Editors
Joseph Zeppetello
Meredith Sloan
Angela Laflen
Students From The Fall 2006 Workshop in Editing and Revision

Judges
Tommy Zirhellen
Moira Fitzgibbons
Lyza Zeppetello
Carolyn Rodewald

Cover Art
Dan Torres

E-Scriptor
Marist College
3399 North Road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
Preface

This journal of student writing is a collection of essays written for College Writing II classes at Marist College for the 2005-2006 academic year. Each teacher of College Writing II was asked to submit an outstanding essay from his/her class. Two editors then reviewed the essays, and works were chosen from each semester to be included in this volume.
Contributors
Fall 2005

John Sullivan won First Place for his essay "Locusts: The Devastating Cloud" written for Judith Saunders' College Writing II class. John Sullivan is a sophomore at Marist. He is a Radio/TV/Film major with minors in Journalism and Cinema Studies. He likes to write screenplays and fictional stories in his free time, as well as watch acclaimed cinema to broaden his view of fine film. In the future, his dream is to edit and direct film and possibly create his own film studio.

Sabrina Cunningham won Second Place with her essay "Poverty in Africa: A Governmental and Economic Issue," written for Lynne Koch's College Writing II class. Sabrina Cunningham is 19 years old, a sophomore at Marist College, and lives in Newburgh, NY. She has been involved in numerous volunteer activities such as Red Cross, Special Olympics, YMCA, Good Counsel Home, and various nursing homes. Here at Marist she is part of Campus Ministry, Habitat for Humanity, and the Marist College Dance Club. She is also a sales associate at Calvin Klein. Her future plans involve becoming an entrepreneur in the business field and becoming a successful businesswoman.

Sabrina would like to thank Professor Koch for sending in her essay, and would also like to thank her parents for always being there for her, giving her the opportunity to attend Marist College and guiding me in the right direction.

Andrew Demsky won Third Place for his essay "Really, Reality TV." Written for Jeff Davis' College Writing II class. I am currently a sophomore majoring in Film/Television production at Hofstra University. While at Marist I bowled on the intercollegiate team and hosted a radio show on "The Fox," 88.1 FM. Today, I still bowl as often as possible, go fishing on the weekends, and play golf during the warmer months.

Andrew Slafta won Fourth Place for his Essay, "Ethics in Genetics: The Battle Over Stem Cell Research and Therapeutic Cloning" Written for Mary Jo Boudinot's College Writing II class. Andrew is a Second-year Marist student, pursuing a Major in English with a concentration in Writing. He is currently a head technician for the Office of College Activities, an active member of the Literary Arts Society, The Dean's Circle, and the Honors Program.

Spring 2006

Liz Eraca won First Place for her essay "Misconceptions Regarding Women's Roles in Islam," written for Penny Freel's College Writing II class. Liz Eraca is currently a sophomore English major at Marist College. She graduated from Maine-Endwell Senior High and frequently returns to her home in Binghampton, NY to visit with her family and friends. Liz hopes to attend law school after graduating from Marist. In her free time Liz enjoys oil painting and listening to music.
John Garrity won Second Place for his essay, "Much Ado About Evolution," written for Moira Fitzgibbons' College Writing II class. John is currently a sophomore at Marist College. He is from right here in Poughkeepsie, and was born at Vassar Hospital. John is a History major, but plans to also add English as a major. His future plan is to become a college professor.

Mary Alvarez won Third Place for her essay "What Are You?" written for Greg Machacek's College Writing II class. Mary is a current sophomore here at Marist College and is majoring in International Business and Spanish. She was born the youngest of three siblings in Mamaroneck, New York to two Gallego immigrants. Gallegos are from the North-West of Spain, right on top of Portugal. She has grown up to be very proud of her heritage and has always been curious about it. Mary visits Galicia every summer to see her grandparents, which has brought her to love Spain. Her dream is to live there one day in the near future. Mary lives in Mount Kisco, NY with her father and step-mother, who is from Colombia. Having a Colombian influence in her life has made her see things in a different light and perspective. Not only do Colombians speak somewhat differently than Spaniards do, but they also have differences in culture. For that reason, Mary has come to love the Spanish language and the history behind all that it implies.

Holly Stajk won Fourth Place with her essay, "Sweatshops," written for Joseph Zeppetello's College Writing II class. Holly Stajk, a sophomore at Marist College, is from Rumson, NJ and graduated from Red Bank Catholic High School. She is majoring in business and minoring in fashion merchandising. During her summers, she lifeguards at the beach in Sea Bright, NJ. She has an older brother, Peter, who graduated from Saint Joseph's University. She hopes to one day become a successful buyer for a retailer at a prominent department store, such as Nordstrom's. She also enjoys traveling to Vermont, skiing, shopping and playing sports.
Contents

John A. Sullivan
Locusts: The Devastating Cloud

Sabrina Cunningham
Poverty in Africa: A Governmental and Economic Issue

Andrew Demsky
Really, Reality TV

Andrew Slafta
Ethics in Genetics: The Battle over Stem Cell Research and Therapeutic Cloning

Liz Eraca
Misconceptions Regarding Women's Roles in Islam

John Garrity
Much Ado About Evolution

Mary Alvarez
What Are You?

Holly Stajk
Sweatshops
Locusts: The Devastating Cloud

By John A. Sullivan

The lone locust is an unassuming creature. Locusts are members of the Acridoidea family, also known as short-horned grasshoppers (Locust FAQ's). It is covered with an exoskeleton composed of mostly chitin (Locust FAQ's). Measuring only two inches long and weighing two grams, it seems to be a normal grasshopper (Entomology' 681). In fact, there is no difference between grasshoppers and locusts except that locusts have two stages that determine their behavior: solitary and gregarious (Insects' 46). The solitary stage is characterized by the locusts remaining on their own and being brown in color (Locust FAQ's). There are many theories about why locusts suddenly turn into swarms. A study at Cambridge University found that the gregarious stage is induced when the locusts become overcrowded. When locusts come into contact with each other several times each minute for about four hours, this is enough to make the population swarm ('Locust' par. 10). Another theory is that when food becomes plentiful, the locusts sense it and swarm together to travel and eat (Insects' 46). No matter what the cause, something causes the locusts to become "gregarious" and swarm together in huge clouds of insects (Insects' 46). The locusts also change color to pink or yellow, depending on how mature they are. Up until 1921, the two stages of locusts were mistaken for two different species entirely (Locust FAQ's).

There are many different species of locust. There is the African Migratory Locust (Locusta migratoria migratorioides) that is indigenous to most of Africa; the Oriental Migratory Locust (Locusta migratoria manilensis) from South-east Asia; the Red Locust (Nomadacris septemfasciata) from Eastern and Southern Africa; the Brown Locust (Locustana pardalina) from Southern Africa; the Moroccan Locust (Dociostaurus maroccanus) from North-West Africa to Asia; the Bombay Locust (Nomadacris succincta) from Southern Asia; the Australian Plague Locust (Chortoicetes terminifera) from Australia; the Tree Locust (Anacridium sp.) from Africa, the Mediterranean and the Near East; the now extinct Rocky Mountain Locust (melanoplus spretus) from North America; and most importantly, the desert locust (Schistocerca gregaria) which covers most of Africa, the Middle East and into the Western part of India (Locust FAQ's). The desert locust is the most well-known because of its devastating migratory seasons and widespread movement. Each species has its own key breeding areas; however, the most heavily watched are the desert locust breeding areas which include the southern desert area on the border of Pakistan and India, the coasts of the Red Sea, the interior Eritrean and Sudanese deserts, the Tibesti mountains of northwest Chad, the Air and Temensa Mountains of central Niger and the Adrar des Iforas Mountains of Mali (Etymology 682). Females bury their eggs about 10-15 centimeters beneath the ground, usually in sandy soil. If she is in the solitary stage, there will be about 95-158 eggs in the egg pod. If she is in the gregarious stage, however, she will most likely lay less than eighty eggs per egg pod. Females lay eggs about three times in their lives, about every 6-11 days (Locust FAQ's).
The locust is not really a threat when it is not in the gregarious stage. When these insects start to swarm, however, problems arise. Due to their ability to congregate in staggering numbers, they leave a trail of destruction as powerful as any war or natural force could hope to leave.

The sheer numbers that comprise a locust swarm are staggering. Swarms can range in size from 100,000 to 10 billion insects (Grzimek 208)! The smallest of swarms can be just a few hundred square meters in size (Entomology 682). The largest swarms, however, can wind up being over 1,000 square kilometers or 400 square miles (Entomology 682, 'Insects' 46)! The density of the swarm varies, but on average has 80-500 million insects per square kilometer or 100-200 million per square mile ('Insects' 46, Entomology 682). These swarms can fly as far as 100 kilometers a day in the general direction of the wind (Entomology 682). As well as flying at a great speed, locusts have the ability to stay in the air for prolonged periods of time. There have been documented cases of extremely long locust odysseys. In 1954, a swarm of locusts flew from Northwest Africa to the British Isles. In 1988, another swarm flew over 5,000 kilometers from Western Africa to the Caribbean over a period of ten days (Locust FAQ's)!

Due to the immense size of locust swarms, the amount of food consumed by these creatures is devastating to those communities the locusts pay a visit to. Locusts can eat roughly their own weight in fresh food a day (Locust FAQ's). In one day, a very large swarm of locusts can devour the equivalent of food consumed daily by about 20 million people (Grzimek 208). In 1957, a swarm of desert locusts destroyed 167,000 tons of grain crop, enough to feed one million people for an entire year ('Insects' 47). While locusts have never been found to attack people directly and do not seem to carry any diseases that could harm humans, the loss of crops to locusts can lead to "human malnutrition, starvation and death" (Locust FAQ's; Grzimek 75).

While desert locusts have been the most consistently dangerous species of locust, one species threatened the very survival of our country in its early days. The now extinct Rocky Mountain locust had some of the largest recorded swarms in history. Typical swarms had billions of insects in them. These locusts would sweep down out of the Rockies and destroy the communities and crops of the still young plains settlers (Lockwood). In 1876, our own U.S. Congress went so far as to declare the locust "the single greatest impediment to the settlement of the country" (Lockwood). The locusts, in addition to eating all crops, would affect the nation in other ways. Trains would run over thousands of the locusts resting on the tracks, making the trains grind to a halt, as the greased rails were too dangerous to continue zooming along them (Lockwood). Birds, namely chickens, would also eat the insects. Although the locusts themselves were not poisonous, too many locusts in their diets rendered their flesh and eggs inedible (Lockwood).

The problem of the Rocky Mountain locusts was soon solved by a simple human migration. No one knew at first what caused the sudden disappearance of the species (Lockwood). Today, however, there is a theory that miners searching for precious ores dug into the locusts breeding grounds, the eastern valleys of the Rockies, and destroyed
the breeding grounds by getting rid of all of the Rocky Mountain locusts eggs buried within the soil ('Locust' par. 9).

The devastation of the locusts has made its impact around the world. Numerous literary works from the Bible to American Frontier literature has had the locust captured for eternity simply because of how destructive it really is.

American Frontier literature was very heavily influenced by the destruction brought on by the Rocky Mountain locusts. Laura Ingalls Wilder described the locusts that descended on her town of Walnut Grove, Minnesota as a "glittering cloud" ('Locust par. 7). The locusts destroyed her family's crops that were supposed to last an entire year. The prairie all around was also completely devoured ('Locust par. 7). Another frontier writer, O.E. Rølvaag, wrote about a locust swarm descending upon Norwegian settlers on the Dakota prairies. His description of the event is one of the most accurate and powerful of any passage on locusts: "And now from out the sky gushed down with cruel force a living, pulsating stream, striking the backs of the helpless folk like pebbles thrown by an unseen hand; but that which fell out of the heavens was not pebbles, nor raindrops, nor hail for it would have lain inanimate where it fell; this substance had no sooner fallen that it popped up again, crackling, and snapping--rose up and disappeared in the twinkling of an eye; it flared and fluttered around them like light gone mad; it chirped and buzzed through the air; it snapped and hopped along the ground; the whole place was a weltering turmoil of raging little demons; if one looked for a moment into the wind one saw nothing but glittering, lighting- like flashes--flashes that came and went, in the heart of the cloud made up of innumerable dark-brown clicking bodies!" ('Locust par. 8). The locusts were an amazing destructive force and yet Rølvaag seems to have found a great artistic way of looking closer at the swarm itself.

In another part of the world, ancient peoples were having their own troubles. The King James Bible mentions the locust twenty-eight times. In the book of Exodus, Moses employs the help of God to send a horrible swarm of locusts into Egypt as the eighth plague: "And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locust went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such" (Exodus 10:13-14). One can only assume that these locusts were a swarm of desert locusts, which was brought on the wind. The swarm might have also been particularly large so that they received the title "there were no such locusts as they."

