The purpose of Encompass Magazine is to renew an ethical dialogue among all disciplines of the Duke community. We hope to show that ethics isn’t just for philosophers, priests, or obnoxious goody two-shoes.

The following survey was taken from a diverse mix of Duke students, faculty, and staff who have no specific relation to the study of ethics.

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word ‘ethics’?

- Writing a paper on ethics
- Life situations and issues like homosexuality and abortion
- Doing the right thing versus the wrong thing
- Having a sense of morality and doing the right thing
- Obama: From what I heard in his campaign speeches and his stance on healthcare reform
- Jesus
- Gandhi: He was a man of peace
- Abortion because it’s taking a life without that life’s consent
- Mother Teresa: She was not corrupted and didn’t have her own agenda. She looked out for what’s best for other people.

Who are some of your ethical role models?

- Obama
- Jesus
- Gandhi
- Mother Teresa

Can you come up with an unethical action that is also legal?

- Social prejudice
- Debauchery
- Stealing a shirt from my sister
- Getting promoted based more on who you know rather than on your actual qualifications

Poll:

On a scale of one to five, how confident are you in your ability to identify an ethical life?

1 = Not confident
5 = Extremely confident

1: 8.3%
2: 12.5%
3: 20.8%
4: 41.7%
5: 16.7%
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The premier issue of Encompass Magazine, Ethics is Everywhere, is all about how ethics exists beyond the conventional borders that we create. You may hear the word “ethics” and think: law, religion, societal norms, or individual judgments. But ethics is so much more. While the law may be primarily inspired by society’s highest standards, it can also sanction injustice. Consider the Apartheid Laws in South Africa (page 15) that legally disadvantaged people by race. Religion may indeed be the moral compass for many, but it risks hindering dialogue across differences (page 19). Even majority opinion sometimes appears to fall short at times when everyone is laughing at a racist joke (page 9) or turning a blind eye to the workforce around them (page 25 and 27). Finally, personal judgments alone can be unreliable if there are no external checks and balances on our own irrational justifications (page 7). If ethics isn’t finely packaged within any one of these arenas, then where should we turn?

If we want to live a more ethical life, we need to participate in the dialogue as it relates to our daily lives. To do so, we believe that ethics needs to be explored across disciplines, cultures, religions, and generations. Ethics is not only in the courtroom, the chapel, the legislature, or the home: ethics is everywhere, even where you least expect it! The food you eat, the car you drive, the words you choose, and the classes you take are fraught with ethical dilemmas you may have overlooked before.

Encompass Magazine not only uncovers moral debates in new domains but also engages them in new ways. For example, we challenge the all too easy dichotomy between “good” and “evil” and instead take on the inevitable grey in between. In our increasingly interconnected world, tackling ethical dilemmas will require complex interdisciplinary solutions. Anticipating this, Encompass brings together writers from a variety of fields such as engineering, history, philosophy, economics, art, and business.

Our mission is to expand your view of where and how to think of ethics and to provide a simple guide for what to make of your newfound moral responsibility. Ignorance may be bliss, but dangerous nonetheless. So what are you waiting for? Read, question, respond, and most importantly, act.

Enjoy, engage, and encompass ethics!
Melissa , Public Policy’09 and Michael McCreary, Philosophy’12 Ethics Certificate Program
ART
as a moral medium

By Alex Burns
Political Science, ‘10

A
s a political science major, I have ex-
namined the intersection of art and po-
itics in several courses at Duke. Most notably, I have observed how art often acts as a key influence on ethics.

The relationship between art and morality may not appear obvious at first glance, nor is the argument for art as a moral medium necessarily clear. Across my courses, I have struggled to identify why art, perhaps more deeply than many other sources, appeals to people’s emotions. What do our instinctive emotional reactions to art tell us about ethics? Why do figures like Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson reference the poet as the creator of moral consciousness, and hail imagination as the main vehicle of ethics? Why do politicians appeal to art, and why are human rights discourses of art and ethics abound—but why? Could the connection between art and ethics imply that morality stems not just from rationality, but also from our passions?

