one child who was locked in a closet for 10 years. When this individual was finally removed from his parent’s control, he was virtually unable to take part in society. This was due to the malformation of his self-identity as a result of his prolonged confinement. In this manner, identity development involves a two-way process involving the transfer of information between the self and society.

There are many bumps throughout the life of an average person that can throw the identity shaping process off-track. While many of the so-called bumps can be ironed out through various protective countermeasures, there
are some experiences that are forever changing. When a person experiences a permanent and disabling injury, he or she will undoubtedly experience a major identity transformation. This function is not necessarily the result of internal processes that redefine the self as disabled. On the other hand, it is the result of the aforementioned way that society plays a major role in the development of the self. Society generally sees disabled individuals as helpless, completely dependent on others and sick. This image or stigma is cast onto the disabled and most have no choice but to accept their fate. However, there are a select few disabled persons who are able to overcome this socially created image and chart their own course. In this paper, I will first discuss the process by which society stigmatizes individuals and then go on to incorporate my own experiences in a discussion of the underlying reasons why some disabled people are able to reject stigma placed on them.

Stigma is a term that originated thousands of years ago in Greece. It was an actual mark either burned or cut into the body in order to show that the moral status of a particular person was blemished in some way. This process has slowly evolved into a system of identification geared towards those people who appear to be in dissention from what society views as normal. The processes of identification and categorization are inherent within society. Individuals are automatically identified and placed into a category according to various attributes deemed to be ordinary and natural for one to maintain. In established settings these processes are performed unnoticed as a person has the instinctive ability to remember personal attributes and characteristics over time. However, when meeting unfamiliar people, a new social identity is created for each person who comes into sight. This identity is a mental image that is formed from the first encounter forward and consists of characteristics and attributes that make up an individual.

The concept of social identity is two-fold, involving a virtual social identity and an actual social identity. Unknowingly, members of every society make demands regarding the attributes an individual is expected to possess, such as skin color or physical ability. The virtual social identity is composed of these unwritten demands and is similar to the concept of societal norms. Similarly, the actual social identity is composed of the attributes a person can be proved to maintain. The brain unconsciously categorizes strangers based on the fact that their virtual and social identities are in harmony. If a stranger is seen to possess an attribute that is foreign to the norms of a particular group, he or she is red-flagged and categorized separately. Accordingly,
such persons are said to have a discrepancy between their actual social identity and virtual identity.

The inconsistency causes members of a society both to make assumptions regarding the person’s abilities and to mark him or her as being inferior in some aspect. Through this process, a person is stigmatized on the basis of his or her personal attributes. Irving Goffman (1963) makes the following statement regarding the initial classification of a stranger:

Evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others and of a less desirable kind. He is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such an attribute is a stigma, especially when its discrediting effect is very extensive; sometimes it is also called a failing, a shortcoming, a handicap.3

The move to stigmatization comes with serious implications in that such an individual is branded as having a spoiled self. There are three broad categories within which a person can be stigmatized, involving both visible and invisible deviations from the norm. The first category involves differences in the physical capacities of each person. For example, a person who has an amputated limb or physical deformity would be stigmatized accordingly. The second classification is made based on character differences. Individuals placed in this category typically have a past history of being mental patients, alcoholics, criminals, and homosexuals, to name a few. The final category of stigmatization is tribal stigma. In this case, people are stigmatized based on race, nationality, and religion. For the purposes of this paper, focus will be placed on the first mentioned stigmatization of physical capacity.

The assumptions society makes regarding the abilities of a stigmatized person have a high potential to detrimentally affect his or her identity. This is due to the aforementioned fact that every member of society, stigmatized or not, has a similar perception of what is expected of him or her. When a person is stigmatized, he or she is automatically discriminated against and discounted on a wide variety of aspects, including physical and mental capacities. As a result, the person feels shame and regret that he cannot conform to the ideals of larger society. The stigmatized individual is almost forced to conform to the tainted identity that is projected onto him by society.

There are many disabled persons in the United States who live a sad and helpless existence due to the way they are stigmatized. In this section, I will discuss my experiences as a disabled person and relate them to stigma. Throughout childhood, I led a carefree
life that was full of fun and excitement, no different from any other average youngster. In December of 1995 my life underwent a dramatic transformation when my parents and I were in a car accident that left me paralyzed from the waist down. At the age of thirteen, I found myself alone in the hospital as my parents were also seriously injured. Following several surgeries and a short stay in the hospital, I was transferred to a rehabilitation center designed to get me back on my feet, or, should I say, wheels. I was left without the skill and know-how to perform even the most basic life functions, such as dressing and showering. At the first meeting with my Physical Therapist, we discussed the long road I faced to become reintegrated with larger society. I faced the interesting situation of having prior knowledge of disabled people and their lives as I had done a good amount of volunteer work in this area. Accordingly, I knew that there were many disabled persons who did not have fulfilling and complete existences.

I realized that there were two paths I could follow in my rehabilitation. The first path involved learning only the basic skills necessary to function in society as a person in a wheelchair, whereas the second path involved my turning the accident into a positive learning experience and breaking away from the typical confinements of the disabled. I quickly decided that the only course I could pursue was the latter, and set out to conquer the world with my new disability. While the road to recovery was rocky at times, it was one of the most rewarding challenges of my life. In retrospect, I now realize that my decision to forge ahead following the second path was, in effect, a rejection of the stigma society placed on me as a disabled person.

I will now outline the various reasons for which individuals are able to overcome stigma placed on them. The first explanation involves a look at stigma as a deviation from societal norms. As stated above, individuals operate on a system of norms by which they determine what behavior is appropriate and inappropriate. For example, American men should be educated, white, strong, fit, heterosexual, and have full physical capacity. When an individual breaks a norm, feelings of failure and unworthiness immediately ensue. However, it is typically possible to restore any kind of damage
created by this infraction and continue moving forward. The case of a disabled person is somewhat different, as such a person cannot help the fact that he or she is in permanent discord with society’s rules. In this manner, the fact that many disabled persons possess characteristics of dependence and bitterness is partly due to a violation of norms.

To overcome the situation, it is essential for such a person to view norms in a different light. Irving Goffman (1967) states, “One solution was for a category of persons to support a norm but be defined by themselves and others as not the relevant category to realize the norm and personally put it into practice.” In order to rise above feelings of self-failure, one has to first be able to comprehend the existence and implications of social norms. In itself, this task is not an easy one to accomplish as norms are something that exist unconsciously in the self. Once a level of understanding is reached, it is then possible for a disabled person to create a type of sub-group in order to both uphold the societal rules and also acknowledge obvious differences with larger society. The attitude of such an individual is one of willingness to recognize differences and similarities between the abilities of disabled and able-bodied persons. This person would be able to lead a full and rewarding life based on the fact that he or she is not operating in discord with the

norms, but is able to work off of a blend of traditional expectations as well as his or her own adjustments to life.

In order to further understand why some individuals are able to overcome stigma, it is important to discuss status structures. Cecilia L. Ridgeway and Henry A. Walker are two sociologists who have studied the way status structures affect self-identity. Every member of society, regardless of age, is involved in the struggle for a position in the hierarchal structure. Many factors come into play when determining the social status of an individual including race, gender, age and occupation. As people work their way up the hierarchy, they are able reach a position of greater power and life chance. At the same time, individuals at the bottom of the structure are subject to feelings of helplessness, as they do not have the status or power necessary to control their destiny. It is important to note that a major determinant of hierarchal position is the extent to which an individual conforms to the aforementioned virtual social identity. Accordingly, the stigmatized find themselves at the low end of the ranking system due to the fact that they are seen as inferior human beings. Most branded individuals are subject to a recurring cycle of inequality and helplessness as they lack the resources to climb the social structure.

Ridgeway and Walker’s discussion of Symbolic Interactionism with
respect to social status helps to explain the reason some stigmatized people are able to break the cycle of inequality:

Each actor attempts to present and have accepted a valued social “face,” but each depends on the support of others to enact that face successfully in the group. As a result, the status order is negotiated through interaction as actors’ face claims, reactions, and counterreactions mutually construct one another’s selves in the situation.⁵

According to this theory, individuals increase their hierarchal status through the presentation of the most positive attributes and characteristics they can develop. In order to overcome stigma and the implications of low status, it is necessary to put in the energy and effort required to become an active part of society. The disabled must work tirelessly to re-learn the way to function as independent, normal human beings. Only at this point, will they have the chance of achieving equal status as able-bodied individuals.

Discussion of group alignment is also useful in the explanation of the reasons some stigmatized persons are able to overcome their projected shortcomings. Judith A. Howard and Irving Goffman have both done work in the area of group membership and self-categorization theory. By nature, human beings affiliate themselves with a group consisting of like-minded individuals. Everyone is a member of either the in-group or out-group depending upon the philosophies he or she shares.⁶ With respect to stigma, the in-group consists of “fellow-sufferers,” or individuals who see themselves as being tainted.⁷ A spokesperson for this group would say that it is where a stigmatized person naturally belongs, in that everyone suffers the same problems. Members of the in-group are proud of the special attributes and values that they are assumed to have. For example, such persons will capitalize on the fact that society assumes disabled people to be in need of constant help. Furthermore, the in-group questions the way they are treated by others and assumes such interactions are only out of pity. This group consists of those members who accept stigma placed on them by society.

On the other hand, the out-group is composed of people who see themselves as being fully human and willing to comply with society’s norms. In order to achieve out-group status, a great deal of hard work, time and energy is required to fulfill the standards required of larger society. Such persons are therefore proud of who they are, as opposed to being bitter or resentful due to their stigmatization. Out-group members use a mix of seriousness and humor in the explanation of their situation to larger society. Irving Goffman (1967) makes the following statement in
regard to the out-group. “The nature of a good adjustment requires that the stigmatized individual cheerfully and unselfconsciously accept himself as the same as the normals.” These people desire to reject stigma in order to live in accord with everyone else and be accepted for who they are.

The final discussion will be one regarding the impact of self-esteem on stigma. According to John P. Hewitt, self-esteem is directly associated with mood in order to provide a measurable indicator of the variable. “Self-esteem is interpreted mood. That is, self-esteem is a culturally specific emotion associated with a general human affective response that we call mood.” Mood is a response to the successes and failures an individual may experience throughout the course of his or her life. All activities and experiences a person takes part in play a role in shaping mood. Any situation in which a person successfully achieves his or her goals encourages a state of euphoria, or the positive pole of mood, while a situation in which a person fails to achieve his or her goals encourages a state of dysphoria, or depression and generalized gloom.

The success of an individual is reinforced not only by the outcome of a particular action, but also by the feeling of high self-esteem and a positive mood. In this manner, success leads to the existence of a positive mood, which encourages further accomplishment. This snowball effect has the ability to take shape with negative mood as well, in that individuals who experience failure have little incentive to partake in any further “risky” activity. This concept can be applied to an individual who suffers stigmatization as the result of a debilitating accident. If such a person has positive self-esteem going into the accident, he or she is likely to use that energy in order to reintegrate into society and conform to its norms. Accordingly, a person with high self-esteem will be able to overcome the stigma attached to the disabled.