God also uses the locust as a curse for the Hebrews. If they didn't follow God and "observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day," God promised, "Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it" (Deuteronomy 28:15; Deuteronomy 28:38). Locusts were thought of as a sign that the Hebrews had been unfaithful to God.
In the book of Revelations, locusts are revealed to be feared by many people as they are shown as tormentors of those damned souls that God will not save as the fifth trumpet sounds. Indeed, "there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (Revelations 9:3-4). They were to torment those damned men for five months (Revelations 9:5). They had "breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle" (Revelations 9:9). This breastplate reference could be referring to the exoskeleton of the locust, and the sound of many locusts' wings probably sound like horses running to battle.

The Bible also mentions locusts as a source of food for some figures and peoples in various stories. The most well-known is the story of John the Baptist, who "was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey" (Mark 1:6).

In fact, many people who are affected by the locusts seem to have adopted a diet including the locust as a delicacy. In Chinua Achebe's book, Things Fall Apart, he talks of people wondering about a cloud that was approaching, as it was not the rain season. Once they realized the cloud was actually locusts, a joyful cry went up, quite a stark contrast to the usual cries of terror. When the locusts finally landed, it was dark. In the morning, dew covered the grasslands and the locusts could not fly or move until they dried. Taking advantage of the locusts immobility, the residents of the village, Umojia, took out bags and pots and filled them with locusts. They cooked the locusts in clay pots and "spread (them) in the sun until they became dry and brittle... this rare food was eaten with solid palm- oil" (Achebe 40). This story shows a small African tribe making the best of a potentially bad situation.

Even in modern times, locusts are eaten in many countries. Their bodies consist of 62% proteins, 17% as fats, and the rest as other elements such as calcium and sodium (Locust FAQ's). Some recipes are even available online for cooking your own locust meal! In Cambodia, the popular recipe is to: "take several dozen locust adults, preferably females, slit the abdomen lengthwise and stuff a peanut inside. Then lightly grill the locusts in a wok or hot frying pan, adding a little oil and salt to taste. Be careful not to overcook or burn them" (Locust FAQ's).

Eating locusts is one very primitive way of controlling the destruction. The residents of Umojia did not seem to fear the locusts, probably because they could collect almost all of them in the jars for food. Eating, however, is not the most effective way of locust control. As the modern world has advanced with new technologies, we have discovered new methods of pest control that help save countless lives.

The most common way of controlling the locust is "with mainly organ phosphate chemicals applied in small concentrated doses (referred to as ultra low volume (ULV) formulation) by vehicle-mounted and aerial sprayers and to a lesser extent by knapsack
and hand-held sprayers" ('Locust FAQ's). This pesticide can kill locusts within twenty-four hours ('Australia Braces').

It is hard, however, to control locusts over the huge area in which they breed and live. Due to the wide expanse locusts cover, the remoteness and harsh terrain many locusts breed in, unstable governments and wars in countries they breed in and other various factors, there have been a handful of outbreaks in recent history. However, as technology grows more advanced, locust outbreaks have almost disappeared. The 20th century has seen outbreaks "in 1926-1934, 1940-1948, 1949-1963, 1967-1969 and 1986-1989" ('Locust FAQ's'). In November 2004, Australia was hit with a locust outbreak. Officials rapidly responded to the outbreak but said it would most likely be an impossible task to prevent all damage. This outbreak was actually an outbreak of three different species of locust: the Australian plague locust, the migratory locust, and the spur-throated locust ('Australia Braces').

The locust is truly a devastating creature that has been feared throughout history for the indirect death it brings with the wind. While the individual locust may not have the size of a more intimidating predator, such as an African lion, 1,000 square kilometers of hissing locusts would make anyone run for cover. Locusts could well be called "the king of pests" as they have been feared since biblical times but only recently have measures come around to curb their swarming. The locust swarm is a machine of destruction and only with proper control will the world truly be safe from those hungry jaws.

**Works Cited**


Poverty in Africa: A Governmental and Economic Issue

By Sabrina Cunningham

Every three seconds, another person dies in Sub-Saharan Africa because his or her family is too poor and cannot afford enough food to survive. One-third of Africa's population is malnourished and forced to live under unsanitary conditions on less than one dollar each day. For years, relief efforts have been attempted in the hopes of eliminating this horrifying reality; however, the poverty level in Africa has grown to such an alarming extent that these efforts have failed. Unless drastic government and economic changes are made, the number of starving Africans is predicted to increase significantly within the next ten or twenty years. To put an end to the destitution in Africa, one must first understand its cause and the reason why it has lasted for so many years.

It is difficult to pinpoint one specific reason since there are many factors that play a part in contributing to this devastation. First, there are certain public policies that are being ignored in order to decrease the poverty rate. An increase in education and health spending and a reduction in the budget deficit and inflation are the first steps that should be made by government officials. As a result of this there would be an increase in annual growth that, in turn, would result in a lower number of people living in poverty. A change in government must also be made in order to fight the war against poverty. For almost half a century, political leaders in Africa have misused the continent's wealth and blocked its productivity. A change in the government's performance, including reducing corruption, would create a rise in per capita gross domestic product growth, thus reducing the poverty rate. The cause of poverty goes further because the incomes of the people are unequally distributed, and the need for improving agricultural development increases. Poor governance and economic instability in Sub-Saharan Africa has created the dire need for better public policies in order to support growth and reduce poverty.

The causes of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa are numerous; however, there are three major issues that are facing Africa today and creating more people to starve to death. For one, the population in Africa has been increasing at a very high rate. "The population of Sub-Saharan Africa was estimated at about 650 million in 2000. According to the 2002 population projections of the United Nations (medium assumption), the population of the continent will grow rapidly to reach 1.8 billion people by 2050" (World Bank 13). This increasing population is hazardous to Africa because there is not enough food, jobs, or income to support all the people. Also, many of these people are young because they do not make it to adulthood as a result of malnutrition or diseases such as AIDS. "This very young population structure has given Africa the highest dependency ratio in the world, about 90 percent, compared with 50 percent in East Asia. Because this adds to the difficulties of providing much-needed human capital investments, population and reproductive health will remain high on the Sub-Saharan agenda for at least the next two decades" (World Bank 13). The more the population increases, the more difficult it will be to prevent poverty and come up with enough food to feed every single person, especially since there is a decrease in the agricultural development. Unfortunately, all the
aid that is given to Africa in order to feed the hungry will not have a long-term impact. The number of hungry Africans is expected to keep increasing unless local governments change their spending priorities and farming methods. As of today, 30%-40% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa are underweight and malnourished (Malnourishment). It was recently predicted by the International Food Policy Research Institute "that the number of malnourished children in countries south of the Sahara Desert in Africa would rise from 32.7 million to 38.3 million by 2025 without a dramatic change in policies" (Bengali). This shocking prediction should be more than enough to promote more efforts in fighting to reduce poverty.

At the same time, "drought and desertification are decreasing the amount of farmable African land, and farming techniques remain primitive. Farm productivity has declined by 5 percent per capita over the last 20 years" (Bengali). Not having farmland that is good enough to use and grow food on has created a major problem. These Africans cannot only depend on getting food sent from other countries. They must have some kind of agricultural productivity; however, this has been extremely difficult, especially after locust infestations eat into cattle pastures creating the price of livestock to fall drastically. "With millions of rural people living at subsistence levels, basic foods became unaffordable. The United Nations has begun an emergency food-aid mission that it says will cost at least $57.6 million" (Bengali). Over the past few years, Africa has turned from being a food exporter to a major food importer. Most of their farmland has become useless so they are unable to export any food or feed the people. "Crop yields are no higher today than they were in 1980. Africa's share of world agricultural trade fell from 8% in 1965 to 2.5% in 2004" (Peacock). Therefore, the main issue that is facing national governments is how to achieve increases in agricultural productivity. "Africa's small-scale farmers and herders need improved technical agricultural support services, access to a range of input and output markets, improved crop varieties, better storage and distribution facilities and livestock improvement" (Peacock). Realizing these changes has proved to be problematic as the population in Sub-Saharan Africa keeps increasing, while the food supply and agricultural development continues to decrease.

The harsh effects of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa can be seen throughout the everyday lives of the people. More than 25 percent of the children die before they turn five. Those who do survive go on to search for a way to deal with the harsh, arid savanna that is just barely suitable for farming and cattle grazing, yet it must feed twelve million people. Cyclical droughts and chronic hunger are a way of life for the people living in Sub-Saharan Africa (Polgreen). The depth of poverty, or how far incomes fall below the poverty line, is greater in Sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else in the world. This has led to poor health with its associated costs and low productivity. "Evidence from the latter part of the 20th century shows that health has often improved before income increased, and improved health appears to contribute to economic growth" (World Bank 29). Health and poverty have become closely linked over the years. Characteristics of the poor, such as unhealthy sanitary and dietary practices, lead to poor health outcomes which then leads to diminished income, thus leading back to characteristics of the poor (Appendix: Table 1). In addition to health, poverty has also had a negative impact on food consumption and its production and preservation. Africans simply do not have
enough money to acquire adequate food for a normal and healthy life. Lack of control of food prices, removal of consumer financial assistance, and increasing unemployment have all weakened the purchasing power of African consumers. In turn, malnutrition reduces people's ability to work by draining them of energy and weakening their immune systems, making them more vulnerable to disease.

Public spending on health is particularly important in Sub-Saharan Africa because of the poor's inability to pay for health care and because insurance and other risk-sharing approaches to financing increasing costs are generally not available. Even wealthier African households cannot afford this kind of care. "Total health expenditures in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) average 6.0 percent of GDP and US$ 13 per capita per year, compared with 5.6 percent and US$ 71 per capita per year in other developing countries, and 10.2 percent and US$ 2,735 per capita per year in developed countries" (World Bank 136). Without an insurance market, private for-profit providers are generally limited to simple clinical services to urban populations who are able to pay out of pocket. For the foreseeable future, public costs will function as insurance for both rich and poor households in a region where neither social insurance nor private insurance is generally accessible.

Opportunities to improve health, nutrition, and population outcomes among the poor are clearly available through fiscal and economic policy. Taking advantage of these opportunities at the country level will require a sustained communication within and among the relevant governments, ministries, and agencies, as well as between governments and their international development partners such as the U.S. and Europe. Improved operational and policy dialogue at the country level and stronger linkages between the social sectors and central ministries can change the functioning of the health sector. Health, nutrition, and population goods and services are financed primarily by households, central government revenues, the private sector, and external development assistance; they are then directed through the local government. "A large share of spending is by households and is not managed by any intermediary; out-of-pocket payments are spent directly in the formal private sector and the informal sector or for user fees at public sector facilities" (World Bank 71). Governance has a direct impact on the links between social spending and social indicators, with health spending being especially sensitive to governance. If poor governance continues, it will start reducing growth mainly through its impact on human capital and investment.

The impact of government spending on health status is a highly contentious issue. However, it does seem clear that severe economic decline and, therefore, lack of expenditure leads to the deterioration of water supplies, sanitation systems and health facility buildings and equipment. Stocks of drugs are not replenished and skilled members of staff leave or become part-time, supplementing their declining salaries from alternative sources (Livingstone 429). There is a large impact of different policy interventions for improving social indicators and economic growth, and reducing the poverty headcount (Appendix: Table 5). The models calculate the impact of an increase in education spending, an increase in health spending, an improvement in governance, a reduction in the budget deficit, and a reduction in inflation. Each graph assumes that the
policy environment remains unchanged, except in the case of simulated changes in inflation and the budget deficit. The growth effects of lower inflation are also large due to its effects on poverty. Cutting the rate of inflation by 10 percent is associated with a 1/2 percent increase in annual growth. Improving the fiscal balance by 1 percent of GDP is associated with an increase in per capita GDP growth by a 1/2 percent when the deficit is high (Baldacci). However, while the initial impact on growth is similar to that achieved with increased social spending, it does not bring additional positive effects as in the case with social spending. Furthermore, the effects from improving the fiscal balance in countries that have already achieved macroeconomic stability are no longer significant. This proves the importance and need to change public policies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Many people wonder what has become of the billions of dollars already poured into the continent. Africa remains wracked by poverty and disease while other former colonial outposts like East Asia are booming. Many of these poor countries are run by corrupt governments that will stash most of the donor money in private Swiss bank accounts. That has certainly proved true in the past, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where the poor have stayed poor while a succession of oppressors have run country after country into the ground ("A Proposal to End Poverty"). At the center of Africa's problems are the political elites that have wasted the continent's wealth and blocked its productivity for almost half a century. The list of abuses that these officials have imposed on the people in Sub-Saharan Africa is long and obvious. African political elites have exploited their positions in order to fill their own pockets. They have given favors and won influence through the funding of huge industrialization projects. They have also exploited the natural resources of their countries and then transferred profits, taxes, and aid funds into their own foreign bank accounts at the same time that they ran up enormous debts to finance their governments' operations. "The fact is that it is poverty and greed that breeds corruption, so it goes without saying that where poverty is alleviated, corrupt practices would be minimal or alleviated as well. poverty is a cause of corruption while corruption is a consequence of poverty and loss of moral values" (Maduagwu). With government corruption still present in these African countries, much of the efforts towards alleviating poverty are not successful.