South African Justice Albie Sachs provided an intriguing answer to this final question in his interview at the Nasher Museum, Sachs explained how art is related to ethics, but also explained how art is related to ethics. Sachs not only affirmed the effect of art on ethics, but also explained how art is related to ethics. Sachs conveyed, art communicates ethical ideas through the medium of creativity, and so represents a universal human language of imagination and emotion. Experienced through senses rather than reason, art transcends rational frameworks specific to certain cultures. Art unites audiences through sensorial experience and imagination, and thus inspires the empathetic and compassionate responses described by Sachs.

Because of this powerful appeal to the emotions, art often acts as the medium through which morality is transferred to a collective consciousness. Whether it is through political speech, interpretive dance, or impressionist painting, art speaks through the senses and pervades the emotions, connects feeling to thinking, and inspires an experience of ethics. We can see morality as an emotional and rational examination of right and wrong. Although ethical values differ across cultures, art can serve as a kind of moral adhesive for the disparities because moral sense and artistic imagination are human intelligences independent of culture. Through individual responses to art often differ, art mirrors the experience, emotions, and senses of man. The reflection of a common humanity enables art to influence empathy and relate to ethics regardless of cultural boundaries. Walt Whitman summarizes the effect of art on ethics well when he describes art as having the ability to mend differences and suture the conscious and unconscious beliefs of man.

He argues that art permeates to the very marrow of society, pervading the thoughts, feelings and actions of man. Therefore, upholding morality manifests itself as a function of art, as the beauty of art evokes an empathetic response and combines the hearts and minds of all humanity.
t's a sight we're all familiar with: the little white circles plugging the ears, the thin cords trailing down the neck, disappearing somewhere into the torso. Wherever we walk on campus, we're bound to run into others toting this peculiar accessory. Maybe you yourself have swapped earrings for ear buds when venturing out on the quad. There's no doubt about it: many of us wear our pods on the quad.

We've come to accept this as normal, I, for one, rarely even take a mental note of who's hooked in to their mp3s—it's as common as if they were going for a jog rather than simply going to class. It's hardly a topic of conversation or controversy. Maybe it should be.

Last year, New York State Senator Carl Krueger introduced a bill to ban the use of mp3 players by New York City pedestrians. He argued that the devices posed a "major public safety crisis" in that people crossing the street would be less able to sense, say, an oncoming bus. Ouch.

Since a range of moving vehicles on our campus is pretty much limited to club cars and segway scooters, perhaps there are reasons besides safety to consider when thinking about our portable music habits.

Not many realize that the issue is a social one. When we walk around campus with music playing directly into our ears, we isolate ourselves. This is obvious if you ever tried to call for a friend's attention: you would end up making a fool of yourself calling after someone who simply just couldn't hear you. Sure, they aren't intentionally ignoring you, but all the same, the moment of contact is lost. After a while, those dangling cables start to relay a message: don't talk to me, I'm not out for conversation.

Of course, very few of us really want an extended conversation as we hurry to class at 8:30 in the morning, but those gloomy strolls can suddenly get a little brighter when we run into an old friend for a quick "stop and chat." Think about the sounds you hear walking across the BC Plaza (where good things happen): yes, I'd love to drown out the tablers, the cell phone yappers and the occasional construction work, but what about the "hello"s and "what's up"s from your friends, that guy who plays guitar at the Cosmic Cart or even the random snippets of overheard conversation that are totally out of context but completely hilarious? Turning on the music limits those chances for social interaction, and, in fact, creates a wall of sound that separates our senses from the outside world.

Moreover, it seems like this is part of a larger trend, one where we, including myself, pretend to be busy in order to avoid those little social moments that threaten to require a lot of effort. In the context of a college campus, habits such as these could subtly undermine the cohesiveness of our intellectual and social community.