In this section, I will conclude the examination of stigma by comparing my experiences with the identified reasons for which an individual is able to overcome stigma. As mentioned above, I was only thirteen years old when my family and I experienced a life-altering car accident. It is apparent that I was
extremely lucky to be so young when this traumatic event occurred. This is due to two reasons. First, most people have heard the expression, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” Following the accident, I had to virtually erase all previous knowledge of my basic life skills and learn how to perform the same functions in different ways. If I were older when this accident occurred, it would not have been as easy for me to become proficient at such tasks. My ability to quickly pick up on these skills and fend for myself enabled me to almost immediately conform to society’s norms.

At the age of thirteen, children are encouraged to partake in as many different experiences and activities as possible. No matter what the outcome of the particular activity, the child is given positive reinforcement and made to feel successful. This feedback is central in the creation of high self-esteem within youngsters. According to John Hewitt, a snowball effect is created as success in an activity leads to a positive mood, which encourages further accomplishments. As a result of my high self-esteem and positive mood, I went into the accident with an attitude of invincibility. I felt that I could accomplish anything I set my mind to and therefore was able to bounce back into society stronger than ever. In this manner, there is a strong connection between self-esteem and the ability to reject societal stigma.

I believe that a pivotal point of the events surrounding the car accident was my decision to break away from the typical confinements of the disabled and turn the experience into one of a positive nature. Through this single choice, I held myself accountable for putting the utmost effort and determination into the rehabilitation process. Over a three-month period, I became completely independent and worked to blend the characteristics and qualities of my life before and after the accident. Through this determination, I was actually able to surpass both the mental and physical expectations of an average boy my age. According to Irving Goffman and Judith Howard, I aligned myself with the out-group in that I was able to overcome stigma and function in society as a “normal” person.

A major part of my fight to reintegrate with society involved the acceptance of my being disabled. When I was first injured, I refused to see myself as being affected in any way. I went so far as to completely disassociate from other individuals in wheelchairs and reject advice pertaining to my disability. I thought that by completely denying the condition, I would be able to rise above any kind of societal connotations placed on me. However, Goffman believes that the only way to reject stigma is to first accept the fact that there are differences between the disabled and able-bodied.
Before making any progress in society, I had to realize that there were activities in which I would have to participate differently than before the accident. I now see this as being positive in that I have experienced countless things that most other people could not imagine. Furthermore, I embrace the differences between others and myself to the extent that I would not give these experiences back for anything in the world.

Society has preconceived notions regarding what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior for its members. When individuals are observed to be in violation of such norms, they are automatically stigmatized and placed in a group consisting of other persons with reduced life chances. In this paper, I have used my personal experiences along with sociological theories to illustrate the underlying reasons people are stigmatized by society and show the way people are able to overcome a stigma projected onto them.

8 Goffman, 115.
10 Hewitt, 45.

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ENDNOTES

3 Goffman, 3.
4 Goffman, 129.
7 Goffman, 112.
What Brought Us Here

By Maggie Bennett
Class of 2005

Trusty legs lined up:
hips over thighs over shins over ankles
over toes. We never saw
who made the first foot
paths through the packing snow,
but took them –

  a pushing forward.

If snow did not make the world
more quiet, would we still call it snow?

Bring me a landscape and I will lift
myself to it, umbrella and descend
all over it. Picture a sheet
flung open from corners, floating
wide, coming down over a young you
who gape up at its air-caught dome,
wigglng, tickled in knowing
that it will cover you, whole face
to toe-tips. Let me be what blankets
you and I will promise to part
ungrudgingly when you pack
down to make new paths.
Revolution in Modern Drama:  
The Use of Theater Within Theater  

By Ken Brown  
Class of 2006  

Mr. Brown gives an overview of seminal theatrical works that use plays within plays to comment on the state of theatre and thereby challenge conventional assumptions. The play within a play presents several layers of meaning, which can both complement and contradict one another. The overall effect is a symbiotic story that provokes the mind and illuminates multiplicity.

Six Characters In Search of Author, by Pirandello, was a groundbreaking production in that it completely dismantled the concept of modern theater and put it back together in a way that rejected theatrical norms but embraced the need for the theatrical construct. His overt portrayal of the backstage in theater was revolutionary because it blatantly stated what Pirandello felt was wrong with theater at the time. Pirandello’s work received critical acclaim because it was a deliberate slap in the face to theater, but he was not the first to discuss the role of theater on stage. Alfred Jarry used King Ubu to do much of the same thing. Jarry was one of the first playwrights who can be classified as part of the absurdist movement in theater. The absurdity of his plays was both visual and textual and they both contributed to his mocking of reigning theatrical concepts. King Ubu is a strange parody of Macbeth and other Shakespearean plays, and this concept of parody allows Jarry to dismantle theater in a strange way. Pirandello and Jarry similarly deconstructed theater in their works but they both acknowledged the need for some level of theatricality. The staging of theater within theater in these plays is a bit of an oxymoron as it serves the purpose of allowing the authors to express their views on the shortcomings of modern drama yet also allows for meaningful construction and entertainment.

August Strindberg’s Miss Julie also utilizes the idea of a play within a play but to a different end from Jarry’s King Ubu and Pirandello’s Six Characters In Search of an Author. In this case, the actors seem to create their own drama, lying to each other as actors do the audience and allowing themselves to be lost in the play within the play. Strindberg’s use of a play within a play allows for a psychological analysis of characters and their motives. It’s an
interesting parallel that the audience gets to be involved in and will end up analyzing the underlying reasons why they go to the theater themselves. Strindberg is not using this effect to mock theater but to examine the psychology of the audience and force the audience to perform the same kind of psychological analysis on themselves.

Theater within theater can be found in Jarry’s *King Ubu* if it is looked at as a parody of Macbeth and other Shakespearean plays. Macbeth, or at least the parody of Macbeth, is the play within the play. Many distinct references to Shakespeare can be made. The parody allows for a new level of theater. It is no longer simply an actor attempting to assume the role of the character but it is an actor trying to be the character in *King Ubu* as well as in “Macbeth.” It’s the seriousness of Shakespeare combined with the slapstick humor of Punch and Judy. The plot of the play is literally about real things in life like avarice, war, and betrayal, but, on a different level, the play is about the shortcomings and limitations still present in modern drama. Jarry used this method to express his feeling that there is something wrong with the staging of classic drama. When *King Ubu* was put on stage, the show went above and beyond the absurdity of the text. The characters were dressed in outrageous costumes, large cardboard cutouts of horses were used to represent an army, and often one man was used to represent a large group. When Ubu and his army were marching through Poland, the audience was forced to imagine a mass of people on the stage. The absurdity has a double function in this play: to entertain and to exaggerate to a degree that one is forced to question the role of theater. Through the absurdity, Jarry questions the representations and limitations of modern drama as well as what type of role the audience should have in theater.

The concept of a play within a play in *King Ubu* can be looked at in another fashion. The first line in the *King Ubu* is “pschitt”, or “merde” in French. From the first line Jarry is already pressing the limits of what is accepted in theater. Many members of the bourgeois audience attending the first staging in 1896 immediately left the theater and rioted in the streets. The play was an outrage. Jarry clearly hoped for this type of reaction, and even from the first line of the play he had started breaking down the norms of theater. Jarry once made a statement about the dress rehearsal that it is “a free show for a select group of artists and friends of the author, and where for one unique evening the audience is almost expurgated of idiots.” This quote embodies what he was trying to accomplish with “King Ubu.” The riot erupted in the theater because the audience was full of idiots, according to Jarry. Those
who came to the theater that night were expecting a drama but it was the play on stage that was causing the drama. There was a drama onstage and an ensuing drama in the audience. The drama on the stage was mocking the limits of theater while being generally performed in the context of classical theater. The audience was unable to grasp this irony and sarcasm that Jarry was putting on stage and a new drama was caused off the stage. This drama, within the drama on the stage, created a new type of theater within theater.

The play within a play that occurs in Miss Julie is of a different style. Pirandello and Jarry utilized the stage to mock the current state of theater while still adhering to the general rules of the modern drama. In Miss Julie it is one of the characters who creates his own play within the play. Jean pretends to be someone he is not, confessing a love for Miss Julie that he has never had. Miss Julie is convinced he is telling the truth and she begins to fall for him and eventually gets sucked into the center of this play that Jean has created for himself.

Strindberg created this theater within the theater out of interest in the psychology of an actor and of the audience. The inner play was a deception, much like the thought that theater itself is a deception of the audience. The idea of losing yourself in a play or in a character is created within this play. Often times, Julie loses herself in the play that Jean has created. There are multiple moments when Jean seems to be putting on a show for Julie. One of the most important times that this happens is when Jean is telling Julie about his overzealous pursuit of her. Julie can do nothing but listen. She doesn’t seem to be actually taking part in the scene, at least not much more than as a member of the audience. The hope is that the audience will lose themselves in the greater play as Julie has lost herself in the play created by Jean. This psychological project works on multiple levels. The actor playing Jean is acting in a play but also acting to deceive Julie in the inner play. The actress playing Julie must play Julie in the overall play but also play the part of the audience that has been forced upon her by Jean in the inner play. The audience has the luxury of watching the whole play evolve from the outside.

The play within a play in Strindberg’s Miss Julie is not constructed to comment on the state of theater but to show how theater can be used to explore the psychology of human beings. Theater has an interesting role according to Strindberg. It can be used to examine the human condition and the underlying psychological reasoning of humans in general.

The play within the play forces questioning the psychology and motivation of Miss Julie, who is much like the audience, and Jean who is the actors on
stage. Julie is lost in Jean’s play and now the audience is able to witness what happens when someone is lost in the drama of another. An interesting moment is just after the peasants ballet occurs. Jean and Julie are together and Jean is attempting to convince Julie to run away with him. After every line of Jean’s, Julie can only respond with a question:

Jean: Run away, travel, far away from here.
Julie: Travel? Yes—but where?
Jean: To Switzerland, the Italian lakes—you have never been there?
Julie: No. Is the country beautiful?
Jean: Oh! Eternal summer! Orange trees! Laurels! Oh!
Julie: But then—what are we to do down there?
Jean: I'll start a hotel, everything first class, including the customers.
Julie: Hotel? (Strindberg 15)

It's as if Julie is watching the scene unfold, not actually playing a part in it but still involved. Julie has become the audience for Jean; she is the one being fooled. This continues for nearly a page and a half where Julie is completely unable to make any statement of her own, only to pose a simple question as to what Jean is saying. It's a role reversal that should force the audience to look at themselves and attempt to discover the psychology and motivation that occurs in their minds when they go to the theater and get lost in the play. The play within the play has forced this introspective attitude on the audience.

The use of theater within theater can be used to accomplish different theatrical goals. Strindberg used it to force the audience to look at themselves and question what role the theater plays in their lives. Pirandello’s overt display of this was used to mock the shortcomings of theater, but he still used the type of theater he was mocking to present the play within a play. Alfred Jarry used King Ubu to accomplish much of the same. The play within the play can be looked at in different ways in “King Ubu.” Firstly, it can be looked at as a parody of Macbeth and other Shakespearean dramas. The absurd parody allows for Jarry’s mocking of theater to come to the forefront. It can also be seen as a drama within a drama by the pandemonium it caused at its first staging. Jarry pressed the limitations of theater and many left the staging outraged with the play. Jarry, like Pirandello, used the play within a play technique to question the way theater is presented while still using the modern construction.