In Sub-Saharan Africa there are two main sectors: the private sector and the political sector. Africa's private sector, made up of peasants and foreign-owned multinational corporations, is exploited by the unproductive political superiors who control the state. Africa's private sector is powerless because it is not free to decide what happens to its savings. Future development in Africa requires a new type of democracy that empowers not just the political elite but private sector producers as well. It is necessary that peasants become the real owners of land, their primary asset. Private ownership of land would not only generate wealth but also help to check rampant deforestation and accelerating desertification. Furthermore, peasants need direct access to world markets. The producers must be able to auction their own cash crops rather than be forced to sell them to state-controlled marketing boards. Africa needs new financial institutions that are independent of the political elite and can address the financial needs, not only of peasants, but of other small- to medium-scale producers as well. (Mbeki, Moeletsi). In addition to providing financial services, those institutions could undertake
all the other technical services that are not being provided at present by African
governments, such as crop research, extension services, livestock improvement, storage,
transportation and distribution to make agriculture more productive. Such changes could
create a genuine market economy that answers to the needs of African producers and
consumers. African governments currently acknowledge the role of good governance in
stimulating economic growth. However, they are still doing little to address the
fundamental problem of the enormous power imbalance between the political elite and
private-sector producers. African governments must spend more time addressing that
problem rather than impressing foreign governments, including those of the G8, with
inflated accounts of democratization on the continent; however, according to John J.
Kirton, who is part of the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto, there was a
"new historic record in money mobilized for global public goods" (Kirton). This positive
news has been able to catch the attention of more government officials and has led to
more movement towards poverty reduction.

The end of poverty is a choice, not a prediction. Each day billions of people fight
just to survive, which gives the rest of the people on earth no excuse not to find a way to
help out those who are less fortunate. In the year 2000, poverty was seen to be declining
in all the countries except for Sub-Saharan Africa (Appendix: Table 3). Action must be
taken by a number of different people and organizations in order to even begin thinking
about reducing poverty. First of all, the World Bank needs to start making more strategic
choices in determining where to focus its operating budget. It has become difficult to
reach an agreement within the Bank on what the institution should not try to do regarding
health, nutrition, and population in Sub-Saharan Africa. The large scale of the needs in
the region can make staff and management take on an infinite list of issues such as
household behavior, medical education, disease control, and agricultural productivity. A
large combination of aid needs to be directed to basic needs like growing more food,
providing access to clean drinking water, and preventing diseases like malaria. For
example, if farmers received better seeds and fertilizers, they would be able to grow more
crops, preventing food shortages in the first place. Children who had safe drinking water
would not suffer from deadly complications of diarrhea such as malnourishment and
dehydration. Fighting malaria, which weakens as well as kills, would increase
productivity. Also, improved roads would allow rural populations to send produce to
market faster (Polgreen). Changes in these four things alone would create a world of
difference for the people suffering in Africa right now; however, getting the governments
to cooperate in these efforts may be a much more difficult task.

Reducing government corruption is one of the most important factors in the
process of reducing poverty. The anti-corruption position can only be achieved if the
greed mentality is addressed through proper management of the national wealth and
through proper completion of the poverty reduction programs. Poverty causes people to
either compromise on moral values or abandon moral values completely. The government
in Sub-Saharan Africa has chosen to completely abandon moral values as it has misused
its wealth and blocked productivity. The fact that most African states have held
multiparty elections in the past decade is relevant as well. Developments, such as the
imminent formation of the African Union out of the Organization of African Unity, have
helped reveal a "socioeconomic potential previously obscured, and they have given strength to a new realism" (Mbeki, Thabo). The governments of other countries must be willing to help as well. "If the US and a united Europe will honor their long-standing and long-neglected pledge of 0.7% of GNP, then Africans and other impoverished people on the planet will roll up their sleeves and get to work saving themselves and their families, and ultimately helping to save all of the rest of us as well" (Sachs). As of the year 2001, Europe's, as well as America's, percent of official assistance to Africa for agriculture has been decreasing (Appendix: Table 4). For America, the Bush administration was trying to move the United States, the world's biggest food donor, into the international mainstream with a proposal to take a step in just this direction; however, this sensible, cost-effective proposal almost failed in Congress because the proposal challenges the political bargain that has formed the basis for food aid over the past half century: "that American generosity must be good not just for the world's hungry but also for American agriculture. That is why current law stipulates that all food aid provided by the United States Agency for International Development be grown by American farmers and mostly shipped on United States-flag vessels" (Dugger). Author Finn Tarp believes that "foreign capital inflows can be indispensable, as they are within the orthodox and the structuralist frameworks. Such inflows can also spell continued exploitation and dependency, as proposed by more radical approaches" (162). This creates a tough decision, especially for foreign government; however, ending poverty is a large moral task and a geopolitical necessity but, at the basis, it is a relatively straightforward investment plan.

Today's society has come to realize that hunger is not entirely due to lack of food; instead, it is mostly due to poverty. In many countries, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, there are people who lack adequate income to purchase or produce enough food for themselves and their families. Sub-Saharan Africa is an area of the world in which this tragedy continues to be widespread. Since Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced low incomes, a high incidence of poverty, insufficient per capita food production and significant malnutrition, special efforts are needed, especially by international development government officials, to provide the necessary support to the efforts and innovative strategies Africans themselves have created to lay a solid foundation for development. As of now, improvements in democracy and political stability have increased predictions for renewed food production, distribution and purchase. Already in a few African countries, agricultural production has increased, even under less than decent weather conditions, mainly due to the restoration of peace and security that has enabled the carrying on of farming by returning refugees and displaced persons. In an optimistic scenario, the G8 Summit hopes to decrease the number of people living below $1 a day by about 112 million (Appendix: Table 2). However, the process to eliminate poverty in Africa is a grueling one and, unless government and economic policies are changed, the hope of reducing poverty may never be realized.

Works Cited


Appendix
Table 1:

HEALTH AND POVERTY ARE LINKED IN A CYCLE

- Characteristics of the poor
  - Inadequate service utilization, unhealthy sanitary and dietary practices, and so on
- Poor health outcomes
  - Ill-health
  - Malnutrition
  - High fertility
- Diminished income
  - Loss of wages
  - Costs of health care
  - Greater vulnerability to catastrophic illness

Caused by:
- Lack of income knowledge
- Poverty in community social norms, weak institutions and infrastructure, bad environment
- Poor health provision—inaccessible, lackskey inputs, irrelevant services, low quality
- Excluded from health finance system—limited insurance, copayments


Table 2:

POVERTY REDUCTION FORECASTS

Table 1: Optimistic Scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumption Growth</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population Growth</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inequality Change</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EECA</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of People living below $1/day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>452.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EECA</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>456.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>242.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,276.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EA = East Asia; EECA = Eastern Europe and Central Asia; LAC = Latin America and Caribbean; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; SA = South Asia; SSA = Sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 2: Less Optimistic Scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumption Growth</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population Growth</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inequality Change</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EECA</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of People living below $1/day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>452.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EECA</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>456.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>242.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,276.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EA = East Asia; EECA = Eastern Europe and Central Asia; LAC = Latin America and Caribbean; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; SA = South Asia; SSA = Sub-Saharan Africa.

* Real per capita consumption growth
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage of poor in population (In percent)</th>
<th>Numbers of poor (In millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>(2.9)</td>
<td>(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>(25.4)</td>
<td>(255)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>825</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: See Table 1 in article for 1985 figures.
Table 4:

**Farm struggle**

% official development assistance to Africa for agriculture

![Graph showing trend of official development assistance to Africa for agriculture from 1995 to 2002.](image)

*Source*: Calculations based on data from the OECD Creditor Reporting System.

**Farming output per capita per region**

![Graph showing farming output per capita by region from 1960 to 2010.](image)

*Note*: 1961 = 1.00

*Source*: FAO.
Table 5:

Comparing policy choices
Poverty reduction can be achieved through a combination of policy measures as shown by the simulations below.

Percent increase in net primary enrollment
- Increase education spending by 1 percent of GDP
- Improve governance to be above world average

Percent reduction in mortality of children under 5
- Increase health spending by 1 percent of GDP
- Improve governance to be above world average

Percent reduction in poverty headcount ratio
- Increase education spending by 1 percent of GDP
- Improve governance to be above world average
- Reduce fiscal deficit by 1 percent of GDP
- Marginal change from high inflation to below 20 percent

Source: IMF staff estimates.
Note: The assumptions for the simulations are:
1. the initial values for the indicators are averages for developing countries in the sample in 2000. For example: the initial real per capita GDP growth is 1.3 percent per year; (2) elasticities obtained in the regressions persist across the simulation period; and (3) the initial poverty headcount ratio is standardized to be 100 percent.
2. Reduction in the poverty headcount ratio is measured in percent of the initial poverty headcount ratio.
Really, Reality TV

By Andrew Demsky

The invention and rapid acceptance of television has woven itself into the fabric of American society with extraordinary speed. Only one in one hundred households had the "box with the cathode-ray tube" in 1948. By 1960, ninety-percent of households owned a television set, and by 1970 television was available worldwide (Adler 6). Parallel to that growth was the public's demand for captivating programming. Early television was filled with sitcoms and news shows. In time, one enterprising producer, Allen Funt, recognized the interest and curiosity of viewers of watching unsuspecting subjects filmed in various situations without their knowledge. His show, Candid Camera, may be the basis of the emergence of a relatively new television genre known as "Reality TV." Upon careful analysis, however, the resounding question that arises is whether "Reality TV" truly is unequivocal reality broadcasting. It may, in fact, be more accurately described as a contrived blend of reality with a dash of sensationalism and a pinch of fantasy added for improved ratings.

What kinds of shows are categorized as "Reality TV" programs? When most think of reality television, the first shows that come to mind are the contest-based shows such as Survivor, Fear Factor, and The Bachelor. However, according to RealityTVMagazine.com, "one of the highest traffic TV websites on the Internet," the genre encompasses competitive game shows, court shows, makeover/home makeover shows and hidden camera shows (Reality). Today, they can be found on nearly every channel, both major networks and cable television. Author Karen Balkin suggests an evolution has occurred in reality television paralleling changes in society. Reality television started with the lighthearted entertainment provided by Candid Camera in the early 1950s, adapting to the more aggressive society of today with shows like Survivor, where contestants are shown eating rats to survive on a foreign island (Balkin). Obviously, these shows represent various moral values and are completely different in terms of content. They are both considered "Reality TV" nonetheless.

It is not my intent to debate whether or not contemporary reality shows portray real life events. Contrary to the main premise of The Bachelor, a man ordinarily wouldn't have the option of dating a group of super-model-like women and choosing one to marry in his normal life. Plenty of similar television programs exist, in which "real" people are placed in unusual situations. These shows in no way represent the reality of the people's everyday lives. Therefore, let it be argued that reality is incapable of being captured on and transmitted through television. "Reality TV" is an improper title for the genre as, to this day, reality has not been and never will be televised.

Before refuting the genre's designation, it is crucial to understand the meaning of reality in its relation to television. To discover the significance behind the derived term "Reality TV," the fundamental question asks how reality television can be defined. Toni Johnson-Woods, author of the book Big Bother, (a book detailing Big Brother, one of the most popular reality shows worldwide) states, "In the broadest definition, reality shows
are unscripted and their participants are non-professional actors" (52). A second critic.s definition is as follows: "Reality television involves placing ordinary people before the camera and deriving some entertainment value from the perception of their activities being unscripted" (Smith 2). Clearly, many critics of reality shows use the term "unscripted" to describe reality television. If this is true, why does each reality show have a writer in the credits? Some of the show must be written of course. No director can turn on a camera, shout "Action" and hope to have a hit show. But, the scripted percentage of the show is never revealed. The point is, if a producer wants to introduce a "reality show" he/she must be sure it is real. Otherwise, there.s no reason to call it reality.

The problem with portraying "reality" is that its definition is not fixed. The search for meaning diverges into both philosophical and psychological directions. When speaking philosophically, one may comment upon mankind.s encounter with life and how the world is explained. A philosopher may argue that there are two tiers of reality based on Platonic theory. Plato believed in a "world of Becoming," the material world, and a "world of Being," a transcendental world (Galloway). In this case, reality is based on the perception of what images and objects we perceive as real. In this argument, reality will be interpreted by adopting a more psychological stance. Reality could be the analysis of a person.s personality and how it influences his/her actions in an everyday common environment. Consequently, reality may be defined as a person.s daily activities, relationships with others, and the environment in which a person lives at any moment.