The bus is a prime example. Since I usually hop on the bus alone, I make sure to bring a Chronicle with me so I can bury my face. But I remember a time—maybe it was just that first week of freshman year, though I suspect it was...
longer—when the bus was the place to meet people.

Then there’s the rush-out-of-class moment. While it seems understood as part of the college student social contract that we start putting away our books in the last minute of class, the ensuing sprint to the door may not help our cause. Though professors certainly moan about the early putting away of books, their real gripe is that conversations often fail to continue outside the classroom. Even if we aren’t going to stick around and talk Fournault, we’re still missing an opportunity to further socialize.

The earphones, the silent bus rides, the rush-out-of-class—not to mention Jim Wulforst’s (the Director of Dining Services at Duke) claims about how take-out food is ruining our social dining experiences—all add up to the same thing: they take away social moments from college life. And that’s a real shame because in our university—completely unlike the streets of New York City—public social action and interaction are primary values.

The quad is more than just a gap between buildings or a pretty lawn. It’s a place for community members to interact—to play, to talk, to debate, to bond, to flirt. Unlike the more exclusive residential spaces or niche-specific academic ones, everyone uses the quads. When we plug in the iPods or bury our noses in the Chronicle, we lose an opportunity not only to publicly reaffirm our bonds with friends and acquaintances but also to meet those who we would never meet in French Science or Kilgo House G.

Moreover, the quad is a space for public action. It’s where we as students exercise our rights to free speech, to protest, to come together to promote a single cause. For example, tabling serves a crucial purpose to the groups on campus as they seek to recruit new members, gather donations, and further serve their missions. The quad is a place where we take our experiences as individuals and bring them out to a public forum. How are we to hear these important social messages when we are too caught up in the music in our ears?

We all recognize the inherent value of socializing. Yet, we don’t realize that our mp3s negate it on a daily basis. By turning on our ipods as we go out in the quad, we encase ourselves in audio bubbles as we move around what ought to be a very public space. Pods trap us in and shut the world out. I know that some people say that some music is so small - there’s always a chance you’ll run into someone you know on your way to class. And once you know them, you might just go out of your way to get a chance to speak to them. And that’s the thing we’ve been missing out on—a lot of friends, and the taste might make it even worse.

So, social isolation may not only lead to a pretty sad life, but also invites cognitive decline. (The American Journal of Public Health)

**OTHER ANTISOCIAL ACCESSORIES...**

**CELL PHONES**

No, we don’t want to hear half of your conversation with your mother, least of all shouted out in the middle of a crowded bus. There aren’t many things more obnoxious than loud cell phone gabbers.

**SUNGLASSES**

You know what they say, the eyes are the window to the soul. The cool factor may not be worth shutting the world out. Don’t hide behind your shades!

**AN OPEN FLY**

Gents, don’t forget to zip up. The clothes you wear can either attract or distract, make sure to keep yourself together.

**CIGARETTES**

The smell of this habit might scare away potential friends, and the taste might keep romantic interests even further.

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**"FAKE" POLITE**

When trying to combat isolation culture, consider how just going through the motions is not the same as genuine engagement. Weigh the difference between throwing around “please” or “thank you” and stopping and taking the time to really help someone. Make it matter.

**WHAT ELSE AFFECTS A SENSE OF COMMUNITY?**

individualistic vs. collectivist culture big city vs. small town cold vs. hot weather

The popular view is that the bankers involved in the financial crisis were evil human beings. Not only is this view incorrect, but it will also never lead us to actually fixing the real problems in the market. We may instead end up trying to fix the errant bankers at the expense of the economy.

To expound on the case of the bankers, let’s look at a set of experiments we did on cheating with some MIT and Harvard students [1].