Strindberg’s use of a play within a play is a bit different in Miss Julie. The actors are assuming roles towards each other and towards the audience. Miss Julie is made to be the audience while Jean acts in front of her. Strindberg does
this to force the audience to look at the way Julie is acting and analyze the psychology of the situation. The hope was that the theater-goers would be able to realize that Miss Julie is much like the audience and they should be able to look inside themselves and attempt to realize their own motivations for attending the theater.

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SOCIAL PROGRESS
What’s Justice Got to Do With It?
The Truth vs. Justice Debate in the New South Africa

By Noah Silverman
Class of 2004

A State’s transition from an authoritarian and oppressive regime to a liberal democracy is often accompanied by painful debates concerning past atrocities and transitional justice. Mr. Silverman takes an in-depth look at South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission by probing the ambiguous controversy of truth vs. justice. Does offering amnesty to perpetrators of heinous crimes in pursuit of the truth further victimize those already affected by decades of apartheid? Or is the disclosure of truth the first step towards national reconciliation?

On October 29, 1998, amidst a furor of controversy, righteous indignation, and betrayal, Archbishop Desmond Tutu presented to President Nelson Mandela the five-volume, 3,500 page final report of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the symbolic – though not technical – end of the TRC’s two-year journey of soul-searching, sorrow, and confession amidst the back roads of South Africa’s harrowing past. Now, more than five years later, many within and without South Africa remain as divided and unresolved about the multiple contentious issues raised by the Truth and Reconciliation process. Not least amongst these issues of contention is the now perennial question within the emerging field of transitional justice, namely did the provision of amnesty to gross violators of human rights result in justice being sacrificed in the name of Truth and/or Reconciliation? With manifest ramifications within South Africa as well as for the conduct of future similar Truth Commissions in other states, the Truth vs. Justice debate raises both the rancor and the grace of many impassioned intellectuals on both sides. Some feel that the provision of amnesty to gross violators of human rights was, in itself, a travesty of justice and, what is worse, it also served to “doubly victimize” apartheid’s victims. Others argue that the truth that emerged from the TRC has fostered a greater sense of national reconciliation than divisive trials would have achieved and that apartheid’s victims gained in the cathartic experiencing of having the truth acknowledged.

While even a basic knowledge of the issues reveals that both sides have
their merits, a more thorough understanding of the arguments must and will be presented for effective analysis. Additionally, the entire debate must be appropriately embedded within both the historical framework of South Africa’s negotiated settlement and the theoretical framework of transitional justice in order to be properly understood. Within this context it has often been noted that the provision of amnesty in South Africa was a foregone conclusion and that trials and punitive justice, even if desirable, were politically untenable from the outset. Ultimately, however, I argue that justice, as traditionally defined, was as morally unattainable as it was politically precluded. There was never any moral possibility for retributive justice to compensate the victims for the horrors of apartheid. Thus, the debate, in this sense, is moot. Justice was only ever a viable imperative insofar as it was conceived of restoratively and in this regard, the TRC succeeded on the whole in achieving both Truth and Justice.

As the 1980’s witnessed the growth of democracy in many Latin American countries followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990’s, a small offshoot of the large corpus on democratization theory and practice delved into the challenges facing many new regimes in negotiating the legacy of abuses by their predecessors. What came to be known as “transitional justice” asks the question of how post-conflict societies can best grapple with their often violent pasts within the new context of democracy and the rule of law. As this nascent field developed, theorists and analysts coalesced around the notion that there were three basic but only two viable options available to new regimes. The roundly criticized and unanimously condemned first option was to adopt a policy of “general amnesia” in the erroneous belief that what is buried will not be resurrected. The folly of this approach is best summed up by the Russian writer Aleksander Solzhenitsyn: “By not dealing with past human rights violations, we are not simply protecting the perpetrators’ trivial old age; we are thereby ripping the foundations of justice from beneath new generations.”

The first of the viable options is to pursue prosecution and trials for past violators of human rights. Those who hold this position make up the so-called “Justice” camp. Advocates of what has come to be known as “Nuremberg-style trials” – named after the post-World War II trials for crimes against humanity – argue that “persons guilty of offenses should be punished as a matter of justice,” justice not only for the guilty who must pay, but also for the victims who must feel as though retribution has been enacted. “In other words, an absence of punishment implies a lack of justice” and a betrayal of victims’ needs. The other, so-called “Truth,” camp holds that
prosecution works against fostering a sense of national reconciliation by entrenching extant grievances and weakening the stability of the new regime. Thus, amnesty should be provided for past offenders in a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness. Many in this camp argue that they do not wish to negate justice, however, and therefore advocate amnesties that are conditional in nature. As Tristan Borer writes, “true reconciliation will not occur unless the perpetrators are forced to give something to the victims in exchange for receiving an amnesty. In the South African case, this translated into granting amnesty in exchange for a full confession.”

What severely complicates this debate in the South African context is that South Africa underwent what in transitional justice is known as a “negotiated settlement.” That is to say that the attainment of democracy in South Africa was not achieved through a military victory and the total collapse of the previous regime but rather through a compromised settlement in which both sides were dependent on the other for the stability of the new regime. This situation bore significantly on the Truth vs. Justice debate in that it severely restricted the freedom of the new government to pursue what it otherwise might have reasoned to be the best alternative.

The Nuremburg and Tokyo trials could work the way they did only because the guilty lost their political power and their guns. Their defeat was complete and the conquerors needed only to wrestle with their own sense of justice. But in … South Africa, the overthrown regime is part of the new government and still has enough power to obstruct the inquests into any abuses or to start a new civil war.

Because the African National Congress (ANC) was dependent on the National Party’s (NP) good will in order to establish full democratic elections, when the NP demanded an amnesty clause in the interim constitution the ANC had no choice but to acquiesce. As Borer writes, “Indeed, one of the major consequences of the negotiated transition in South Africa was the fact that no serious debate concerning the merits of prosecution over clemency was allowed to take place.” This then constructs what Borer calls the “South African dilemma”: given its constitutionally entrenched amnesty provision, how should the state devise “a process that is deemed acceptable to both the victims … as well as their perpetrators?” Many of the victims subscribed to the “Justice” camp mentality, which demanded that their torturers and the killers of their loved ones pay for what they had done. “Time and again, these victims … have said that what they most need for healing and reconciliation is justice. Most often, this
has translated in a demand for prosecution, and anger at the fact that former abusers have been able to maintain positions of power.”10 However, not only was amnesty already agreed on, but former members of the Apartheid State “claimed that what was necessary to feel a sense of reconciliation was the assurance that they would not become victims of retributive witch hunts.”11 The “dilemma” for the new government then became how to meet the needs of both groups, maintain a stable democracy, achieve political justice, and reconcile not just perpetrators and victims but the nation as a whole.12

The all-in-one solution devised to handle these diverse and most likely mutually exclusive tasks was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In accordance with the constitution and in order to satisfy the needs of perpetrators, amnesty was to be provided through a special Amnesty Committee; however, amnesty was to be conditional on the full disclosure by perpetrators of their deeds as well as demonstrative proof that their actions were motivated by political imperatives. The legislation that enacted the TRC nonetheless charged it with more than just the adjudication and doling out of amnesties. In order to “provide a sense of dignity to victims by allowing them to tell their stories” and to further national reconciliation, the TRC mandate also included establishing “as complete a picture as possible of the gross violations of human rights which occurred in South Africa between March 1, 1960 ... and May 10, 1994.”13 This task was to be carried out by the Human Rights Violations Committee. Finally, the TRC was instructed to make recommendations to parliament concerning the granting of reparations to victims of human rights abuses through the Committee on Reparations and Rehabilitation of Victims.14

This mandate, however, did little to assuage the fears and reservations of most parties. Afrikaners still feared a witchhunt and being assigned sole and collective guilt for past atrocities, while many victims felt as though they were being forced to forgive. Both of these views are echoed by the stories described within the narrative of Antje Krog’s Country of My Skull. Krog tells of how the families of Steve Biko and Griffiths Mxenge took the Commission to
court for its amnesty provisions. Speaking on behalf of Charity Kondile, whose son was murdered and body destroyed by cremation, Imram Moosa accuses the murderer, Dirk Coetzee, saying “If you were really remorseful, you wouldn’t apply for amnesty, but in fact stand trail for what you did.” Charity Kondile herself expresses the sentiment of many black victims perfectly when, in the interview in which she refuses to forgive Coetzee, she says “It is easy for Mandela and Tutu to forgive … they lead vindicated lives. In my life, nothing, not a single thing, has changed since my son was burnt by barbarians … nothing. Therefore I cannot forgive.” The brother of Ace Moema, another victim of Coetzee, testifies before the TRC and implies that it has achieved little more than the “farce” that was the Harms Commission of the previous apartheid government. Meanwhile as early as his interview to be appointed to the Commission, one of the Afrikaner commissioners, Chris de Jager, expresses his fear that the TRC will become a “witch-hunt,” a sentiment echoed by Professor Jaap du Randt who warns that “one person’s vigorous search for truth is another’s witch-hunt.” Krog and other journalists are inundated with hate mail referring to the “Crying and Lying Commission” and accusing victims’ testimonies as being “untested evidence.” Krog herself goes through a hundred different permutations of guilt, denial, anger, sorrow, and self-hatred.

Many have thus concluded that the TRC failed in all of its essential objectives. “Few people believe that it has [succeeded in achieving reconciliation.] Surveys have found that people are further apart than before.” While those granted amnesty walked out of the hearings and/or prison that day as completely free citizens, victims have still not received any reparations and “the TRC itself was the first to declare that [repairing and healing the trauma of the victims] was, singularly, its biggest failure.” And while many believe that if “regarded as an effort to create a forum for victims to bring some form of balance to the political ideal of amnesty, then the commission succeeded in a most remarkable way,” the indignant head of the Justice camp roars that Truth was not worth the sacrifice of Justice.

What this argument fails to con-
sider, however, is that justice – as they define it – was never really a possibility to begin with. Some have argued that this is so because trials were politically precluded in the negotiated settlement; while that is factually accurate, it is not why justice was never attainable. The advocates of Justice never could have been satisfied because they understand justice to be retribution and punishment. They cling to a notion of justice that is grounded in the biblical concept of “an eye for an eye.” The Justice camp attacks the TRC for its provision of amnesty because they feel justice was transgressed and victims were doubly wronged. But even if trials were politically possible and logistically feasible, would the result have been any different? The sheer horror and absolute depravity of apartheid was so great that an equal punishment could never have been morally exacted. The biblical concept of justice as parity would demand that just as many Afrikaners be tortured as were Africans, that just as many whites become impoverished as were blacks, and that just as many people be killed now as was done during apartheid. How could the dozens of murders committed by Dirk Coetzee be retributively punished? By killing him dozens of times? Certainly the Justice camp does not demand such a thing when they bemoan the lack of justice in the TRC; however it exposes a fundamental flaw in their moral thinking.

Unfortunately, the death of a murderer does not bring back the life of a loved one, and while retributive justice might have momentarily sated the victims of apartheid with the baseless passion of revenge, they would not have been healed and they would not have somehow miraculously attained justice. The sad legacy of apartheid was that on purely moral grounds, after so much injustice, justice became impossible.