Because one's reality is based on his/her lifestyle, it is vital to examine what shapes a person.s way of life. What is it that molds personality and behavior? In the mid-1960s, trait theory critic Walter Mischel opened discussion by instigating the "situation-trait debate." The trait side argues that permanent traits instilled in a person influence behavior while the other side believes behavior is based on a given situation (Wood 486). The two groups of debaters are respectively categorized as structuralists and functionalists. The first group believes personality traits are fixed and stable whereas the latter group feels that personality changes based on the situation (Green 388). One.s behavior could either be predictable through permanently established traits or constantly changing as different scenarios present themselves. Consider the following hypothetical example to clarify the two theories. Structuralists would state that laziness is a permanent personality trait. Now, let.s take a common college situation and put a .lazy. person in it. Supposedly, if a professor assigned a paper on a Monday to be due on Friday, this person would never take the initiative to do the paper early. Why? The laziness is a permanent part of the personality. The functionalists would argue differently, believing personality is constantly changing based on the situation and person.s interaction with the environment. They would suggest that although it is possible for laziness to be a part of this person.s personality, it is likely that a change will occur to accommodate the given situation. Because there is so much time available to write the paper, this person.s behavior may change, and he/she may promptly begin to work on the assignment.

The "situation-trait debate" primarily addresses the question of whether or not personality traits exist. They may indeed be forever changing. Does it make sense then to describe some television shows as "reality" television? If the reality of one.s life is based
on a person's personality, and personality is not a fixed concept, can there ever be reality? Because this has no conclusive solution, it is my position that reality can never truly be represented on television.

Perhaps reality television is not meant to capture what is real, but instead is intended to provide a representation of the real. Because it is delivered through a television, viewers see only an image, and therefore it can never be real. It may be a difficult concept to grasp, but artist René Magritte tried to deliver the message in one of his most famous paintings titled Ceci n'est pas une pipe (French for "This is not a pipe."). The image itself was that of a smoking pipe with the words painted below. Magritte was trying to convey that the picture was only his representation of a pipe, and not an actual pipe. Similarly, in Book 7 of The Republic, Plato discusses how prisoners in a cave perceive shadows on a wall as being real objects. The shadows were real to these people, a part of their reality. One prisoner exited the cave into sunlight to see the actual objects or "realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows" (Plato 210). Hence for Plato, reality is perceptual. Relating this same concept to "Reality TV" it is clear that viewers see only somebody's (and in this case the producer's) representation or image of reality. Viewers must take into account how they are encountering this reality. The medium of reality TV is the television, not a person encountering reality in his/her own personal lives. The manager of UCLA's Film and Television department, James Friedman, makes this point clear in one concise, understandable statement. He writes, "Television cannot bring reality to viewers; it can only provide a representation of reality" (5).

Now, to take into consideration the concept of reality as portrayed through the medium of television, it is critical to examine and understand the editor's role in "Reality TV." Usually, with contest-based contemporary reality television, production of the show is completed months before it airs. This gives the editors time to choose the most suspenseful moments, those that supply the audience with the essential clues foreshadowing the winner and to create a dramatic finale (Friedman 8). To establish notoriety, the main concern for producers is to compete for viewers (Kilborn 73). Naturally, then, they do anything in their power to alter their show. Author Arild Fetveit's essay, "Reality TV in the Digital Era" emphasizes the impact that computer technology has had on today's images. He notes that it is often difficult to discern between actual images and those modified through digital media (127). The editing adds to the American audience's preference for "sensationalism" in place of accurate observations and debate (Scott 246). If an editor can adjust "Reality TV," then it is no longer "reality." The producers and editors work side by side for the sole purpose of entertainment.

Some critics argue, though, that entertainment is exactly what audiences nationwide seek. Professor Steven Reiss asserts that it is not necessarily true that audiences are attracted to reality programs so that they will have a subject to discuss with friends and colleagues the next day. Most viewers are amused by the possibility that if some ordinary person can be made famous by a reality program, then maybe they could be too (Reiss). Maybe it's not essential for reality television shows to present what is real.
The most important thing might just be to air a show that is enjoyable. Author Nancy Day indicates, "As entertainment programming, [reality shows] do not have to worry about accuracy, fairness, or balance" (67). If this is the case, the genre should be re-named "Relaxation TV" and not "Reality TV." Because of this artificiality that the shows have, they may want to call the genre .docusoaps. suggesting a fictional aspect to the events that occur (Johnson-Woods 53). In this sense, they.d be related to .docudramas. programs that incorporate "historical fiction" (Davidson 252). Doing so combines actual "on-the-scene" footage and reenactments (Day 67). The two are then edited together to present an enjoyable representation of reality . but not reality per se. Still, some scholars maintain that "Reality TV" is an appropriate title for the genre. Sociology professor Ellis Godard finds nothing wrong with the nomenclature "Reality TV." He views the realism of the shows from a different perspective. He argues, "What makes them reality shows is the resulting naturalness of social interaction." While the sets and situations may be staged, the unscripted interaction between contestants is real (73). In this viewpoint, the artificiality of the staged sets is ignored and the reality is based solely on contestant behavior.

A movie of several years ago, The Truman Show, was a fictional film depicting a legitimate reality show . if we ignore the staged set as Godard does. It was released in 1998, a time before the explosion of contemporary "reality" programs in the new millennium. The basic premise of the film was as follows: A television producer builds a dome containing a fake world. Everyone who lives in the world is an actor, except one man. This man is born and raised in this artificial world filled with hidden cameras to capture every real moment of his life. The show runs "24/7/365," and is perhaps the only true form of reality television. Some argue that there are aspects of today.s reality shows that similarly represent reality. However, no show comparable to this movie exists.

A television show in the early 1970s attempted something similar to what The Truman Show portrayed. It was called An American Family and it followed the lives of one family.s members over the course of several months. The family volunteered to have cameras set up in their house so that everything that occurred could be filmed and captured by the show.s producers. This was perhaps as close to "reality" as television will ever get. The characters on the show were real people. They lived in their home and took part in everyday activities. So everything that happened was real to them, catering to each person.s "reality." Nothing changed in their lives when the show started . except the installation of cameras. In Annette Hill.s study of audience responses to reality television, she found that "70 percent felt that members of the public generally overacted for the cameras" (Lewis 290). Author Richard Kilborn.s opinion is that the awareness of cameras has the largest influence on a person.s reality. Kilborn suggests, "The consciousness that individuals are performing for the camera has taken on a new order of significance with the reality game-doc formats" (75). After all, how can something be real if a person is aware that he/she is being monitored? Personality would change, even if only slightly, to cater to the cameras and the audience.s reaction to what transpires.

The simple reason as to why reality will never be captured on television today is that the people on the shows . though they are "real" people . can never act in a "real"
way. The knowledge of being on camera completely changes the mindset of an individual. It is not possible for someone to "be themselves" on camera when trying to appeal to the people watching them. The simple knowledge that the camera is there has influence over what is said and how people act. For example, in 2002, New York City traffic authorities set up over two hundred fake surveillance cameras to deter traffic violators. These cameras were inexpensive, didn't violate privacy laws, but surprisingly worked as well as real cameras (Haskell). Because cameras have an intimidating presence, currently the "dummy camera" market is growing for both businesses and homes. If cameras curb the behavior of potential criminals, the behavior of reality show contestants is most likely altered as well. What's more, the contestants often have to keep in mind the contracts that they signed agreeing to participate in the show. The CBS contract for the show Survivor gives the station all of the rights to the contestant's names, likenesses, and stories of their past lives (Halbert 44-45). Besides the camera's presence affecting their actions, contestants must also be careful as to what they do and say because they don't know how the show's editors and producer will present such scenes. Therefore, with the contracts and cameras lingering in the backs of the minds of the show's stars, they can never act in a real way.

The only reasonable counterargument to this case would be based on hidden camera shows, a sub-genre of reality television. Hidden camera shows set up an "experimental situation" and monitor common people who are not aware of the presence of the cameras (Coudry 65). Though hardly any of these kinds of "reality" shows exist today, the few that do accurately portray reality as did Allen Funt's Candid Camera. Some shows come close, like Boiling Points on MTV. It has many elements of a reality hidden camera show. The contestants are real people living their everyday lives in a situation filmed by hidden cameras when suddenly an obnoxious person enters the scene. If these contestants are able to suppress their emotions, they win a prize after an allotted time period. The personalities of the contestants are not altered by the knowledge of being monitored, and these people are unaware that the person causing the disturbance is only an actor. Therefore, their personalities are shaped based on the situation. The only aspect that detracts from the reality of the show is the prize money that the people can win, although the contestants are unaware of the potential award until the scene is over. In life, annoying people don't pay money to say they're sorry. Clearly then, this isn't reality.

To date, two shows have been produced that accurately portray reality television: Candid Camera and Trigger Happy TV. Therefore, it is possible that reality can be represented on television. Both hidden camera shows develop a staged situation, involving real people who are unaware that they are being filmed. They react completely uninfluenced by cameras or the possibility of winning a prize. It is entertaining to such a wide audience because its innocence is so real to us. There are no mansions, private islands or crazy stunts. Instead, it is good, honest, everyday life captured on television. Audiences don't need to be tricked into thinking that something is reality by what producers and editors choose to reveal. When a man ties balloons to his baby's wrist and suddenly the baby flies away when the man goes to get coffee, a scene in an episode of Trigger Happy TV, the reactions of the bystanders are not prone to change based on the
knowledge that a camera is there. A woman who covers her mouth out of concern isn't doing so to convey the feeling of shock and despair to entertain a television audience. She does so because she is actually worried about the baby who is floating away. That is reality, and hidden camera television illustrates it well. The other contemporary programs that fall into the "Reality TV" genre are not categorized appropriately.

The representation of reality on television is evidently controversial. What does it mean to portray real life? Can it be achieved with the knowledge of being monitored? The clear answer to the question of the validity of the term "Reality TV" is that there is no definitive answer. The presented research and commentary is not necessarily intended to overwhelmingly convince the reader of the inappropriateness of the term "Reality TV," but rather to evoke further analysis and discussion of the subject. Perhaps the present era of "Reality TV" will segue to the next genre of similar shows. "Really, Reality TV".

Works Cited


Ethics in Genetics:
The Battle over Stem Cell Research and Therapeutic Cloning

By Andrew Slafta

With the world anxiously moving into the twenty-first century, technological improvements and advances have taken society into an era of boundless possibility. On such a monstrous threshold, we have come to an ethical crossroads. Where and when do we discontinue our own innovation and creation? How much is too much? This has become exactly the issue in regards to the acceptance and proliferation of stem cell research and therapeutic cloning.

These are two of the world's most pressing moral topics, and citizens all over the world need to address the viability of genetic research in human healthcare. For a majority of the general populace, the decision has been a consensual disapproval. Embryonic stem cell research has met staunch opposition in that it requires "murder" of the human organism in its earliest stages and that it manipulates and alters cells beyond the level of appropriate human interaction. Similarly, therapeutic cloning has been condemned as overstepping our moral bounds by creating purely manufactured and wholly unnatural organs and parts.

These same individuals view both of these enterprises as compromising the sanctity of human life and violating the natural order of existence and our place in that structure. In the simplest terms, we are unfairly "playing God." Although not all of their grievances and fears are unfounded, it is unjustifiable to deny the continuation of such potentially beneficial institutions on the sole basis of moral objection. This is even more inopportune when you consider that genetic research has already crossed many of the ethical boundaries that therapeutic cloning and stem cell research are still fighting.

Two of the first areas of society to consider moral values as an intertwined part of research and development, horticultural and botanical researches, have long had to evaluate the acceptability of genetic modification. For years scientists and researchers have been pushing to modify plants and crops to produce more virile, resistant, and productive strains. *Bacillus Thuringiensis*, or BT - a toxin known to protect plants from pests, is one of the frontrunners in this genetic struggle ("Transgenic Maize"). It has been widely included in American corn production, used to "protect corn against corn rootworm damage," and also "has been inserted into hybrid poplars to protect them against defoliation by a leaf beetle. (National Research Council 222; National Research Council 222).

Our reshaping of natural organisms for human needs is not very much unlike the moral dilemma posed by cloning. By altering these organisms we are indeed "playing God." Yet the opposition to such endeavors is limited, especially in comparison to that of the debate centralized around therapeutic cloning. How can it be validly claimed that the creation of an organism for our own necessity is unacceptable when there is such little petition against this in an agricultural sense?
Perhaps debaters would argue that agricultural alteration is a necessity for a supportive food supply in the twenty-first century. Although this is not totally unrealistic, it is hard to advocate a total modernization of our food supply when there are many mismanaged and poorly allocated products. As of November 17, 2005, over 84 trillion pounds of food have been wasted in 2005, with the number steadily rising every minute (http://www.secondharvest.org/). Furthermore, this argument loses more weight when you consider that the same genetic technology has been implemented into plants and crops for purely aesthetic and sensory value.

In 1992 Calgene, a Chicago-based research company, brought to the attention of the Food and Drug Administration the possible production of the "Flavr Savr Tomato" ("Genetically Modified Food"). The tomato "which used gene silencing to inhibit the expression of an enzyme involved in fruit ripening" was not only easily approved by the FDA, but was deemed to need no label identifying it as a genetically modified food (Kramer and Redenbaugh 295). This is an unsettling thought when you consider the genetic alteration was introduced for the sole reason of improving the tomato's taste.