We gave a large group of students a sheet of paper with 20 simple math problems but only five minutes to solve those problems. A third of the students submitted their sheets and got paid 50 cents per correct answer. Another third were asked to tear up their worksheets, stuff the scraps into their pockets, and simply tell the experimenter their score in exchange for payment. The students would then walk 12 feet across the room to another experimenter, who would exchange each token for 50 cents. The participants in the third group took the cake. They were no smarter than the previous two groups, but they claimed to have solved an average of 9.4 problems—5.9 more than the control group and 3.2 more than the group that merely ripped up their worksheets. This means that when given a chance to cheat under ordinary circumstances, the students cheated, on average, by 2.7 questions. But when they were given the same opportunity to cheat with non-monetary currency, their cheating increased to 5.9, more than doubling in magnitude. What a difference there is in cheating for money versus cheating for something that is a step away from cash!

What lesson can we learn from this experiment about human rationality and the stock market? It turns out that we humans are fantastic rationalizing machines. When given an incentive to see the world in a certain way, we will see it that way. Any sports fan knows this very well; it’s very hard to see a close call that is against our team as being justified and vice versa. What is more, when actions become less defined, removed from cash, or just fuzzy (think of watching a very small TV with a dirty screen or about complex financial products that no one really understands), our ability to justify our actions increases dramatically, and we are able to “bend” reality in a way that suits our selfish motivations.

This suggests that the bankers involved in the market meltdown were not evil people—they were just ordinary people, driven by the same motives that would have played tricks on all of us.

The only way to prevent such a disaster from happening again is by making sure that we don’t place the next generation of financial experts in situations where they face conflicts of interests. Just as we don’t want judges to get a cut of the settlements over which they preside, it is also clear that we don’t want the bankers to be biased by their own incentives.

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What is the point of all of this? We intuit that people could easily take a pencil home from work without thinking of themselves as being dishonest, but that they could not take 10¢ from a petty-cash box and feel good about themselves. In essence, we wanted to find out whether the insertion of a token (a piece of valueless, non-monetary currency) into the transaction would affect the students’ honesty. Would the token make the students less honest in tallying their answers?

What were the results? The participants in the first group (the control group), who had no chance to cheat, solved an average of 3.5 questions correctly. Those in the second group, who tore up their worksheets, claimed to have correctly solved an average of 6.2 questions. Since we can assume that these students did not become smarter merely by tearing up their worksheets, we can attribute the 2.7 additional questions they claimed to have solved to cheating. But in terms of brazen dishonesty, the participants in the third group took the cake. They were no smarter than the previous two groups, but they claimed to have solved an average of 9.4 problems—5.9 more than the control group and 3.2 more than the group that merely ripped up their worksheets. This means that when given a chance to cheat under ordinary circumstances, the students cheated, on average, by 2.7 questions. But when they were given the same opportunity to cheat with non-monetary currency, their cheating increased to 5.9, more than doubling in magnitude. What a difference there is in cheating for money versus cheating for something that is a step away from cash!

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What is the value of anonymity on the Internet? Is that value different for individuals and for society as a whole? What is the threshold for things that are “bad” enough to circumvent existing laws about online identity disclosure? In other words, what are the acceptable exceptions and why are they acceptable?
Can I Laugh at That?

By Scott Peppel
International Comparative Studies, ’10
Member of Duke University Improv

Encompass, "That's Funny", January 2, 2007 via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution
Comedy at its best is based on truth. We laugh at stories of childhood, visits to the dentist, or frustrations with airplane food because we can directly relate to these situations. When comedians find clever nuance to everyday life, we applaud them with laughter and the phrase “Wow, that is so true!” But when, if ever, does the truth stop being funny? What lines are too tender to cross, and how do we know when it is acceptable or who is allowed to cross them?

While questions about ethics can show us that comedy isn’t all about fun and games, so can biology. Laughing has been shown to be therapeutic by releasing endorphins and lowering blood pressure. On a social level, it is one of the best ways to connect with others. In many situations, comedy also enables us to discuss topics that might otherwise be considered taboo. Comedy can help us explore the past and find the humanity in our loneliness, frustrations, and secrets.