What is left after this realization is simply Truth and Reconciliation, and it is by no accident that the Commission was so named. In his infinite wisdom, I believe that Archbishop Tutu recognized the impossibility of punitive justice in South Africa and so developed his concept of *restorative* justice. Tutu writes:

> We contend that there is another kind of justice, restorative justice, which was characteristic of traditional African jurisprudence. Here the central concern is not retribution or punishment. In the spirit of *ubun-tu*, the central concern is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offense.  

Thus, to my mind, restorative justice is in reality simply another way of
conceputalizing Truth and Reconciliation as one entity. Through Truth and Reconciliation a stronger and more durable justice can be built. In this manner, the TRC did attain justice: through the telling of their stories many victims gained acknowledgement of their pain and recognition for their suffering; through the amnesty hearings many victims finally learned the circumstances of demise and whereabouts of their loved ones’ remains; through the amnesty process perpetrators were forced to live with their public shame and disgrace, by many accounts a more cruel punishment than simple death or imprisonment; and while the communities may be farther apart now, the process of uncovering and publicizing the truth will ultimately allow for future generations of South Africans to unite under their commonly understood history. Just as it was impossible for retributive justice to be attained, likewise it is unrealistic to expect this generation to achieve true reconciliation. As always, it is for the children to rectify the wrongs of their parents and to rebuild the damage that has been left them.

Ultimately, in spite of the well reasoned and extensively debated arguments of both sides of the Truth vs. Justice debate, and even in light of the particular nature of South Africa’s transition to democracy, the question of the morality of amnesty is largely irrelevant. Amnesty is in fact amoral in that, while it bears no inherent good, it is a necessary expedient to the greater goods of Truth, Reconciliation, and their combination in Restorative Justice. It was and is the immoral history of South Africa, not its negotiated settlement, that makes it impossible to seek a moral resolution. What was possible and what was largely attained was Restorative Justice.

ENDNOTES

3 ibid. p. 304.
4 ibid. p. 305.
5 ibid. p. 305.
7 ibid. p. 31.
9 ibid. p. 304.
10 ibid. p. 305.
11 ibid. p. 305.
12 ibid. p. 306.
13 ibid. p. 306.
14 ibid. p. 306.
16 ibid. p. 80.
17 ibid. p. 142.
18 ibid. p. 86.
20 ibid. p. 214.
21 ibid. p. 385.
22 ibid. p. 385.
23 ibid. p. 385.
Women’s Rights are Human Rights: A Measure of Progress, Unification, and Freedom for African Women

By Andrew Imbrie
Class of 2006

Progressive movements which foster modern ideals and political reform often come into conflict with defenders of "traditional values." Mr. Imbrie focuses on a morally relativistic society in which the oppression of woman has historical legitimacy and cultural acceptance, bringing to light the progress and regression of African women’s rights movements. He highlights both the domestic and international spheres and notes women’s rights achievements such as political reform, NGO creation, and growing awareness of the movement itself.

“Let there be then no coercion established in society, and the common law of gravity prevailing, the sexes will fall into their proper places.” Mary Wollstonecraft

To what extent have women established that “Women’s Rights are Human Rights?”

Taken as a point of departure, this question will serve as a thematic backdrop to an exploration of the women’s rights movements in Africa, their progress, setbacks, and future implications for the continent as a whole.1 However, before moving on it is important that we contextualize our present viewpoint on the subject; for although ostensibly modern in its practical application, the debate over women’s rights has had a long and varied history. In terms of its overall progress, then, one’s source of measure must, at minimum, be broadened to acknowledge the historical longevity of women’s attempts to gain equality and freedom.2 Doing so will contribute to a more lucid understanding of the barriers to progress that African women face when caught between the rush of modernity and a culture struggling to maintain its traditional identity. Hence as spectators, and hopefully participants, in the women’s rights movements,
we must gain an understanding of some of the characteristics that can be extrapolated from this conventional clash between tradition and modernity.\textsuperscript{3}

In the traditional sphere, many conventional societies are extremely resistant to change. This resistance may include an intolerance of new ideas, a denial of different opinions, a lack of interest in new information, and a deep suspicion of technology. As a corollary to this last point we may also note that traditional societies tend to place a high value on religion, traditional patron-client relations, and particular moral and ethical values. Just when the period of “modernity” began to emerge, and subsequently the tradition/modernity schism, is still debated but we can make a rough estimate relative to increases in technology, a rapid diffusion of ideas, openness to new experience unfettered by heteronymous forms of authority, and an interest in the outside world.

In its overall scope, then, this essay will attempt to trace the women’s rights movement in Africa in light of the conflict between societies torn between traditional and modern values. Our investigation will be limited, focusing on key themes and articles that exemplify the overall struggle of African feminists. More specifically, the essay will provide a critique of the extent to which African women have established that “Women’s Rights are indeed Human Rights.” The paper will begin with an examination of the successes that African feminists have achieved throughout their years of struggle, covering areas in political reform, NGO organizations, and the establishment of international awareness. Following this will be a similar analysis of the struggles that African feminists have had in internationalizing and domesticating their personal agenda. The paper will conclude with a brief remark on the distinction between moral relativism and moral realism placed in an applied context for those dealing with gender-based ethical atrocities in Africa.

Regardless of one’s ethical trajectory on the issue of African feminist achievement, it is clear that change has been an evolutionary process; considering what women are up against, change may only come in this form. Perhaps most gradual is the attempt by African women to create “political space” for

"Women’s groups in South Africa and Malawi have played a substantial role in constitution formation."
reform. To understand why this is so, one need only turn to the numerous statistical results on the subject. As Lisa Aubrey notes in her essay “Gender, Development, and Democratization in Africa,” that “only 9 women had been elected the Heads of State in the twentieth century...[and] in the mid-nineties women comprised only 4 percent of members of parliamentary assemblies in Africa North of the Sahara” (Aubrey 90). Such statistical inequalities are rooted in African tradition, Islamic expansion, European colonization, postcolonial state policy, and patriarchal forms of governance. Hence, although these traditions have restricted women’s rights, they have not prevented activists from questioning their validity. Efforts to combat such tendencies can be found in engenderization proposals, calls for broadening and universalizing education, de-legitimizing existing governmental structures and pioneers, and challenges to neo-patrimonial rule. Although this process has, as mentioned previously, been an evolutionary one, women who have fought to exact such change should be commended for their efforts.

In addition to challenging political structures, women in Africa have mobilized their efforts in the form of Non-Governmental Organizations, a fact that should not be overlooked. For in many cases, “ruling parties and regimes sought to bring women into state-related clientelism by controlling women’s associations through various strategies, including the creation of women’s wings tied to the ruling party” (Tripp 37). Hence, this movement away from clientelistic control has allowed women’s groups to become autonomous centers of power. Examples of such independent sources of power include: association with the Greenbelt Movement, the Society for the Advancement of Women in Malawi, and the Women’s League of the United Nations Independence Party in Zambia. Also central to the development of women’s rights in Africa has been the role that women’s organizations have played in reforming the Citizenship Law of 1982-84. Many attempts at reform were “stonewalled” by the government but this form of filibuster did not prevent a coalition of various women’s rights activists to emerge, such as Emang Basadi, a non-partisan women’s organization in Botswana -- and press their concerns for female inclusion in the legislation process. As Professor Aili Mari Tripp notes in her article “Women’s Rights Movements as a Measure of African Democracy,”

The challenge to the Citizenship Law was an important movement building and consciousness-raising project for women’s rights advocates in Botswana. It showed that neither a political nor a legal strategy by itself was enough, but that a legal challenge root-
ed in and supported by political mobilization could win.
(Tripp 145)

Moreover, many women’s groups have played a substantial role in constitution formation. This is particularly apparent in South Africa and Malawi where women’s organizations, such as the Commission on Gender Equality and the National Commission on Women and Development, were constantly involved in ensuring the inclusion of women’s rights throughout the codification process. As Noeleen Heyzer, the Executive Director for the United Nations Development Fund for Women, observes,

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of women’s networks across the world, proof that women are coming together to be heard — on the frontlines in their communities, in government and national institutions, in the international sphere and through the media, their voices are not only those of victims, but of survivors, leaders, advocates, and change agents. (UNIFEM)

As Heyzer points out, women’s networks have also reached beyond domestic issues and have made their presence felt in the international sphere. Women’s organizations have, despite their multiplicities, been able to come together and coordinate their agenda at a transnational level which “demonstrates the transformative potential” of their involvement (Friedman 22). Worth noting is the role that women played at the 1992 Rio conference concerning sustainable development. Considering the African economic system, it is praiseworthy that women have come together to raise the importance of this issue. Water contamination, for example, deeply affects the domestic structure of the African household and at times the interpersonal relationships between husband and wife—father and daughter. Women’s voices were also present at the ‘93 conference at Vienna where women’s rights were not only pushed as human rights but the problems with various perceptions of northern values vs. southern values were dialogically addressed. The following year many women’s organizations and activists met with UN representatives at Cairo for the 1994 conference on population and development. Here again their presence was felt as they raised questions on moral personhood, contraception, and women’s rights to control their own reproduction. Nine years later, the African Union would adopt a women’s right to abortion for the first time in international law explicitly setting forth the “reproductive right of women to a medical abortion when pregnancy results from rape or incest or when the
continuation of pregnancy endangers the health or life of the mother” (Africa-Action).

Despite such success, however, we must refer back to our previous assertion, namely, that the actualization of “Women’s Rights as Human Rights” has been an ongoing process and as such the movement has its share of setbacks. Bureaucrats continue to stonewall a large portion of proposals from women’s organizations, and authoritative male-centered political rule still exists. The lack of efficacy among women is perhaps partially to blame, for unless women situate themselves within the political sphere their agenda will never be fully realized. Feminists activists must work to overturn the common conception of politics by women as “dirty.” The Botswana government, for example, has managed to maintain a centralized form of chauvinist politics and, consequently, there has been little to no change in its policies towards gender equality. Additionally, there is a conspicuous shortage of empirical and scientific research on the topic of “Women’s Rights as Human Rights” (Poe et al. 823). Without such concrete evidence, political reform both on the national and international level will remain limited.

Paralleling the need to exact change at the political level, women’s rights activists must also ensure that their autonomous centers of power, NGO’s, avoid having an apolitical following. Numerically, women “dominating the NGO sector [tend to fit] squarely with the notion of the apolitical women interested more in the domesticity of the private sphere” as opposed to the overly politicized setting of the public sphere (Aubrey 94). Professor Aubrey goes on to note that as a result of their apolitical membership, many NGO’s can be marginalized in their political focus as well as disorganized in concept and practice. Reciprocally, however, it does not bode well to have independent women’s organizations that are too intimately tied with state politics, for their agenda no longer stands in tension with the government but acts out of deference to political influence. This event, often referred to as state feminism, does nothing for the movement of women’s rights in Africa and ultimately “serves to maintain the status quo of the public life of politics, and to repress women’s engagement in civil society” (Aubrey 104).

“To what extent have women established that women’s rights are human rights?”

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Perhaps an alternative path can be found through education. A fair number of women have succeeded in gaining access to information, publishing scholarly journals and essays, and speaking publicly. However, this form of manifesto can address at best only a very limited sector of the African public, leaving out, perhaps most importantly, the rural class of African society. How then might these standards of right and wrong, education, opportunity, and universality be communicated to the masses? My conjecture is that this communication will require a complex interdependent response from the global community. African women must make the necessary political, social, and ethical cases to engage global society in a critical dialogue on morality.