Likewise, common apples have been bred for years to achieve desirable combinations of colors and tastes while other fruits and vegetables have been altered to create "seedless" varieties. Yet such products are not only met with little resistance, but for the most part have become deeply incumbent in individual diets and societal standards. Although this is far from the ethical depth of destroying a human embryo or creating genetic duplicates of human organs, it is not utterly unrelated.

Still, there are those who would argue that the two are too distant to compare and that human genetics is ethically incomparable to the moral issues inherent in horticultural genetics. Even if this were true, human genetics cannot be said to be as vastly unrelated to genetic research in other animals.

It is in this frontier that we have also encountered ethical complications not dissimilar to those facing human research. In recent years we have created numerous transgenic animals, not unlike plants created with genetic alterations. These transgenic animals, or animals bred with artificial genes added to their natural ones, are used for both research and manufacturing purposes (University of Michigan).

For research purposes "These animals can be used to study gene function, gene expression, gene regulation, to develop animal models of human disease, and to test gene therapy agents" most likely condemning the animal to a brief life of analysis and dissection (University of Michigan). Their agriculture counterparts can be altered in numerous ways to increase both productivity and profit, or minimize complications and problems inherent to the animal's usage in an agricultural arena. Quite possibly the most predominant account of such a practice would be that of BST, a growth hormone added to a majority of American cattle to encourage the increased production of milk. There has been debate arising recently to the possible side effects of such a growth hormone transported to the human population, but not enough concern or opposition to inhibit its continued usage.
The only real time that genetic research in animals has truly precipitated a global discussion even closely comparable to the attention given to human genetics would be immediately after the cloning of Dolly in 1997. Almost completely catching the global community by surprise, a Scottish cell biologist, Ian Wilmut, and his colleagues "produced" Dolly, a genetic clone of a ewe who had died six years earlier. Utilizing breast tissue cells that had been preserved in a freezer, they were able to produce an exact genetic replica of the original animal (Wickware 16).

Yet where are we less then a decade later? As undeniable as the unrest was, the discussion and debate following Dolly's "inception" have faded to but mere murmurs. Genetic research, more specifically the cloning of mammals, has continued practically uninhibited by any concerned opposition. Researchers have cloned rabbits and mice and have introduced them into the population of research laboratories worldwide. Also, organs from cloned animals have been used for research and transplanted into human beings.

Moreover, these reproductions are not just experiments of the past. On April 24, 2005, researchers at the Seoul National University produced "Snuppy" the genetic double of a three-year-old male Afghan Hound (Brownlee, "Double Dogs" 83). Besides the muffled reports of a few select news organizations, this received very little international attention and even less opposition.

If this is not "playing God" - if the construction of a genetically identical animal by research scientists isn't exceeding our moral parameters - then what is? How effective could any argument be that claims we are morally unable to produce a new human lung for a dying child when cloning a dog has become a common place occurrence?

It is even harder to argue so when you consider what stem cell research and therapeutic cloning have to offer the world. Utilizing stem cells, "cells that can replicate themselves or make any type of cell required to build an organism," researchers could theoretically create replacement cells for patients without the risk of donor rejection ("Stem Cell"). These could replace cells ravaged by cancer or restore nerve cells damaged by ailment or injury.

Not only would they have an immediate impact on those patients who are already coping with such problems, they could potentially offer new research methodologies to fight disease outside of an individual basis. Stem cells could allow for an entirely new surface for experimentation and study, allowing for the analysis of cell characteristics not previously possible. This could be especially helpful in the study of genetic diseases. Here, "cells that carry the DNA from a patient with a genetic disease could differentiate in a Petri dish, permitting scientists to observe how disease characteristics develop" (Brownlee, "Time" 131).

Furthermore, therapeutic cloning could offer many more quantifiable benefits. Organs and tissues could be generated for deserving individuals from their own basic cells. This would not only remove the risk of donor rejection, but eliminate the need for
lengthy tissue verification and donor registries. It could have an immediate effect on the organ shortage currently ravaging the world, not only increasing the supply of organs and the potential for matches, but decreasing wait time.

Still such benefits seem to be far removed as opposition has strongly impeded their progress and output. The largest portion of this comes from those who believe that the destruction of a human embryo required to utilize the most productive stem cells is immoral and unacceptable. As possibly the opposition's most substantial argument, even this rhetoric is waning. Recently researchers have uncovered a new method of combining these embryonic stem cells with adult skin cells, creating cells that retain valuable embryonic traits but carry the adult cell's genes. This new method "may eventually lead to stem cell lines that match a patient's DNA while avoiding the destruction of human embryos," effectively nullifying any such argument (Brownlee, "Time" 131).

Although this does acknowledge the validity of the existing argument, it is important to realize that such advances never would have been feasible without the allowance of current research. If we place a ban on such enterprises, we not only inhibit the current frontier, but future ones as well.

Even though the thought of a world conquered by human clones and genetic anomalies is a disheartening one, such fears cannot be allowed to inhibit the progress of potentially life-altering research and development. Even our current technological state has the potential for disaster. In 2001, Severino Antinori, an Italian fertility scientist, claimed the conception of a human clone ("Antinori, Severino"). While his claims were unsubstantiated, the science behind them being possible was not. We are already at the point of being able to produce catastrophe, and yet besides the villainy inherent to all times and places, society has been able to display restraint and temperance.

We must place faith in our continuing ability to show restraint and not in the fear of the opposite. Our acceptance could bring such topics into the spotlight, keeping individuals and organizations responsible and accountable. Our debate only threatens the lives of those who need new innovation for survival and forces the continuation of research to be done in secrecy. It does not seem like a reasonable price to pay, especially when the basis for moral opposition is an outdated and removed fear. It is okay to not want to play God, but to play dumb is unacceptable.

Works Cited


Misconceptions Regarding Women's Roles in Islam

By Liz Eraca

In the last decade a new word has entered the vernacular of citizens in the United States for the first time: Islam. This religion, which accounts for about 22 percent of the world's population and is second only to Christianity, has not been taught to us in school, but rather through recent entertainment and news media (Robinson 1). This way of teaching has misinformed the country and has influenced the American opinion of Muslims in a negative way. Muslims are viewed by many as barbaric terrorists who hate the United States. An example used to support this claim is the oppression Muslim women face in the Middle East. The decrees about women in Afghanistan during the Taliban rule have misguided Westerners to believe Muslim women are victims of fanatic religious zealots. The reality is that the Taliban is a politically minded group that most Muslims viewed as reactionary and "without foundation in Islamic governance" (Musico 115). As a result of the erroneous, and often deceptive, Western media, the situation in Afghanistan was not properly represented and the motives of the rulers were distorted. Looking at Afghani history and the teachings of the Qur'an, reveals how damaging the disjointed correlation between the oppression of Muslim women and their Islamic religion has been.

The foundations of Islam are characterized by "progressive liberation" and "elevation of status for women" (Emerick 270). Consequently, some of the staunchest supporters of Muhammad, as well as some of the most prominent figures in the history of Islam, were women. Perhaps the most important example is Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Muhammad's first wife and Islam's first convert. She was an important merchant who provided financial backing for the Prophet. Khadija also stands out for the hardships she endured at the time she converted, which included being ridiculed publicly, being ostracized from her family, and facing the risk of being killed. Also noted is another wife of Muhammad, A.ishah. Not only was she one of the Prophet's most important advisors, she was also the leader of women and a teacher to both sexes (Shorish-Shamley 5). Another important female is Umm Ammarah, a woman who protected Muhammad and "fought off a crowd of attacking men with arrows, a spear, and finally a sword and shield" during a fierce battle with the Meccans (Emerick 246). These women were dedicated because the teachings of the Prophet allowed them to transcend the pre-Islamic patriarchal ideals which originally oppressed them. It is in the Qur'an that women are first seen as equals to men, with no restrictions on their full participation in the social, economic, and spiritual spheres of their society.

According to Muhammad "women are the twin halves of men" (Lawall 1151), meaning neither is complete without the other. The familial roles of women as wife and mother are given great prominence in Islam. Although Middle-Eastern women are sometimes forced into arranged marriages, it goes against Islamic teaching. This abuse was not tolerated by Muhammad. Islamic scholar Yahiya Emerick recounts a story in which "a woman who had been married against her will went to the Prophet and complained about it; he annulled the marriage on the spot" (277). In pre-Islamic Arab
societies, women were bought and sold as a commodity. By giving them the free will to
decide who to marry, Islam elevated the status of women from a possession of men to
their equal partner in the institution of marriage (Shorish-Shamley 4). Similarly, Islamic
teaching provided women the same rights and opportunities as men in regard to education
and work.

In Islam the duty to learn is paramount. This obligation is shared by Muslim men
and women alike, and it is against Islamic law for any man to prohibit or restrict women
in their quest for knowledge (Zoubier 2). The Prophet.s Hadiths, or the traditions relating
to his sayings and doings, repeatedly emphasize the acquirement of education for every
Muslim male and female ("Hadith" 1). For example, "a mother is a school. If she is
educated, then a whole people are educated" (Shorish-Shamley 2). Education is not only
a right for women under Islamic law, but it is also her duty.

Conversely, working for a living is not an obligation for women as it is for men.
The reason for this is elaborated in the article "Women.s Work." The author explains the
Islamic view: "If a woman were charged to work in order to provide for her livelihood in
addition to her natural duties of pregnancy, child birth, and breast feeding this would be
an obligation above what she could bear and would be an injustice" (1). The most
important job a Muslim woman has is being a mother. She still has the rights to own
property, acquire wealth, and to work. Since the man has a religious obligation to
financially support his family, he is entitled to twice the inheritance of a woman. If a
woman feels her husband is not properly providing for the family financially, she has the
right to take money from him because she is only taking what is rightfully hers (Emerick
280). Although their obligations are different, Muslim women have the same rights as
men, and their roles are viewed as equally important.

Islamic law, as it is written, considers men and women to be equal in all respects.
This includes their marital roles, political status, moral duties, and social opportunities.
Why then, do many westerners have the misconception that Islam teaches that women are
second class citizens? This is largely due to misinformation in the press following the
9/11 attacks. A new and foreign culture was introduced to the United States on a massive
scale, virtually overnight, in the wake of one of the greatest tragedies the country has ever
seen. The information that began to flood the country regarding the terrorist attacks, the
Muslim religion, and political unrest in the Middle East, blended together on the airwaves
and in the minds of many Americans. As a result, there developed two problem areas
with regard to women.s rights in Muslim countries such as Afghanistan. The first is the
distorted motives of Taliban rulers. The second is a misrepresentation of the situation in
Afghanistan.

After the Taliban took control, edicts were passed that deprived women of their
fundamental rights. These edits announced that "women were barred from employment
outside the home except in the health sector, discontinued education for girls," and
women were required to wear large robes in public, called burqas, veiling them from
head to foot ("Women in Afghanistan" 3). Many news reports have given the impression
that the Taliban was at war with women. In fact, when the Taliban initially assembled as
a group of college students, their intentions, while extremely simplistic in nature, were not malicious. Instead, their concerns revolved around the conditions in war-torn Afghanistan. The Taliban maintained that society needed to be rebuilt from scratch and that the only way to do this was to keep women at home so the next generation could be raised correctly. They believed that "husbands and fathers had to first become stable with steady work and then women could claim their place in public society at a later date" (Emerick 279). Although the Taliban tried to sound reasonable, Muslims across the globe were outraged, for no one can forbid what Islam allows. Compounding this frustration was the fact that Western media sources linked these directives directly with Islam itself. In reality, none of the Taliban.s pronouncements regarding women were rooted in authentic Islamic Law. Abdullah Qazi writes that the Taliban admitted as much when "their representative in the United States remarked in 1999, .We are following Afghan customs that go back thousands of years".(2). The Taliban policies show that it is their culture, and not their religion, that takes precedence.

While the Taliban strategy has been significantly misconstrued, the facts of life in Afghanistan are virtually unknown, leading to further inaccuracies in the Western mind. The rise of the Taliban is not what led to political and social instability in Afghanistan; in fact they assembled initially to rectify the violence and suffering caused by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Emerick 278). The Afghanistan War began in 1978 as a conflict between anti-Communist Muslim Afghani guerrillas, known as the mujahideen, and the Afghan government and Soviet forces. The countryside was completely destroyed during the conflict, and the Soviets committed some of the most atrocious crimes against civilians that have ever been seen. Eventually, the government fell at the hands of the Mujahideen. The triumphant guerrilla forces proved to be disparate and unable to unite; they soon began fighting amongst themselves ("Afghanistan War" 1). Afghanistan became divided into private fiefs carved out by individual warlords. This political division is what facilitated the rise of the Taliban.

When the Taliban first assembled in 1996 they were a group of students committed to eliminating the evil warlords who had taken over their country. Suffering Afghans were eagerly recruited, and by 2001 the Taliban controlled close to 90 percent of the country (Emerick 278). However, they had inherited a country in dire need of serious reform. It was described as "a place where people were starving, cities were in ruins, and the economy was of Stone Age proportions. Women were just as poor and desperate as the men" (Emerick 303). Unfortunately, referring back to their ideas for reform, the Taliban.s logic backfired. The lot of women worsened and that of men failed to improve. Islam, however, certainly did not condone their miscalculations or their methods. Furthermore, the situation for women in Afghanistan after the United States overthrew the Taliban in 2002 has not significantly improved.