When a woman in Africa, for example, is raped repeatedly by her own family members and forced at a young age to go through the horrific process of genital mutilation, this is not a matter for political rulers in Africa to cry moral cultural relativism but a call for those willing to listen to intervene. Such initiative is normally debated along the lines of when intervention becomes invasion. But when a government, like many in Africa, declares intrusive all attempts at intervention by upholding relativistic claims of morality, the results may be disastrous. Hence, it is crucial that global society, as well as African feminists, understand the arguments for moral cultural relativism and promptly discover why such arguments must be dismissed.

Central to the arguments of moral cultural relativism are four main premises: there is/are no objective moral truth(s), standards of right and wrong are defined by society, no society is morally “better” than another but merely upholds a different set of relativistic values, and no objective standard(s) exists whereby one society could be in a position to judge another society as better or worse; doing so would not only be rationally unjustified but hubristic.

However, if we take these claims seriously there are unacceptable consequences. To begin, how might a moral cultural relativist maintain the doctrine of societal impartiality when some societies uphold as right universally unacceptable practices such as slave labor, oppression of women, and female genital mutilation? Moreover, if we accept moral cultural relativism as true then citizens or members of that society need only consult the respective authorities for clarification on what is morally right and wrong. Hence, women in Africa who are virgins need only consult the male-centered patriarchal forms of governance to discover whether their submission to rape by African men who hope to cleanse themselves of AIDS [a deeply traditional practice] is morally right. One might also ask the moral cul-
tural relativist to explain the phenomenon of societal “improvement.” Take, for example, our previous case of virginal rape in African societies to cure AIDS. Although this act is horrific, it unfortunately represents a societal improvement from earlier times when women were subsequently killed after their raping—now viewed as immoral by the African society and government. But how is this “moral improvement” possible; doing so would entail valuing another society’s ethic over its own and/or judging its created standards against an external standard of morality—but this violates the tenet of societal impartiality towards standards external to its own. Finally, one may also point out the common anthropological concern to the moral cultural relativist that realist political theories of societal independence since the inception of the “nuclear age” have waned in importance. The state is no longer a closed entity, autarchy becoming more of an ideal than a suitable practice. We live in a complex interdependent world where technology bridges island nations into a single land mass that can no longer claim to exist independently of its neighbors, whether this independence is claimed in the name of morality, politics, or mere practice.

To what extent have African women established that “Women’s Rights are Human Rights?” In the previous paragraph I have tacitly attempted to argue that human rights are not only objective but must analytically contain women’s rights, namely, that we must take the concept of human rights to necessarily include women’s rights built into its very concept—without the constraints of moral cultural relativism. Perhaps even less demanding, geo-political society, activists, and women’s rights movements must, at minimum, not shudder in the face of relativistic claims for in essence they result in nothing more than truncating, as Charles Taylor would point out, necessary dialogical conversation. The essay as a whole, however, has attempted to reveal practically how African women have made this previous supposition a reality. Granted that detractors exist, women in Africa have moved the arrow of evolution in a positive direction with the available resources. Women’s Rights NGO’s continue to proliferate with vigor, the political sphere is beginning the engenderization process, and international society has recognized the rights of women not only in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but at specific hallmark conferences as well. Without the persistent efforts of the feminist activists, these results might have never become reality. It is now up to the global community to recognize women’s efforts, validate their goals, and assist in their relentless effort to discover and gain what is due, their freedom.
ENDNOTES

1 For thematic sake, this essay deals with the progress of women’s rights movements in Africa as a whole, but this should not discourage the understanding that different countries within Africa vary in the extent to which progress on the women’s front has been made.

2 Such attempts are scattered throughout history and can be found to exist not merely in organized movements but in the actions of many strong-willed individuals such as: Livia (Emperor Constantine’s Wife), Empress Theodora, Blanche of Castile, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella d’Este, Lucrezia Borgia, Mary Astell, and Mary Wollstonecraft, to name only a few.

3 I preface the tradition/modernity dichotomy with the words “conventional clash” with the intent of leaving open the possibility that tradition and modernity may, in some respects, not be as repellent to one another as they might first appear.

4 For an insightful elaboration on this topic see James Rachel’s The Elements of Moral Philosophy (4th Ed.) chapter two.

WORKS CITED


Conservation Terrorism

By Alice Kelly
Class of 2004

From Yellowstone to the Clean Air Act, man has measured the progress of modernity by the steady march of environmental conservation. In striving to protect the earth, however, we have often compromised the autonomy of various groups of people. Ms. Kelly terms this disenfranchisement “conservation terrorism.” Her essay reminds us that what is progress for some is not necessarily progress for all.

Environmental terrorism has been a fast-rising issue in the international environmental eye, in reference to the employment of environmental damage as a weapon used in war and in terrorist activity.¹ Those who use the term claim that environmental terrorism has been used since biblical times. In recent years it has been applied to such cases as the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam, and the Iraqi spilling of oil in Gulf waters.² This term has been used in politics, media, and academia, but what about the term “conservational terrorism?” Has it been considered that by protecting a certain environmental resource or value, it is possible for one group to hurt another? Terrorism is always used to influence some governmental or human action and usually comes in the form of violence, both physical and mental, directed at a specific group.³ According to Schwartz, environmental terrorism only exists if the act of terrorism breaks national or international laws which protect the environment during peace and wartimes, when the threat has specific targets and the violence is aimed at a symbolic mark, and when the environment is used by an entity as a way to instill fear in a population over the ecological consequences of its actions against the environment.⁴ I believe that “conservational terrorism” is an issue that should be considered parallel to environmental terrorism, especially in view of the effects of establishing national parks and protected areas. Thus, my definition of “conservational terrorism” would be similar to Schwartz’s. Conservational terrorism must include the unfair, or illegal, allocation of land or resources by a government or other entity in the name of conservation. This allocation of land or resources must displace, or deprive another group of people of essential assets, and this allocation must be a symbolic act, used to harm and cause the fear in the people being affected.

Using the definition employed above, conservational terrorism has
been taking place for decades, beginning with the exclusion of Native Americans from the Yellowstone area in the Untied States for the purposes of preserving a pristine environment.\(^5\) Claims of environmental problems or need for protection are continually used as an excuse for illegitimately taking land from native peoples.\(^6\) These claims are usually associated with the idea that these local people prefer a “rapid and relentless exploitation of the natural world,” incapable of preserving, or sustainably using, their own resources.\(^7\) Such conservational terrorism has occurred worldwide, affecting many of the 250 million indigenous peoples on Earth.\(^8\) The Coica in the Amazon, the San people in Botswana, and the Katu people in Indonesia are just a few indigenous groups experiencing conservational terrorism currently.\(^9\) Its effects range from the excluding of people from their land, to denying them resources that have traditionally been gathered locally. Imposed conservational laws change traditional subsistence hunting into poaching, and wood gathering for fuel into timber stealing, criminalizing traditional activities.\(^10\) The concept of conservational terrorism is a current issue in the case of Amboseli National Park in the Kajiado District of southwestern Kenya. This paper aims to discuss and reveal the issues of conservational terrorism in terms of colonial and liberated government imposition of regulations and restrictions on the Maasai people indigenous to the Amboseli ecosystem. Further, it will address the ways in which this terrorism was dealt with, and ways in which it can be fought currently.

**Background:**

**The Amboseli Ecosystem and its Ecological and Cultural Importance**

To understand the problem we must first understand the setting and the issues at hand. I will first explain why the Amboseli ecosystem is biologically important, showing why it is a place much in need of protection and stewardship.

The rare vegetative and geologic qualities of the Amboseli ecosystem make it an important grazing and browsing site not only for large mammalian species such as elephants, but also for Maasai cattle. These wet grazing areas have been essential to the survival of the Maasai, and other pastoralists in surviving droughts and dry seasons for over 2000 years.\(^11\) In many cases the survival of the Maasai depended on the survival of their cattle.\(^12\) This significant dependence on cattle was born of the state of the rangelands upon which the Maasai live. Unsuitable for agriculture, the land made the Maasai dependent on cattle for many of their nutritional needs.\(^13\) Thus, cattle became, and remain to be, the main focus of Maasai lifestyle, regulating
economic, social, and physical aspects of well being.\textsuperscript{14}

**Views of the Land: Maasai, Colonial, and Post-Colonial Governments**

Before British colonialism (1904-1963) Maasai herders populated the Kajiado District of Kenya.\textsuperscript{15} Land was communally owned, and different clan territories were adjusted during dry seasons and droughts to assure the survival of most herds.\textsuperscript{16} Land was, and still is, seen by the Maasai as something that cannot be possessed, a creation of god. “How can you own something you are part of?” asked a Maasai man when questioned about land ownership.\textsuperscript{17} The Maasai have a deep respect for their land, believing that god made them pastoralists so that no Maasai would “defile the land by farming, digging wells, or burying their dead.”\textsuperscript{18} The use of wildlife as a food resource is still taboo in Maasai communities unless the community is under great stress from drought or disease.\textsuperscript{19} Many Maasai believe that eating wildlife is greedy because of their belief that the cattle god gave them are enough to sustain them without other sources of sustenance.\textsuperscript{20} Maasai saw wildlife as “second cattle,” willing to live with them, but believing that they served no purpose other than emergency food sources.\textsuperscript{21}

The Maasai have been pastoralists for generations, measuring wealth in the form of cattle production and numbers.\textsuperscript{22} Because there is a strong drive to sustainably keep cows continuously, the Maasai have a highly developed sense of land-use that would be nearly impossible to equal in ecological profiling or planning.\textsuperscript{23} It is this traditional use of land for sustenance and wealth, along with constant territorial battles with other clans of Maasai and ethnic groups, that has made land so important to the Maasai.\textsuperscript{24} Unfortunately, with the advent of British colonialism these values and sustainable practices were affected negatively.

When the British arrived in Kenya in the 1880s they brought with them Western ideas of land ownership, development, and cultural civilization. At first arrival the British branded the Maasai as barbaric, fierce, lustful, and lawless wild-men, seeing their actions as “predatory” influences on other ethnic groups in Kenya.\textsuperscript{25} As the British set themselves the task of “developing” Kenya, many other ethnic groups such as the Kikuyu and Kamba fell in more easily with their plans of heightened agriculture and a monetary trading system.\textsuperscript{26} The Maasai, however, did not. Instead, they remained fiercely traditional, refusing a sedentary agricultural lifestyle.\textsuperscript{27} Because of this resistance the Maasai were branded as backwards and uncivilized, their land use wasteful and an obstacle to development.\textsuperscript{28} This
extremely negative British view of the Maasai lifestyle, and their implication that the Maasai underutilized the land over which they had control, helped justify the annexation of Maasai lands for European settlement. This was the beginning of the conservationist terrorism in the Amboseli region. Within 20 years of settlement British colonialists settled around primary water sources within Maasai land, excluding them from land use. The Maasai were further punished for their social and economic rebelliousness by having over half of their land resources taken away from them through treaties in 1904 and 1912 in the form of wildlife reserves (like Amboseli), and privately owned ranches. The land-grabbing of the British colonials through the creation of national reserves was done under the guise of protecting the land from the people and preserving a natural environment uninhabited by man. These preservationist ideas were presented as triumph over greed and waste, showing compassion for wildlife and the land. The poorly thought-out plans for these reserves showed more malice and censure towards the Maasai than a love of wildlife, however. Most of the land grabs performed in order to preserve natural environments were a breach of the promise made to the Maasai in 1911 that their remaining land would stay in their possession for as long as they existed as an ethnic group. During colonial occupation, and after its conclusion in 1963, other ethnic groups moved into Maasailand, living on land bought from the government that had promised that no more land would be taken away from the Maasai.