In many rural areas, warlords have returned and a sense of instability prevails in contemporary Afghanistan. While the recently adopted constitution states that "the citizens of Afghanistan.whether man or woman.have equal rights and duties before the law," many families still restrict their mothers, daughters, and wives from participating in public life. "They are still forced into marriages and denied a basic education. Numerous
schools for girls have been burned down and little girls have been poisoned to death for daring to go to school" (Qazi 1). Prior to Soviet invasion significant reforms had been made to "prohibit traditional practices deemed feudal in nature" ("Women in Afghanistan" 2). During the war, Afghanistan and the moral code of its people were destroyed. Under the drug-funded warlords, Afghanistan was a "nightmarish gangland battlefield." As unsuccessful as the Taliban was, they did manage to end the fighting and bring some normalcy back to a shell-shocked nation (Emerick 388). Regardless, to the larger Muslim world the Taliban were still simpletons. Their odd and brutal policies were as representative of the Muslim community as the actions of the zealots burning down abortion clinics are to the Christian community.

In the United States, we forget our own history of oppression. The women's rights movement encountered such stiff opposition that it took over 100 years for equal-protection laws to be enacted. Early pioneers, like Susan B. Anthony, were ridiculed by American men as "rebellious, scandalous, and downright anti-Christian." Even today, many women would agree that their gender status still needs significant improvement (Cardullo 272). It is in our own history that the error of our ways is revealed: blaming Islam for women's oppression is similar to looking at crime statistics in America and concluding that Christianity is oppressive to women. Both cultures exemplify abuses against women by men either falsely hiding behind their religion to justify their actions, or acting abusively in ignorance of their religion. When Islam initially emerged, it provided women with a way out of the stifling Arab customs of the day. Today, Muslim women's liberation will again be accomplished, not by rejecting their religion, but rather by implementing it.

Works Cited


Much Ado About Evolution

By John Garrity

The debate about the validity of evolution has gone on for nearly 150 years, ever since the publication of Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species in 1859. The evidence supporting evolution keeps mounting, while opponents try to keep up. Ironically, their views tend to evolve. Opposition to evolution comes from some religious believers, not only fundamentalists, as well as average adults. A Gallup poll conducted in 2001 showed that 45 percent of American adults agree that "God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so" (Quammen). To put this in perspective, David Fromkin wrote in his book, The Way of the World, that "more than half of the adults in the United States do not know that every year the Earth orbits around the sun." Science suggests that these people are wrong, and the judiciary supports this as well. As Jeffrey Mervis reported for Science in his article with "Dover ID Decision: Judge Jones Defines Science," the judge ruled that the Intelligent Design argument had violated the ground rules of science.

So is a debate about evolution really just another argument between science and religion? Christopher Toumey, author of "Modern Creationism and Scientific Authority," believes it is but that there is a larger issue. The problem deals with the "question of the position of science in American values." While this may be true, it is also much deeper than that. People do not want to give up their beliefs without a fight, for they feel threatened. So evolution has to be debated, and this debate needs to be done so that those who disagree can come to terms with their own faith without feeling like they sold their religion out. Therefore, to add to the already extensive debate, will attempt to reconcile science with religion on the subject of evolution.

It could be said that such a heated debate between science and religion is actually beneficial, as it drives more people to do more research. Ultimately, it provides us with more information and certainty as each side tries to prove the other wrong. As the decades passed between 1859 to the present day, more and more evidence has been found that supports Darwin's theory of evolution. Note that only twenty-one years after the publication of "The Origin of Species," in 1880, T. H. Huxley asserted that "Evolution is no longer a speculation, but a statement of historical fact" (20). In his speech to the Royal Institute, he explains why it is that evolution is fact, and he also warns us that, "it is the customary fate of new truths to begin as heresies and end as superstitions" (Huxley 15). This is precisely what has happened in America, for we seem to look at the word evolution, and cringe, while we think "we came from monkeys?" Now, we.re certainly not monkeys, but what is wrong with being related to monkeys? We know we superior, though more destructive. We.re also more innovative, and we constantly make new discoveries and propose new theories, such as the theory reported in Discover "that viruses, long regarded as lowly evolutionary latecomers, may have been the precursors of all life on Earth" (Siebert 33). As Huxley contends, "[man] is today, thanks to his new method of evolving by the cumulative transmission of experience, the only [species]
capable of realizing important new possibilities." (qtd. in Darwin 16). Indeed, barring self-destruction or natural disaster, humans are equipped to survive well into the future.

Putting all that aside, one may be wondering what exactly brought Huxley to assert that evolution is fact. Part of his certainty came from the discoveries of "transitional forms between birds and reptiles [which] removed Mr. Darwin's proposition that 'many animal forms of life have been utterly lost, through which the early progenitors of birds were formerly connected with" (Huxley 16). The evidence supporting evolution does not stop there as "each year, researchers worldwide discover enough extraordinary findings tied to evolutionary thinking to fill a book many times as thick as all of Darwin's works put together." (Culotta and Pennisi). One of these extraordinary findings includes the mapping of the genome of our closest relative, the chimpanzee. The data concluded "the total difference in DNA between our two species [is] about 4%." Speciation, how new species emerge, was also provided with more supporting evidence. A more recent example is a discovery that was first published by Nature and later reported on by Science in April 2006. The finding of a 375-million-year-old fossil, a member of the Tiktaalik roseae group, helps represent a missing link between aquatic and land vertebrates. It is much like the previous specimen mentioned, in that it helps illustrate the transition of one known species to another. In this case, "The new fossil, says paleontologist Per Ahlberg of Uppsala University in Sweden, 'goes a long way in filling one of the big gaps in the origin of tetrapods." (Pennisi 33). The gaps between species are not at all that big when one considers the "homologous bones" which occur in multiple species. As David Quammen explains, "the five-digit skeletal structure of the vertebrate hand appears not as just in humans and apes and raccoons and bears, but also, variously modifies, in cats and bats and porpoises and lizards and turtles." He goes on to mention that the bones in our lower leg are homologous to the bones "even in the long extinct bird-reptile Archaeopteryx." Note this is the same species as noted above by Huxley in the article written over 100 years earlier. Quammen also provides us with another convincing example of evolution in action by examining the "bacterium Staphylococcus aureus." The treatment for staphylococcus infections was fought by penicillin, which was invented in 1943. Quammen goes on to explain the never-ending battle humans wage against these microbial diseases. They constantly mutate and evolve, and we have to keep up and make new drugs to combat them. Quammen suggests that this makes "evolution a very practical problem by adding expense, as well as misery and danger."

These discoveries point to science's constant and ongoing effort to better itself. It is becoming increasingly difficult to deny the vast body of evidence for evolution, only a fraction of which was mentioned above. Still, some people believe continue to dismiss evolution as "just a theory." Quammen notes this as well and groups evolution along with Einstein's Theory of Relativity and Copernicus' Theory of a Heliocentric Universe. "[E]ach of these theories," Quammen says, "is an explanation that has been confirmed to such a degree, by observation and experiment that knowledgeable experts accept it as fact."

However, in order to help religious believers accept evolution, the scientific community must demonstrate openness and acceptance toward them. Science is open to
anyone with an inquisitive mind and it benefits when more and more people join in the quest for knowledge. That being said, there are some guidelines and rules for scientists to follow to be able to scientifically arrive at new knowledge. Proponents of the "Intelligent Design theory" have already lost a huge court battle which really helps to illustrate what these rules do not allow. Here is an excerpt from the decision as reported by Science:

1. ID violates the centuries-old ground rules of science by invoking and permitting supernatural causation;
2. The argument of irreducible complexity, central to ID, employs the same flawed and illogical contrived dualism that doomed creation science in the 1980s and;
3. ID's negative attacks on evolution have been refuted by the scientific community. It has not generated peer-reviewed publications, not has it been the subject of testing and research. ID takes a natural phenomenon and, instead of accepting or seeking a natural explanation, argues that the explanation is supernatural. (Mervis, 34).

The entire decision is 139 pages and explains that the Intelligent Design Theory does not qualify as science. It also points out, as in the excerpt above, that creationism has tried and failed on a number of occasions to become a real theory. Though it is certainly a theological theory, and is rooted in science, it has been debunked and remains entirely religious in nature. This is why I believe it should not be taught alongside evolution, nor should it even be taught separately. If it is to be taught, it should be done as a part of religious teachings. Now that the "Intelligent Design" movement seems to be in its last throes, it is likely to be scrapped and replaced by something else as religious people don't want to believe in ID if it doesn't accomplish their true goal. As Judge Jones explained in his ruling, "The goal of the ID movement is not to encourage critical thought, but to foment a revolution that would supplant evolutionary theory with ID" (qtd. in Mervis 34).

Evolution itself is also highly criticized by the scientific community. The difference between it and the "Intelligent Design" and "creation science" arguments, besides the obvious, is that it has withstood the critics. As Huxley explains "There was a period, from about 1895 to about 1925, when Darwinism came in for a great deal of criticism, sometimes violent, from many of the leading biologists of the time" (qtd. in Darwin 12). Consequently, one cannot say that science has intentionally put evolution to the forefront of all vying theories as some sort of conspiracy. It has withstood the proverbial "test of time." As Quammen mentions, Darwin wasn't right about everything. Quammen points out a few errors Darwin made but adds, "Evolution by natural selection represented Darwin at his best which is to say, scientific observation and careful thinking at its best."

On the other hand, those who believe in creation science have a right to their opinion, right? Why are scientists so afraid? What is the problem with creationism? If science is so liberal, why not just allow creationism to exist? Though some opinions, such as racism, might be too abhorrent for society to tolerate, religious belief and creation does
not fall into this category. The real problem with creationist thought is best described in an editorial by Donald Kennedy in which he states:

The present wave of evangelical Christianity, uniquely American in its level of participation, would be nothing to worry about were it a matter restricted to individual conviction and to the expressions of groups gathering to worship... [but] when the religious/political convergence leads to managing the nation's research agenda, its foreign assistance programs, or the high-school curriculum, that marks a really important change in our national life. (Kennedy 165)

Kennedy agrees with Judge Jones that fundamentalist religious groups are not only trying to replace evolution, but they are also making political choices with the same ideology. The time for evolution is now. The fact that fundamentalists have come so far as to devise "Intelligent Design theories" seems to suggest they understand that Americans do find great value in science. They realize that without scientific backing, fundamentalists will not have much credibility, if any at all. This is why Christopher Toumey said "many citizens who are not fundamentalists nevertheless believe that creationism is about as scientific as the idea of evolutionary thought" (681). One could then conclude that a large majority of Americans will one day believe in evolution. The next step is to convince people that science is not trying to destroy religion. Many have already come so far as to stick the word science with creation, indicating that people understand that they can believe in science and keep their faith, too. To take the extra step to evolution is not as farfetched as people have first thought since even fundamentalists recognize the value of science. In fact, the phrase "creation science" suggests that the bridge between evolution and fundamentalists has already been created. The thing is, it now requires people to walk all the way across to both sides.

Religion, particularly Christianity, exists to this day despite the fact that Galileo observed, with the telescope, Copernicus's calculations that the earth revolves around the sun. Christianity originally told us that the Earth was the center of the Universe, and we followed the Ptolemaic view for over a thousand years. For some time, Christianity also believed the Earth to be flat, yet this was proved false even prior to Christianity. Christians at one point thought that the Bubonic plague was God's way of punishing humanity and we eventually learned that a virus caused the plague. Now this does not mean that Christianity is always wrong, nor does it mean Christianity should be cast aside. Despite all of these contradictions, the religion still exists today. People do find a message in religion, and they find meaning. Darwin himself was a religious man, but that did not stop him from publishing his discoveries. The same could be said of Copernicus. The two have both put the human species into perspective and made people reconsider our place on this planet. In doing so, it is possible that they, along with other scientists, have made us better Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and so forth. As Edward Wilson explains:

The revolution begun by Darwin was even more humbling [that Copernicus.]: it showed that humanity is not the center of creation, and not its purpose either. But in freeing our minds from our imagined demigod bondage, even at the price of humility, Darwin turned
our attention to the astounding power of the natural creative process and the
magnificence of its products. (Wilson 13)

When I began researching for this paper, I already believed in evolution. Moving
forward, I was surprised to learn that evolution was thought of as a fact and not just
another theory. Becoming convinced of this, I realized that other people would likely be
convinced when faced with the same information. I have provided not only statistical
numbers to help bring perspective, but I have also provided a lot of scientific evidence
which supports evolution. In doing so I also tried to remain empathetic to other people's
opinions about science and religion, and I hope to have done so effectively. The gap
between the two, as I said earlier, is already bridged and requires only that we cross
it.then we will see that we are all the same.