With the fall of British colonialism, the dominant ethnic group in Kenya, the Kikuyu, came into power under President Jomo Kenyatta. During this transition period the new government followed the path set by its predecessor, encouraging development and modernization. The agricultural Kikuyu, long rivals of the Maasai, showed political and economic animosity towards them. This animosity, combined with increased international pressure to protect the wildlife of Amboseli, caused the post-colonial government to make moves to keep Maasai and their cattle out of such reserves as Amboseli. With increased pressure to work within a monetary economic sys-

“How can you own something you are a part of?” asked a Masai man when questioned about land ownership.
tem, and develop agriculturally, along with smaller land resources, the Maasai began to diversify their incomes using small scale ranching of sheep and goats, as well as practicing small scale subsistence farming.\textsuperscript{39} While the Maasai views of land use were changing, so were those of the national government. By the early 1960s the Yellowstone Model of national parks (totally exclusionary and preservationist) had become a popular ideal for nature conservation.\textsuperscript{40} The popularity of this type of park gained recognition worldwide through the work of such American preservationists as David Brower.\textsuperscript{41} Native peoples were believed to be ignorant of the value of the wildlife around them, and thus possibly damaging to the environment.\textsuperscript{42} Further, with the rising popularity of wildlife parks in Kenya, there came tourist complaints of seeing more Maasai than animals, pressuring the government to make changes in the park plan.\textsuperscript{43} In 1974 Jomo Kenyatta decreed that the Amboseli reserve be made a national park, totally excluding Maasai and their cattle from a 200 square mile area which encompassed some of the most constant and important springs in the area.\textsuperscript{44}

**Conservational Terrorism**

Amboseli is an ideal example of conservational terrorism. The Maasai, the most disliked, seemingly dangerous tribe in Kenya were portrayed as a threat to development and to other ethnic groups by the colonial and post-colonial government. Thus, they were punished, oppressed, starved, and otherwise terrorized as a result of their image. This is an ideal case of an unpopular, unwanted population being oppressed and threatened by the establishment of preservationist institutions in the hopes of the eradication of that population, or the alteration of their traditional practices. The illegal procurement of land, a symbolic part of Maasai identity, is an act of psychological and physical terrorism. This constant unfair acquisition of land caused widespread fear amongst the Maasai people. These effects on the Maasai were not achieved through explicit violence or law, but instead through other avenues which appeared to be positive, such as creating national parks and reserves, and banning the photography of Maasai. I will now describe the progression and development of this conservational terror within the Amboseli ecosystem (Maasailand).

When colonial powers first created national preserves in Maasailand they were called “shamba la bibi” by the local Maasai, meaning “the woman’s garden,” a derogatory remark referring to the British Queen.\textsuperscript{45} The Maasai did not like these reserves because they were geometrical containers, holding the environment as a separate entity from the pop-
though this law claimed to be protecting the Maasai, it was actually intended to revoke any incentive they had for wearing their traditional dress and displaying body markings (simple wrappings of cloth and extensive body alterations such as ear stretching). The government wanted to discourage this traditional costume because it was believed that it reflected poorly on Kenya as a developing nation if tourists returned to their native countries bearing pictures of “uncivilized natives.” Thus, instead of protecting the Maasai, this law took away the only form of income from tourism the Maasai had. The combination of further restrictions on land and frustration with their loss of tourist income caused the Maasai to become belligerent. A Maasai man speared a foreign tourist through the shoulder.

This action set an example for other Maasai protest, and sent a clear picture to the Kenyan government of Maasai sentiment at that time. This act of protest was not organized or funded; it was instead an act of passion, of pure emotion about an issue. It was also a warning.

As was mentioned previously, the Maasai were promised in 1911 by
the British government that their sanctioned lands would be theirs for as long as they existed as a people.\textsuperscript{56} This promise was revoked time and time again with the creation of reserves like Amboseli, and Maasai Mara, as well as private ranches and farms for British colonials.\textsuperscript{57} After the British left, land grabbing remained a constant point of contention between the Maasai and Kikuyu. This sentiment is evident in this quotation from an Amboseli Maasai following decolonization: “When the British left, the Kikuyus took over. Tourists make them greedier than ever for our land.”\textsuperscript{58} This constant land grabbing is a form of psychological terrorism, because, as was mentioned before, land is a symbolic part of the Maasai identity. With the illegal acquisition of this land both British and Kikuyu were threatening Maasai culture and subsistence. The Maasai people were continually in dread of losing more land, living under the pressures of the reality of their helplessness against government actions. Further, the Maasai people’s lives were physically threatened by the loss of land, depending upon it heavily for survival.

Beyond greed for foreign profit and land, it was obvious to the Maasai that the Kikuyu acted out of their ability to control and oppress them. According to Weisner, situations such as this have “less to do with the ability of local populations to cope with conditions in their lifeworlds and more to do with the desire for external authorities to exert control.”\textsuperscript{59} The Maasai and Kikuyu were in conflict over land and livestock long before the British arrived.\textsuperscript{60} As David Collett states, “while both the economics of tourism and the desire to preserve wildlife have played a part in the development of National Parks and Game Reserves in Masailand, it is the covert power of the administrative image of the Maasai that has provided the most sustained justification for these policies.”\textsuperscript{61} Thus, Maasai saw the annexing of Amboseli as a national park as an act of war on the part of the Kikuyu.\textsuperscript{62} This conservation of land was actually a violent act directed at the Maasai. The implications of the act of violent conservation of the swamps in Amboseli included severe problems for the local Maasai community. The restrictions on land available to livestock would lead to conflicts over remaining water sources.\textsuperscript{63} Further, the restrictions on land use would lead to the overpopulation of certain areas, leading to erosion, grassland degradation, vegetation disruption, disease and cattle death.\textsuperscript{64} Closely tied with cattle death would be Maasai starvation, sickness, and death. According to David Western, a researcher in the Amboseli ecosystem, “if the entire swamp were closed to livestock, the Maasai would be marginalized and starve.”\textsuperscript{65}

In response to the atrocities visit-
ed upon the Maasai by both colonial and post-colonial governments, a form of “Maasai nationalism” arose. This nationalism became especially important in the Loitokitok area of southwestern Kenya, an area within the Tsavo-Amboseli ecosystem closest to Amboseli. Nationalism included buying back land within Maasailand which belonged to other ethnic groups, as well as privately owned parts of group ranches to assure that enough communal land existed amongst the Maasai to allow them to continue some semblance of their pastoral lifestyles.

**Protest**

**Action from within:**

**Maasai approaches**

In response to Kenyatta’s declaration of the annexing of Amboseli as a national park, the Maasai threatened to burn Amboseli’s swamps, kill lions and endangered black rhinoceros, as well as harass tourists and rangers. The government took no notice of this warning and three days after this threat was made the killing began. Three elephants, two rhinoceros, a litter of leopard cubs, lions, and hyenas had been killed. These killings were to protest the loss of Maasai dry season grazing lands to a national park which did not benefit the Maasai whatsoever. Further, the protest was meant to prove the point that Amboseli would never survive without Maasai consent and involvement. They wanted to make clear that without the Maasai the migrations to the park would stop, the animals within would be killed, and with the loss of the animals would be the loss of the tourist industry that the government was so desperately trying to build.

Although there is no clear evidence as to who ordered the killings, these actions were presumably ordered by Maasai elders, who, several years prior to the fight against national park status, had ordered Maasai Morans (warriors) to enter the reserve and kill elephants in response to the tightening of restrictions on the land. Although only a select group actually performed these acts, there was solidarity amongst Maasai that prevented the prosecution of any single party for the violence. The aspects of this movement are typical of Kamienieki, et al.’s description of “New Grassroots Actions.” The activists in this case were Maasai. In accordance with Kamienieki, et al.’s definition they were driven by survival issues as well as the continuation of cultural practices, were poor and ethnically discriminated against, and were fighting for a local issue of immediate concern. As activists the Maasai mobilized the few resources they had: their historical image of violence and extreme measures, their advantage of knowing the
land and the weaknesses of park protection, the understanding of what was visible and important to the park tourists, and a united front of resistance towards the park’s implementation. The tactics used by the Maasai are equivalent to environmental monkey-wrenching, establishing immediate short-term effects through drastic action. Although the particular circumstances of this protest are unique, the tactics are not singular in their violence. Instead, this “environmental banditry” was a tool used internationally, beginning with the displaced rural poor of the Adorondack Mountains in New York State who purposely violated unwanted environmental regulations in the late 1800s to protest oppressive park regulations.

Action from without: David Western

With the lack of international Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) interest in the conservation terrorism the Maasai were confronted with, David Western was the only supporter of the Maasai who was not within the ethnic group. David Western, a wildlife researcher in the Amboseli ecosystem since 1967, had worked with the animals surrounding and within Amboseli reserve. During his time researching, Western became a “stock associate” with the Maasai when he exchanged livestock with local men. Once considered a peer because of his cattle ownership, Western was allowed to discuss the fate of the Amboseli ecosystem and the pastoralist lifestyle of the Maasai with elders and warriors. Further, owning cattle as the Maasai did made Western realize the difficulties of their situation in the Amboseli area, and the necessity of the swamps for dry season survival. Western was in the unique position of fully understanding the Amboseli ecosystem ecologically as well as socially. With this knowledge Western tried to create a compromise between preservation of the animals and land of Amboseli and the survival of the Maasai. In 1968 Western began work on creating a “Maasai Park” with the help of anthropologists, Maasai, and ecologists, which would make the local Maasai people instead of the government the custodians of the land and wildlife. The plan would allow the Maasai people to benefit from the tourism that the park attracted, while at the same time preserving the wildlife and ecosystem of Amboseli. This plan was first rejected by the government and later by the Maasai, fearing further land grabs. With the declaration of Amboseli’s national park status in 1974, Western acted as an informal negotiator between the government and the Maasai. He tried to explain that a park would never enclose an entire ecosystem, meaning that the animals and vegetation within
the park would still depend on the willingness of the local Maasai to preserve it.\textsuperscript{88} Western also worked to broker a deal with the World Bank to allow the Maasai to gain money from their support of a national park.\textsuperscript{89} Further, Western fought to have the implementation of park rules pushed back until the end of the drought that had begun in 1971.\textsuperscript{90}

Results of Protest

Kamieni, et al. states that the effectiveness of a movement “is determined by the extent to which [those involved] achieve their stated goals.”\textsuperscript{91} Although the Maasai did not have officially stated goals for their protest, I will work under the assumption that they were trying to achieve: 1. respect and recognition of their position of power within the Amboseli ecosystem, 2. a reduction or total revocation of park boundaries, 3. compensation and economic benefits for lost land and tourism. I will first discuss the immediate response to the Maasai protest, and then the continuing responses that extend to present day.

Immediately after the Maasai attack on the animals within Amboseli, the park size was reduced and a “buffer zone” was created between Maasai territory and the park in which cattle were allowed to graze.\textsuperscript{92} The implementation of park rules was delayed until the drought ended one year after their initial declaration.\textsuperscript{93} Further, the World Bank loaned the park $40 million to ensure proper infrastructure and benefit were awarded to the Maasai.\textsuperscript{94} Boreholes were built, as was a pipeline to give the Maasai water sources outside of the park.\textsuperscript{95} The Maasai were presented with a wildlife utilization fee, paid twice during the dry season, with which funds the Maasai built a primary school.\textsuperscript{96} These concessions created a more open relationship between the Maasai and the government. As a result, the park flourished with the Maasai promise to protect the wildlife within it.\textsuperscript{97} In the short-term the violent and radical actions of the Maasai were effective according to the definition set forth by Kamieni, et al.\textsuperscript{98}

Unfortunately, although Maasai violence against wildlife was halted, the government’s embarrassment of this ethnic group, as well as their intentions to marginalize them had not. By 1981 the Wildlife Conservation and
Management Department, responsible for the maintenance of the pipeline and boreholes for the Maasai, stopped maintenance and these vital resources fell into disrepair. Further, with the oil crisis of the 1970s the tourism trade waned, allowing little money to be given to the Maasai for benefits or compensation. In my personal experience living and researching in the area near Amboseli National park in the spring of 2003, I saw no proper water resources for the Maasai. Instead, many of these people were driven to break an enormous pipeline headed for Nairobi (used to irrigate flower farms) to survive in the dry season. Water was muddy, scarce, and illegally obtained. The people living within the migration corridor between Amboseli and Tsavo West parks claimed to gain no benefits from wildlife. Instead their farms and lives were destroyed by marauding elephants, zebra, and gazelles. The only compensation received for a death resulting from wildlife is the equivalent of $200. To avoid these problems an electric fence was erected near around one of the farming communities in this corridor with the help of U.N. money. Although this fence benefits the farmers within it, the Maasai living beyond the limits of the fence continue to suffer.

Without government funding or help, the Maasai of the Amboseli area created seven wildlife concessions by 1997 with the help of David Western. Further, within the buffer zone of Amboseli National Park cultural manyattas have been implemented by the Maasai. These manyattas are representations of Maasai communities which are used to educate and entertain tourists about traditional Maasai culture. Although these manyattas are somewhat demeaning to the proud Maasai people, they do allow them to benefit from the tourist industry that the park has created in the area. Although these are improvements, they still do not give the Maasai the compensation and rights that they deserve in the area. Thus, in the long term only one goal remains fulfilled: the Maasai still maintain a buffer zone around Amboseli National Park in which they are allowed to graze their cattle. Otherwise, the drastic measures that the Maasai used to achieve immediate change did only that, allowing the Kenyan government and park system many avenues to continue conservation terrorism. This movement was not effective in the long-term for several reasons. The issue did not gain international attention or support, the Maasai lacked media access or avenues of presenting their cause to the public, as well there was the fairly wide-spread unpopularity of the Maasai within Kenya. Without support outside of their own ethnic group, aside from David Western, a singular crusader for the cause, the Maasai will not achieve the reparations and privileges that they deserve.
Conclusion

To argue against conservation terrorism is not to argue against conservation. Obviously, conservation is a necessary action in many fragile ecosystems worldwide, like Amboseli. It is the implementation of this conservation that becomes the issue. If it is performed in a malicious and terrorizing manner, conservation can be a force of harm rather than protection. Historically this perspective has not been considered. Instead, as Jacoby states, the history of conservation has become “a narrative drained of all moral complexity, its actors neatly compartmentalized into crusading hero (conservationists) and small minded, selfish villains (conservation’s opponents)”\textsuperscript{103} In the instance of Amboseli, and countless other instances of conservation terrorism, these neat descriptions are not the case. We must ask, then, what are the best ways to stop conservation terrorism, and stop this incorrect labeling of heroes and villains?

I propose three steps to eradicate conservation terrorism: (1) Give rural and indigenous people affected by conservationist movements a public voice.

As Jacoby points out, there is a “voluminous body of documents generated by conservationists,” while “there exist few sources produced directly by those who engaged in acts such as poaching or timber stealing.”\textsuperscript{104} By allowing this less-heard group to speak, local governments would have more of an idea of the impact of their actions. Further, by giving seldom-heard positions a pulpit, international NGOs, and interest groups would have an opportunity to get involved in the process of the fair implementation of conservation. With improved transparency in the issues of conservation there would be less room for corruption, malice, or terrorism. (2) Educate everyone. By educating the local people affected by conservation on the necessity of preserving a certain area, as well as on sustainable living techniques and simple ecological practices, national governments would be able to implement conservation goals with far more ease. By educating governments and park managers on the values of cultural diversity, as well as on the practices and beliefs of the people they would be affecting, fears would be allayed, and implemen-
tation could be tailored to these people. Thus the ignorant ideas of heroes and villains are removed from the conservation picture and are replaced with cooperative parties working together towards a common goal. (3) Allow those affected by conservation to benefit from it. As in the plan I outlined for the possible implementation of a “Maasai Park” in the Amboseli ecosystem, I believe that it is important to give local communities an economic incentive for conservation. Without incentives nothing is achieved, people are oppressed, animals are killed, and “environmental banditry” is allowed to continue.

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Only Human

Why It Is Right To Limit The Prenatal Screening And Abortion of Disabled Children?

By Jared Tester
Class of 2004

As we grow older, we encounter events and people that lead us to evolve the opinions we hold. In this case, Mr. Tester's personal testimonial concerns the progress of his own views on prenatal screening and abortion, as enhanced by the experiences of his close friend. His essay asks us to consider the arguments for proscribing a woman's right to unconditional abortion.

It was through the American Legion’s Boys Nation Program that I met my dear friend Paul Tanghe, and it was Paul who changed my view of abortion forever.

In the spirit of Boys Nation—an annual, week long "mock government" exercise for which 96 "Senators," two outstanding graduates of each Boys State program within the "Lower 48," are selected to debate and pass "Bills" concerning the issues of the day—I engaged Paul in a discussion of abortion.

"I remembered what you said," Paul pulled me aside after a particularly long "senate" session that memorable week. "I couldn't really think of an answer offhand, but I found something I wrote for school."

Handing me what would later become his Senior Speech and Personal Statement for admission into the United States Military Academy, Paul remarked, "Think about it" before walking away. The essay, "Ex Andrew In Veritatem," concerns Paul's eldest brother, Andrew, of whom the youngest Tanghe writes, "My brother Andrew was born with an extra 21st chromosome, challenging him with Down Syndrome...We do the things we do, we try the things we try, because everyday a reminder calls us on the phone or greets us when we walk in the door. It is a reminder that all is not well in the world, that for some people, things will never be right." (2)

Although I have never had the privilege of meeting Andrew Tanghe, he taught me that disabilities are not banes, but human blessings. Before attending Boys Nation as a burgeoning high
school senior, I seldom thought of my own disability, Cerebral Palsy. Indeed, since mine was but a "mild" case, I had long had the luxury of "living my life" following the multiple corrective orthopedic operations that consumed the first eleven years of my existence. Nonetheless, Paul Tanghe's essay was a rare revelation, and I decided that I had to reassess the role of disability in my life.

Of paramount curiosity was the question: had they had the resources, would my parents have chosen to abort me? While I have never desired (nor will I ever desire) to trouble my parents with such a query, I know that my birth-six weeks premature--physically endangered my mother and me. At fifty-two, my mother numbers her five hours in labor as the most painful and frightening of her life. Furthermore, my extensive stay on a ventilator was of great worry to the Doctor in Residence, and I am an only child, predeceased by a brother born still. "Had we been unable to have you, we would have given up," my family recently confided.

So, what stopped them?
Why am I alive?

Based on my own experiences, I believe that -- with the requisite assistance -- disabled citizens can bring joy to themselves and -- as proven by people like Andy Tanghe -- those around them. Therefore, contrary to my heady high school views, I now hold the abortion and "prevention" of disabled children to be indefensible, exempting women who have suffered rape and incest, as well as women whose very lives are imperiled by the absence of reproductive freedom.

While my own essay grapples mainly with the reasons for prenatal screening, in the piece that inspired my own, "Prenatal Screening And Its Impact On Persons With Disabilities," Deborah Kaplan confronts abortion, a particular method of "prevention" that is the central issue of this essay.

I am sensitive to the "Pro-Life" movement, given the fact that I myself could have been aborted. Yet I remain wary of the Pro-Life movement's Fundamentalist underbelly. In their so-called zest to protect human life, many allegedly "religious" people often seek to diminish the quality of existing humans' lives by limiting or barring all casual sexual activity. We do not know what each person is thinking directly before, during, and after a sexual encounter; to assume so would be to pose an Orwellian quandary. Therefore, we are right to allow sexually active men and women to gain access to contraception. "The Right To Choose," however, is another matter.

While I have been criticized for taking only a "moderate" Pro-Life stance, I do so for personal reasons, such as my aforementioned support of casual sex and my familiarity with the crime of sex-
ual assault. Rape and incest, I argue, are sometimes so traumatic that the victim never recovers. On the plight of his brother, Paul Tanghe writes, "It is not right that [Andrew] could never play football. It is not right that my brother can never drive a car, live on his own, get married and raise his own children. It is not right that many of his friends and coworkers cannot even go to the bathroom by themselves, but it is reality" (2). Comparatively, it is not right that many victims of rape and incest are driven to insanity, suicide, and murder of their assailants, but it is reality.

The moral distinction between someone who has an abortion in the case of rape or incest, and an otherwise "healthy" mother who acts to eliminate a predetermined disability in her child is therefore clear. Simply, imagine the rightful public outcry if women began deliberately aborting or "screening out" not only the disabled, but babies of a certain race, gender, or sexual orientation. Such activity smacks of Fascism.

Aside from the obvious ethical dilemma posed by the legitimate "slippery slope" of abortion/"prevention," proponents of limiting the number of disabled citizens in the world claim that the consequences of caring for the handicapped run so much deeper.

On apparent economic ramifications, Kaplan comments, "It is widely believed that there are disability-related costs that must be assumed by families with disabled children. Although there is plenty of anecdotal evidence of this situation, it is unclear just what these costs are and how predictable they are" (Kuhse and Singer 132). Kaplan is right to assert that there are added fiscal responsibilities associated with raising disabled children. Nonetheless, I doubtless am not the first to assert that the same is true of all children, and that the parent who is unprepared to take responsibility -- to change diapers, to watch Disney, to rise at ungodly hours for unexpected feeding frenzies and pay the insurance behind it all -- is unprepared to be a parent.

Other critics point out that, under the Americans With Disabilities Act and similar legislation intended to help the handicapped, employment of the disabled has recently decreased. In reality, the entire economy is struggling, so
does this mean, in turn, that parents should not have children for fear that their babies may one day make bad investment decisions? 