Works Cited

Culotta, Elizabeth, and Pennisi, Elizabeth. "Breakthrough of the Year: Evolution in


Huxley, T. H. "The Coming of Age of the Origin of Species" The Scientific Monthly 21.2
http://library.marist.edu.

Kennedy, Donald. "Twilight for the Enlightenment?" Science 308 (April, 2005), 27 April

Mervis, Jeffrey. "The Dover ID Decision: Judge Jones Defines Science.and Why
Intelligent Design Isn't." Science 311 (Jan. 2006), Proquest. Marist College Library,

Pennisi, Elizabeth. "Fossil Shows an Early Fish (Almost) out of Water." Science 312 (7
April, 2006).

Quammen, David. "Was Darwin Wrong?" National Geographic (Nov. 2004). 25 March


Toumey, Christopher P. "Modern Creationism and Scientific Authority." Social Studies
of Science 21.4 (Nov. 1991), Jstor. Marist College Library, Poughkeepsie, NY. 19 April
2006 http://library.marist.edu".
What Are You?

By Mary Alvarez

I was eating dinner with friends when I noticed a strange girl next to me. She said she and her friends were curious and asked me plainly, "What are you?" It only took a second to realize she was asking me what my heritage was, and I responded that I was from Spain. Her eyes showed excitement, and she continued by asking when I came to this country. I simply told her that I was born here, but of Spanish descent. She looked at me somewhat disappointed and went back to her table of friends.

We live in a world where it is generally assumed that race exists. Almost everywhere in the United States, one can see the different ethnicities that belong to our society and world. The multiculturalism of the United States seems to show that race exists, and if race exists, the white race must undoubtedly exist as well. After all, we check off the box that says White, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, Asian, Black, or Native American throughout our lives, but the question about whether race exists is not in fact the best question to ask. The questions one should be asking are: what is race, and why do we still use it today?

Many scientists claim that race has no biological basis:

Evidence from the analysis of genetics (e.g., DNA) indicates that there is greater variation within racial groups than between them. This means that most physical variation, about 94%, lies within so-called racial groups. Conventional geographic "racial" groupings differ from one another only in about 6% of their genes. In neighboring populations there is much overlapping of genes and their phenotypic (physical) expressions. Throughout history whenever different groups have come into contact, they have interbred. The continued sharing of genetic materials has maintained all of humankind as a single species. ("AAA" 712)

Therefore, there is only a 6 percent difference in genes in comparing different racial groups, yet a 94 percent difference among the people of a single group. If we are all one species and possess almost all of the same genes, it becomes almost impossible to argue that race has a biological basis. If science says race is not a true biological term, it must not be.

Genotype is the structure of DNA that determines the expression of a trait (Hagedorn). Phenotype refers to the observable characteristics of an organism, the expression of gene alleles as an observable physical or biochemical trait (Hagedorn). James King, author of The Biology of Race, further explains

Physical characteristics such as hair color, eye color, height, skin color, build, etc., are the components that make up an individual. These are the observable characteristics that can be inferred as inborn qualities. From these qualities we assume that the traits are inherited
from the parents. The genotype is the genes that are directly given to the offspring, and the phenotype is the consequence of those genes. (King 111-14)

This basis has provided the grounds for race to operate in our society. Race is the result of our genes and our ancestry. It is a part of society and has been since the beginning of the human species. We cannot do away with race given that it has historically functioned throughout time. Despite the fact that it has been scientifically proven that race does not have a biological basis and there are no deep biological grounds for it, we cannot deny that it exists.

**The History behind "Race"

Whatever the biological case may be, race has always existed culturally and historically in our world. Yet, how race operates has varied throughout history. Although it is not definitively known when the first dealing with race came about, instances of racism date back to Ancient Egypt and biblical times. Egypt used four different colors of complexions on the walls of the tombs to represent their people. "Color prejudice," says one writer, "depended on which ethnic group held sway" (Gossett 4). In other words, whichever race held power was the "better race" and the other three colors were represented as inferior. This dates back all the way to 1350 B.C. when one might think that man did not necessarily think about race distinctions. Another example of ancient ways of viewing race was in the North American Indian legends. According to one legend

the black man and the white man were created before God had mastered his technique. In baking the first man, God cooked him too long and he emerged black. The white man, also a culinary failure, had not been baked long enough. It was only with his third attempt that God was able to produce the properly golden brown Indian. (Gossett 7)

This legend shows not only the North American Indians' sense of superiority because of their complexion but also that, even at a fundamental level of thinking, man still believed in race. Many other ancient cultures in India, China, Israel, Greece, and Rome also had unique ways of showing that they too had beliefs in what we now call race (Gossett 7-8).

There is no way to get around the fact that race and, specifically, the white race, exists historically. When one considers what the Spaniards did to the Native Americans in the age of exploration, one could rightfully believe that this encounter was the first to spark the concept of race as it has developed today:

Even though the race theories had not then secured wide acceptance or even sophisticated formulation, the first contacts of the Spanish with the Indians in the Americas can now be recognized as the beginning of a struggle between conceptions of the nature of primitive peoples which has not yet been wholly settled. (Gossett 16)

The Spaniards killed the Indians for their own glory and power. Viewing their "enemy" as inferior made killing the enemy easier. Not all men believed this to be true, as in the
case of Bartolome de Las Casas. It took Las Casas twelve years to change his mind about how his people treated slaves and the natives, yet his fight against it did not do much, historically speaking.

History now shows how race was used as an advantage in order for certain people to feel better about themselves and their actions. Race was a justification for various forms of oppression. "The concept of race also served to create emotional and psychological distance between Europeans and other visually different peoples. But it was not until the 18th Century that the concept of race as a set of biologically inherited physical characteristics was developed to support the use of the term" (Akintunde 2). The Europeans felt the need to use African-Americans as slaves and eliminate the Native Americans, so they justified their actions by naming themselves superior because of their complexion. Although the European creation of race seems more convenient than logical, it still, undeniably, took place in human history.

Even without a sound genetic basis, race also clearly exists as an operational concept, as evidenced by examining the Holocaust. According to Jackson Spielvogel and David Redles, Hitler claimed that

All the human culture, all the results of art, science, and technology that we see before us today, are almost exclusively the creative products of the Aryan. This very fact admits of the non unfounded inference that he alone was the founder of all higher humanity, therefore representing the prototype of all that we understand by the word "man." He is the Prometheus of mankind from whose bright forehead the divine spark of genius has sprung at all times... Exclude him - and perhaps after a few thousand years darkness will again descend on the earth, human culture will pass, and the world turn to a desert. (2)

Hitler's claim is about his "master race," the Aryan race. Although one could never agree with the ideals of such a fanatical man, one sees the reasons wanted to create the "perfect" race. He thought that the white race - in this case, blond-haired, blue-eyed, light-skinned people - was superior.

Although the Holocaust is over, there still remains an idea that the white race is the superior race. Some examples of the groups that still practice this theory are the Neo-Nazi, Ku Klux Klan, "Christian" Identity, World Church of the Creator, and White Supremacists. Each one of these groups believes it is right in expressing its love for the white race. For example, the World Church of the Creator puts out slogans such as "A Whiter and Brighter World" and "Racial Holy War." These groups believe that people who are not white are of a "mud race," a sub-species who share a common ancestor with the white race. Black people form the bottom level of humans, barely above monkeys and chimpanzees (Robinson). The concept of race has many negatives and hopefully will disappear from our world soon.

American history also attests to race as an operational concept. Until the Civil Rights Movement American culture was guilty of believing that whites were superior to blacks by segregating all public services and places. Segregation meant whites and blacks
did not eat, learn, or do anything at the same place except fight. White taunted blacks because of their difference in skin color. Although the "intention" of segregation was for "equality," equality cannot be achieved by separating two groups of people based on the color of their skin.

Today, instead of using race as a convenience, Americans are using it to understand one another and celebrate the differences we have. It now functions as a marker of identity. Globalization requires us to understand the differences among peoples of the world so we can understand and negotiate with one another. If we did not believe in race, then we would not take the time to try and understand other cultures. ways of life. For example, many jobs, including those medical and business-related, offer diversity training:

Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, has a three-level diversity training program. The classes start with educating staff on diversity in general, then focus on conflict resolution and end with leadership building. The hospital measures success by comparing data from the annual employee survey and also through exit interviews to see if the reason for leaving is diversity-related, says Wanda Davis, diversity specialist. (Mills-Senn 24)

It is clear that we still make a big deal out of race, but now our differences are being embraced. Race still exists, but at least it is being viewed in a different, more positive way. With all the quotas and affirmative action that has been established in our country, how can we doubt that race exists?

**What Does it Mean to be White?**

Even if race possesses some level of validity, there is a further problem in defining what groups belong to the white race. In order to begin the argument of the white race being valid, it would be necessary to know where "whiteness" originated. Since white-skinned people are of European descent, it is natural to look to Europe for origins of the white race.

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach was one of the pioneers of the quest to discover the origins of race. A professor of medicine at the University of Gottingen, he is now considered one of greatest scientists of the Enlightenment. His main interest was the study of race differences. Stephen Jay Gould explains that "Blumenbach noted that all supposed racial characteristics grade continuously from one people to another and cannot define any separate and bounded group" (68). Yet, at the same time, he thought it possible to divide mankind into five groups: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay. With his addition of the Malay group to the previous four-race system used, he was credited as "the founder of racial classification" (Gould 66).

Blumenbach also created the word Caucasian to describe the white race. It is curious that this word, still widely used today, is based upon a single skull in Blumenbach's collection uncovered in the Caucasian mountain region of Russia. Blumenbach found strong similarities between this skull and the crania of Germans.
Therefore, he hypothesized that the Caucasus regions may have been the original home of the Europeans and, in essence, the home of the original stock of mankind (Gossett 37-38). If his assumption could be proven, one would be able to say that the white race is made up of any humans who can claim a strong European ancestry. Yet, the same branch of early humans from the Caucasus region that Blumenbach considered white also migrated southward into India. Though Indians are not considered white, they should be according to Blumenbach's definition because today's Indian people are descendants of the white-skinned Caucasus people.

Science also proves that the white race exists. Figure 1 traces early human migration and indicates that mankind likely originated in Africa and then migrated all over the connected continents. Since those of the original African origin were brown-skinned, the principles of evolution suggest that a gene mutation that produced a lightened skin tone occurred by chance in a single individual after the first human exodus from Africa. The offspring of that individual apparently had some sort of competitive advantage in the changing environment as humans moved northward into what is now Europe. This advantage gave rise to the lightest of the world's races, and the white race began to exist and establish itself in history (Weiss 1).

Figure 1: "Migration of Homo Sapiens" (National Geographic Society)

According to many scientists and philosophers, mankind started in one place with one "race." Two the earliest believers of this theory are the aforementioned Blumenbach and Leonardo da Vinci. Both believed that mankind originated in one spot of the world and then migrated to other regions. The different "racial" characteristics we see today were mankind's response to changes in climate, environment, air, etc. Both da Vinci and Blumenbach believed that if a white-skinned man were to migrate to a different region, his descendants could gradually become darker. Similarly, if a dark-skinned man
migrated his offspring's skin color could change over time. If this logic made sense to some of the greatest minds in human history, why did race become such a big issue? Due to man's ambition and ignorance, he believed that race could be used as a form of separation to divide the "best" from the "worst." The most familiar example is the argument of white supremacy that endured throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Over the centuries, the category of the "white race" has undergone many changes. Cose explains, "For though the question - who is white? - is as old as America itself, the answer has often changed. And it is shifting yet again, even as the advantages of whiteness have become murkier than ever" (64). Since the time when Spanish conquistadores were labeled as white to the period of discrimination against Jews because they were not truly "white," one may ask oneself, what does it mean to be white today? Why do we still make use of labels that are constantly in flux? The answer is not simple because we have made it very confusing. There seem to be different levels of whiteness. According to Mobilio, "Although you can hardly get paler than someone born in County Cork, being Irish once carried its own deep shade in this country and still does in England, where the expression "white niggers" is common among the British troops" (18). Even among the whitest of the whites, there is discrimination because of different cultures and dominance. Many European immigrants of the nineteenth century did not see themselves in connection with their European origins. They wanted to escape their motherland in hopes of a new life, but they could not escape their identities as Italians or Germans. Hollinger explains that "Distinctions between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews of European extraction were once taken as seriously in the United States as are the distinctions now made between Euro-Americans and Asian Americans" (26). It is hard to understand why some Europeans were viewed as whites and others as "dirty" whites. The fact that there were levels of whiteness seems absurd to many, since many of the levels have been erased. Yet, I believe that the American people are even more confused about whiteness and race than ever before.