Historically, the purpose of civil rights movements has been to change social mores, so that the oppressed can achieve full equality. While people such as myself, Paul Tanghe, and countless others wholeheartedly support the Disability Rights Movement, we wholeheartedly question Deborah Kaplan’s last “reason” for the elimination of disabled children: the arbitrary notion of "normalcy." The author writes, “To a certain extent, this concept of perfection is tied to our notion of ‘normalcy’” (Kuhse and Singer 133). Kaplan then posits that “potential research questions” (133) support her claim, but behind all of the data, I sense there is still something that opponents of disability rights and the “scientific experts” cannot see, or do not choose to see. Based on the anecdotes and arguments I -- and many others -- have presented, how can one not see that the disabled are people whose presence benefits others, and society as a whole? Why are so many blind to the Casey Martins, the Max Clelands, the Andy Tanghes in their midst?

In response, I believe the disabled can do no more than live their lives as best they can, thus affirming and reaffirming their personhood to an often indifferent world. To borrow once more from my friend, Paul Tanghe, “All it takes to restore my faith is to come home from school and get a hug from my brother...Then I know that each time I act on behalf of someone else, I am not only bettering the world, I am better for it.”

As Robert Kennedy said in 1968 to a segregated South Africa, ‘Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others...he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope...and those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance" (3).

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SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY
Carbocaine: Comparison to other Anesthetics based on Structure, Toxicity and Potency

By Alissa Agnello
Class of 2005

Agnello compares carbocaine to other anesthetics based on its structure, toxicity and potency. She proposes that the discovery of more anesthetics, and the quality of current anesthetics, could be furthered by focusing on the effects of one enantiomer of a current anesthetic. Further research could yield a more effective painkiller, thus greatly improving the comfort of patients during surgery.

Carbocaine (Mepivacaine) is a local anesthetic, which came into clinical use in 1956.¹ It is often used as intravenous regional anesthesia, especially for surgeries that last at maximum one hour² (although the effects can last up to four hours³). Although some toxicity data has been published,³ it is less toxic than some other popular anesthetics, such as bupivacaine (which causes cardiotoxicity) and chloroprocaine (hypersensitivity).² Mepivacaine, like many other anesthetics, is manufactured by joining a five- or six-membered, saturated ring (with one nitrogen atom) to an alkyl group using an amine bridge.

Compared with other anesthetics, mepivacaine is relatively safe. Bupivacaine and chloroprocaine cause cardiotoxicity and hypersensitivity respectively.² Cardiotoxicity is caused when the sodium channel is blocked. Many anesthetics cause an accumulation at the sodium channel, because the blockage which normally dissociates during diastole dissociates much more slowly.³ Mepivacaine, however, has sustained release, which prevents toxic plasma levels from being reached.³ The level of mepivacaine concentration can be monitored by radioactively labeling the N-methyl group. In the minutes immediately following the administration of mepivacaine, the highest concentrations of the drug were found in the brain, salivary glands, and liver. After an hour, however, the largest concentration was in the excretory glands. Another way to track the mepivacaine in the body is to monitor traces of the metabolites in urine and plasma, in order to determine how much of the drug is in the body at a given time and how long it remains in the body.⁴ The major metabolism of mepivacaine
Carbocaine and relevant compounds (by author).

begins with dealkylation into piperidoxylidide (PPX). Mepivacaine is metabolized into many other metabolites. For example, one pathway begins with adding a hydroxide group onto the benzene ring (through an epoxide intermediate), while another pathway double bonds an oxygen to the carbon that is ortho to the nitrogen.

Studying the structure of the mepivacaine molecule is useful in understanding trends in the potency and toxicity patterns in anesthetics. Neutral, amine-linked anesthetics (such as mepivacaine) partition readily at an oil/water interface, which provides information
about the anesthetics’ hydrophobicity or lipophilicity. Since pharmacological activity of a drug is correlated to hydrophobicity and lipophilicity, by studying the partition coefficients, it is possible to predict that mepivacaine is more potent than anesthetics that do not partition as easily. Mepivacaine can be protonated into its ionic form, which also can be measured for its partition coefficients and thus its potency. The hydrophobicity of the mepivacaine ion can make it more potent by either allowing the drug to bind to the site better, or by allowing the drug better access to the binding site in the membrane.5

As for the differences amongst the amine-linked local anesthetics, the length (or structure) of the carbon side chain (off of the tertiary nitrogen atom) is the main varying structure.3 Absorption of mepivacaine is somewhat hindered because of its double-ringed structure. Other anesthetics that have shorter carbon chains in place of the disubstituted benzene do not have the challenge of steric hindrance and thus are absorbed more readily.6 Conversely, the longer the length of the chain is, the greater the solubility in lipids, and the greater the potency.3 Following this theory, the greater the number of alkyl groups, the more likely the anesthetic is to be more potent and toxic, despite steric hindrance.3

Another structural interest is the difference between the enantiomers of mepivacaine. As normally produced, both R- and S- enantiomers are made in equal proportions.3 When referring to the enantiomers of mepivacaine, the chiral carbon is the carbon adjacent to the nitrogen atom and bonded to the carbonyl carbon7. The racemic mixture of mepivacaine is more soluble than the isomers alone; however, both isomers are less toxic when not in a racemic mixture. Furthermore, the S- isomer is longer lasting and has lower acute toxicity than the R-isomer8. The S- isomer is biologically more active than its enantiomer7.

Future anesthetics could be found by further studying the effects of only one enantiomer of a currently used anesthetic, for example Levobupivacaine. Levobupivacaine, the S-stereoisomer of bupivacaine3, is in the same family as mepivacaine in that 2,6-pipocoloxylidide (essentially the mepivacaine molecule without the methyl group ring substituent) is one of the intermediates in its synthesis. Levobupivacaine shows much lower cardiotoxicity data than a racemic mixture of bupivacaine.9 Another possibility in the future of anesthetics is the manufacturing of biodegradable matrices or copolymer pastes, which would allow the medicine to be released over a period of days or weeks to alleviate long term pain.3
ENDNOTES


Laws of Nature:

Why No Lawyer Can Save Us

By Drew Beebe
Class of 2007

Does the natural world adhere to natural laws? Did Newton truly discover the laws of motion or did he merely invent? Philosopher Ronald Giere has argued that so-called laws of nature are merely linguistic tools created and revised by humans. To the contrary, Mr. Beebe argues that Giere’s arguments are self-defeating and that an understanding of universe requires the existence of natural laws.

"One has been endowed with just enough intelligence to be able to see clearly how utterly inadequate that intelligence is when confronted with what exists." -Albert Einstein

Ever since philosophers first began squabbling with one another, the question of whether the universe follows a strict set of rules has been at the center of countless debates. While some argue that our world must be made up of rules, known as laws of nature, due to the countless experimentation and testing that suggest these laws exist, others argue various counterpoints, such as the fact that only a miracle could have led to the world we know, or that laws cannot exist because we will never observe them individually. Any explanation, however, cannot deny the fact that our universe is governed by a set of rules, regardless of whether we will ever be able to understand them.

In 1687, Isaac Newton published three scientific laws in Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newton's_laws_of_motion) which drastically changed our understanding of how the world worked. With these new laws, people could make astonishingly accurate predictions towards how objects would behave, given the right circumstances. These circumstances, for a completely accurate prediction, however, required the object(s) to be alone in a vacuum, which is simply impossible. On top of this aspect of Newton’s laws, groundbreaking work done in 1905 by none other than Albert Einstein took a radical perspective on Newtonian physics, which essentially debunked
Newton’s theories as laws. Newton’s work, however, was not incorrect by any means; his laws simply do not accurately describe the rules governing objects moving at incredible velocities. The issue that Einstein’s work brings into light is a question of what we can accept as the truth concerning the way the universe functions, and whether we can ultimately find the truth we’re looking for, or if we are embarking on an endless journey of scientific revision.

A widely accepted definition of a "Law of Nature" is that it describes something that is an undeniable fact, void of exception. Take, for example, Darwin’s law of Natural Selection which provides a good example because of its intuitive nature. According to this law, traits that encourage procreation will survive and be passed on, whereas those traits that inhibit procreation will not. This provides an explanation for countless features of life on Earth, and will, by rules of logic, always remain true, even if the features of what encourages procreation change. Future discoveries in the field may shed light on aspects of evolution never before considered, but the chances that the law will be disproved, just as Newton’s law were expanded upon, is very unlikely.

Ronald Giere, a philosopher of science, speculates that there are no laws of nature, but plays the role of a linguist rather than a philosopher. The argument against the laws of nature that Giere presents rests on the definition of the word “law.” He states, and correctly so, that a law must hold true in any circumstance; otherwise it would cease to be "void of exception." For example, it is true that force equals mass times acceleration. If I were actually to take a ball of a given mass, and apply a given force to it, it would not accelerate at the exact rate that Newton’s laws would have predicted. Why? Because of air resistance, gravitational forces, and possibly even other reasons we do not yet understand. Newton’s law then becomes force equals mass times acceleration if there is no air resistance, no gravitational forces acting upon it and so on. Grier’s objection to the use of the word law is that a true law, he argues, cannot be trailed by an infinite number of clauses, especially if the circumstances that the law describes do not

"Future discoveries in the field may shed light on aspects of evolution never before considered, but the chances that the law will be disproved is very unlikely."


exist in our universe. Therefore, he concludes, there is no such thing as natural law.

What Giere seems to overlook, however, is that these clauses are simply laws of nature of their own. Air resistance, for example, is a law that states that any voluminous object traveling through any medium besides a vacuum will be slowed by the force being exerted on it by resident particles. While it does impede the clarity of the results of an experiment, it certainly does not suggest the absence of laws. If anything, it clues us into the astoundingly complex and beautiful lawfulness of our universe.

To imagine our universe as a chaotic, lawless entity is difficult. While we may marvel at the coincidence that brought us to live in this universe of countless wonders, we cannot allow ourselves to interpret this coincidence as something else. Science, as we know it, could not exist in a lawless universe, for it would be ruled out by its own structure. The fact that we can conduct repeatable experiments, and always reach the same conclusion as our understanding of the laws of nature would lead us to expect, draws us to the conclusion that our universe is very ordered.

An issue which has only been mathematically supported since the advent of computers is the infinitely complex aspect of chaos in our world. When we look at nature, there are no straight lines, and no nice even numbers, everything is only as complex as we decide to measure it. Hypothetically, if we were to measure some things to an infinite extent, we would continue to see an increasing measure of complexity, similar to the unending number pi. This would lead some to believe that the chaotic nature of many things in our world signals the lack of laws, but in truth, the fundamentals of chaos are generally based on simple rules. For example, the Mandelbrot Set, a well known example of fractional geometry, is an infinitely complex system based on the extremely simple formula of $Z=Z^2 + C$ (http://www.ddewey.net/mandelbrot/). Amidst what seems to be complete and unending chaos, rests a simple and easy formula, governing the entire process.

Our universe is governed by a set of rules that we must acknowledge whether we can see or understand them. Giere argues that there can be no laws because the rules of this world all support one other, and cannot truly be distinguished from each other, but really, much like a fractal, all are held together by natural laws. Ultimately, the only trustworthy way to learn about our world is through experience, and that is what science is: recorded experiences about the world that allow us to draw conclusions due to the fact that the universe follows a fundamental set of laws.
"Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night; God said, 'Let Newton be!' And there was light."
- Alexander Pope

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