Usually when one is asked plainly "what are you?", he or she replies with the name of the country they live in or where they originate. Very rarely does one come across people who will tell you that they are White or Asian, unless you ask them what race they are or if you ask them to check a box on a written form. If race is not the immediate thing people think of when asked what they are or what they represent, then what does race do for us? What it does is temporarily give us the comfort of understanding a region or a type of people. Not many Hispanic people, or any other race, would like it if they were told they were simply Hispanic and could not represent their countries and their own unique cultures. Although many believe that recognizing race celebrates cultures, in many ways it does not. In 1923 a high-caste Hindu asked the Supreme Court to accept him as a White. His claim was rejected and the Court declared that "it may be true that the blond Scandinavian and the brown Hindu have a common ancestor in the dim reaches of antiquity, but the average man knows perfectly well that there are unmistakable and profound differences between them today" (qtd. in Cose 64). In this case, race denies ancestry. It puts a variety of people into a group that does not necessarily represent all of their traits. Whites are from the countries of Europe, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile,
New Zealand, European Russia, the United States, and Uruguay (.White People.). Many "white" Americans have ancestry dating back to Europe. "White' is a dehistoricized and culturally vacant category, while 'Euro-American' invokes something at least slightly more specific" (Hollinger 30). Essentially, the fact that an American is white-skinned is supposed to mean that he is "Euro-American." But are Americans who have lived in the United States for decades and centuries without celebrating their old ancestry European? No, they are definitely not. Americans are of a different race according to the way in which the racial categories were formed. An American is a mixture, in some cases, and adopts a way of life that is not the same as a European. Can Americans all be Americans without categorizing themselves as different races? For now, it seems impossible.

If whites come from so many countries, then it shows that the white race has many appearances, features, and cultures. Therefore, it is common sense to understand that the white race is not what Hitler depicted as the Aryan race. There is no specific look or feature in being white except for one's ancestry and if one is a light-skinned person. Yet, how can one person be both White and Hispanic? It seems as though the concept of race includes color, ethnicity, culture, and language all at the same time; even though all are independent from one another.

Hispanics can be considered white, black, indigenous, or mixed. They have many different physical traits that do not make it easy for anyone to say which race they are:

The bloc that owes the least to classical race theory is the Hispanic, or Latino bloc. The various peoples now grouped in this bloc were usually considered white, or Caucasian, until only the last two decades. Also, they were commonly designated by country of origin, Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, etc., much the way European ethnics were associated with either Italy or Poland or Denmark. "Brown" remained only a colloquial designation, although it served to mark lines of discrimination in many communities, especially in California and Texas. As late as the 1990 census, more than half of the Mexican-American population continued to classify itself as white. This notion of the whiteness among Hispanic people has prevailed despite the recognition that the ancestry of the people of Mexico was heavily indigenous and that the population of Puerto Rico consisted largely of a mixture of white and black ancestry in a combination anomalously exempted from the American one-drop rule. (Hollinger 31-32).

What could have made the Mexican people call themselves white for such a long period of time? They believed they were white. Many Hispanic people are considered white until they open their mouths. How can one define a race based upon a specific language? It had never been done before, but since racial categories could not describe what to call the people who had some white, black, and indigenous ancestry, Hispanic was developed as a category. The author of "What's White, Anyway?" describes her Argentinean friend as white as a white man could be, but his entrance into the United States confused him greatly. He was not sure whether he was white or Latino (same meaning as Hispanic). The author explained to her friend that most Americans would initially consider him white, but would change their minds as soon as they heard him speak Spanish. Although he could still be considered white, his identity would be as a Latino (Cose). It seems
almost foolish to try to grasp this concept, yet many people are required to understand it. The 2000 Census categorized Spanish, Hispanic, and Latino as one group. A Spanish person is someone who is native to Spain or has ancestry dated back to Spain, not someone who just speaks the language. It seems as though our concept of race has fooled us. It suggests that certain people of white, European descent are Hispanic and that white groups of South America, such as Argentina and Uruguay, are not actually white because they speak Spanish. It is shocking to many people to find out that their race is not what they believed it to be.

It seems as though we are still using race as a convenience. After all the problems race has brought us throughout history, one would think that it would be abolished by now, yet it seems as though this may never happen. "Fewer and fewer Americans believe in the biological reality of races, but they are remarkably willing to live with an officially sanctioned system of demographic classification that replicates precisely the crude, colloquial categories, black, yellow, white, red, and brown" (Hollinger 9). One does not believe in something unless it is clear and logical, yet race is still considered a valid concept. In an advanced world, it is sad to think that we still accept race as a legitimate way of recognizing the differences in mankind, despite the scientific reality. Until we realize what equality truly means and what should matter in our society, I believe we are going to live in a confusing world.

When the girl came up to me and asked, "What are you?" I should not have responded the way I did. Instead, I should have told her: I was born and raised in Westchester County, NY, and my family and I are from a small village in La Coruna, Galicia. We share Celtic traditions similar to the Irish and Scottish in which we dance to music played by bag-pipes and eat cabbage stew. We speak a dialect called Gallego, a mixture of both Spanish and Portuguese. Not only would I be telling her specifics about my heritage, but I also would not be putting myself into a racial category, one which says nothing about me and my culture.

Works Cited


Sweatshops

By Holly Stajk

Sweatshops first appeared in the nineteenth century in England during the Industrial Revolution (Stone 379). Sweatshops allowed companies to compete by producing goods at the lowest possible price and selling the goods for a greater profit. Sweatshops were able to produce goods at low prices because low-skilled and immigrant employees would work long hours in poor conditions for low wages. Today, sweatshops are common in developing countries because the countries "desperately need foreign investment, and therefore compete with one another to produce goods more and more cheaply, allowing U.S. corporations to dictate their purchase prices" (Co-op America). Some of the more blatant violators of human rights are countries like Indonesia, Nicaragua, and Honduras. Some of the larger companies that buy clothing from sweatshops are Wal-Mart, Levi's, Nike, and many more. The use of sweatshops is morally wrong, and there is no acceptable justification for the harsh child labor, cruel working conditions, and extremely low wages that the employees in sweatshops are forced to endure.

Children working in sweatshops can be as young as five years old. According to UNICEF "there are almost 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 working full-time every day" in sweatshop factories (Mullally). Bringing these children into the work force at such an early age is going to have a negative effect on society. It is likely that these children will never have a chance to receive a good education when their parents are forced to make them work in sweatshops. Worst of all, "poverty locks these children into a cycle of poverty from which it is difficult to escape" (Taylor). Children in sweatshop factories live and work in unsafe conditions that are rat-infested, crowded, filthy, and surrounded by barbed-wire fences that are always monitored by armed guards ("Women").

In 1995, Kathy Lee Gifford, the famous actress, singer, and television talk-show host, captured the media's attention when she was accused of abusing child labor laws. Investigators from the National Labor Committee found girls between the ages of thirteen and fifteen sewing clothing at her Global Fashion plant in Honduras (Lee). The children were screamed at, worked twenty-hour shifts when a deadline needed to be met, and were not allowed to take breaks or stop working for a drink of water (Lee).

Women make up over 90 percent of sweatshop employees, and they work in the same conditions as the children do (Given). These young and uneducated women are fed a diet of rice and cabbage broth that lacks adequate nutrition. As a means of punishment they may be given nothing to eat ("Women"). Women are also often sexually harassed, verbally abused, spat on, and beaten. If they become pregnant, they are forced to have abortions in order to keep their jobs. Women are given no choices and are "prohibited from unionizing, and face the loss of their job[s], physical abuse, or deportation if they try to better their situation" ("Women").
These harsh working conditions were also part of the United States' early industrial development; such a case was the Triangle Shirtwaist Company's sweatshop. The company used flammable textiles that were "stored throughout the factory, smoking was widespread, illumination was provided by open gas lighting, and there was no fire extinguishing equipment" (Wijesiri). Given these conditions, fire was inevitable, and on March 25, 1911, a fire broke out on the eighth floor of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. The workers tried to open the doors to escape, but their efforts were unsuccessful because the "owners had frequently locked the exit doors in the past, claiming that workers stole materials" (Wijesiri). The only workers who were able to escape were the ones who made it to the roof. A ladder was used to connect the Triangle Shirtwaist building with the building next door, and the workers used it as a bridge to get to safety. When the fire was over, 146 of the 500 factory employees had died (Wijesiri). The fire could have been prevented if management had used the money it wasn't paying its employees to improve working conditions.

Today, employees working in sweatshop factories are not paid a living wage, yet the products they produce are sold for a high price. "According to the National Labor Committee, a worker in El Salvador earns about 24 cents for each NBA jersey she makes. These same jerseys sell in the U.S. for $140 each" ("CAFTA"). Even though the workers in these sweatshops are working full-time jobs, they live in poverty because of the extremely low wages they are given. With the development of large department stores and mail-order companies, ready-to-wear clothing became a growing demand and retailers pressured clothing producers to lower their prices (Carper). Due to this new pressure, many employees are now forced to work double shifts, live in poverty, and earn less than 75 cents an hour (Stone 379). Not only are these workers paid low wages, but sweatshops frequently fail to pay their employees on time and sometimes never pay them at all ("Women"). While sweatshop employees in Nicaragua are being paid as little as 23 cents an hour, the CEO of the Gap makes $7,824,696 as an annual income (Wiley). CEOs of the apparel industry make thousands of dollars an hour, while sweatshop workers suffer in dreadful factories and are not given a break to go to the bathroom during their shifts. Additionally, they are fined if they break the rules. Most of the workers are uneducated and illiterate, making it difficult, if not impossible, for them to know their rights. Therefore they must endure their suffering ("Women").

Today, many U.S. companies are still heavily involved with sweatshops, even though there is a Fair Labor Standards Act, which was enacted in 1938. The Fair Labor Standards Act called for a minimum wage, the 40-hour work week, time and a half for overtime, and a minimum working age (Wiley). After this act was passed, sweatshops significantly declined because they were seen as unjust and illegal (Wiley). However, sweatshops have made a comeback, and many U.S. companies have sweatshop factories in the U.S. One sweatshop was discovered when

A U.S. congressman went undercover to garment factories in the city's Chinatown, and found filthy, dilapidated factories with barred windows and doors. Many of the workers were illegal immigrants who had been smuggled into the country. They were forced to work 16 to 18 hours a day and paid as little as $1.30 to $3.00 an hour. (Stone 379)
The Department of Labor statistics show that over 50 percent of garment factories in the U.S. are using techniques that qualify them as sweatshops. Some of these sweatshops can be found in U.S. apparel centers in California, New York, Dallas, Miami, and Atlanta (Given).

The U.S. also has ties with many foreign sweatshop industries located in developing countries. Companies like Wal-Mart, Disney, Nike, JC Penney, and the Gap have connections with sweatshops in developing countries where their products are made inexpensively. For example, the Disney Company has been identified as particularly guilty of abusing the labor laws in Chinese factories (Mullally).

Nike is another major company that practices unethical behavior in factories located in China, Vietnam, Indonesia and Haiti (Given). These factories violate both human rights and health and safety standards by forcing their employees to work with toxic chemicals and without proper training or equipment. Nike also forces its employees to work 60-70 hours per week and pays them as little as 2 dollars a day ("Women").

Many people and corporations feel that sweatshops are acceptable and can be justified because they provide work for people in developing countries ("CAFTA"). Employers justify the low wages they pay their workers because of the lower cost of living in these countries. They also argue that low-paid work is better than unemployment or the other options people have for work, such as prostitution ("Sweatshop").

On the other hand, many people feel that the countries that allow sweatshops to exist are acting unethically. However, because it is companies from the United States that are exploiting the desperation of people in poorer countries, U.S. companies need to adopt more ethical regulations to help these poorer countries (McLean). U.S. companies dodge this responsibility by promising to adopt codes of conduct, which, in fact, never materialize. These codes of conduct are supposed to eliminate suppliers and factories that take part in sweatshop practices and follow the standards for workers. rights (Co-op America). However, the codes of conduct that are actually created are only intended to make a company look like they care about their workers. Businessmen create these codes to protect other businessmen. They are not legally binding documents, and many workers do not even know that the codes exist (McLean).

Instead of pretending to change their practices, companies should "adopt real labor regulations such as The Worker's Right Consortium (WRC) . . . which is made up of labor, human rights, and religious organizations along with students, universities, and colleges" (McLean). Under the WRC, workers are given living wages, and employees working conditions are frequently monitored and inspected. More than 100 colleges and universities are connected with the WRC (McLean).

A recent study has shown that consumers would pay 30 percent more for goods not produced in sweatshops (Kimeldorf). One way people can make sure they are buying sweatshop-free products is by buying Fair Trade products. Fair Trade products are made
by employees who are working in healthy working conditions and receiving fair wages (Co-op America). A unionized factory is another place sweatshop-free products are made. Some unionized companies include Red Wing, Union Jeans, and Platinum Sportswear.

The truth about sweatshops is that they do not provide employment opportunities for workers, but provide development opportunities for companies. Most importantly, all children need to be removed from sweatshop factories and put into schools where they belong. These children are too young to be working long hours in horrible conditions. Next, the working conditions in these factories need to be improved and training and safety equipment need to be provided to ensure the safety of the workers. Employee wages need to be fair, and a realistic overtime and minimum wage needs to be set and followed. Companies in the U.S. and abroad also need to find a different way to produce goods and refrain from using sweatshops as an answer to cheap labor and production.

**Works Cited**