But does comedy take on a different tone when we start joking about issues of race? What about tragedy? The Broadway Musical “Avenue Q” challenges these questions with puppets that dance and prance to songs about racism, pornography, and shadenfreude. They claim that “everyone is a little bit racist” and that’s OK. Comedians such as Pablo Francisco, Katt Williams and Lisa Lampanelli make careers of delving into topics that are generally considered taboo, such as religion, sexism, assault, and terrorism. While these jokes may open discussion, they can also reinforce stereotypes, offend the audience, and ostracize individuals in a way that makes the topics even harder to discuss. So where do we draw the line? What can we do to keep jokes from dividing us?

Our sense of humor can ultimately be seen as an extension of how we see the world, so telling others that their laughter is unjust or out of place can actually be a fairly personal attack. I doubt censorship will find much success in the comedy industry. But there is something people can do: they can be educated consumers of comedy. At its root, comedy depends on the simple economic concept of supply and demand. If there’s a demand for jokes about sex (i.e., people laugh when sex jokes are told) then comedians are going to keep supplying that kind of material. You have the power of instant feedback, so use it. You stop laughing, we’ll stop joking.

But also remember that comedy can help us cope, discuss, and find human empathy. When used tactfully, humor is something that we can all share. It bonds individuals and jokes fun at reality. It stretches our thinking and helps us understand what looks funny to other people. It is really one of the most intimate looks into what can bridge people across cultures, religions, age and sex. So let’s protect the sanctity of comedy and do our best to master the most valuable comedic tool of all, the ability to look inward and laugh at ourselves.
Socrates is said to have defined ethics as "how we ought to live." We must learn how to survive and thrive in our day-to-day experiences. Teaching this can be quite challenging since most undergraduates have only briefly engaged contemporary work settings, if at all. Their experiences with ethics generally have been under the mantle of academic integrity. Thus, to teach ethics to undergraduates, it is necessary to build a bridge between academic integrity and professional ethics. In other words, students must know why and how to be morally exemplary in school, so this is an ideal framework from which to design a course that will help with the transition to the work setting. One could argue that this is exactly what happens when a teenager learns to drive a car.

Professional ethics can be likened to driver's training, where the basics of driving a vehicle from a textbook (i.e. the "Rules of the Road") is augmented by hypothetical cases and scenarios to engage the student in "what ifs." Social realization that new drivers are at risk and are placing other members of society at risk. Teenagers are asking to handle an object with a lot of power (e.g. hundreds of horsepower), a large mass (greater than a ton), with a potential to accelerate rapidly and travel at high speeds. To raise the consciousness (and hopefully their conscientiousness), they are shown films of what happens to drivers who do not take their driving responsibilities seriously. Likewise, ethics classes include films and discuss cases that scare the future professionals in hopes that this will remind them of how to act when an ethical situation arises. This takes place in a safe environment (the classroom with a mentor who can share experiences), rather than relying on the one's own experiences.

But, memory fades with time. Psychologists refer to this as extinction, which can be graphed much like a decay curve familiar to engineers (See Figure 1). Unless the event is very dramatic its details will soon fade in memory. This may be why educators often use cases with extremely bad outcomes (e.g. operations gone horribly wrong, bridge failures, fatal side effects, scientific fraud on a global scale) as opposed to less extreme, yet more likely cases, such as the engineer or architect who must decide whether to avoid a conflict of interest in selecting bids for a project.

Another possibly contributing factor in extinction is that if a bad thing happens to someone else, like the scenarios in the driver's education films, they are not easily remembered, even if the results are gory. Much more memorable are events that occur to us personally. Anyone who has been in a car wreck will remember it for many years. The hope for young people is that the wreck that is sure to come will be severe enough to be memorable but not physically harmful to the driver.

Thus, at least two ways of trying to make sure that future professionals remember the importance of ethical decisions are: 1) using powerful cases, or 2) repeating the lessons. In the latter case the extinction curve is bumped up periodically (See Figure 2). But, like driving, most ethical education occurs "out there." Only when a professional is confronted with the actual ethical problem will what has been learned be put to the real test.

Learning ethics, as is the case in learning to drive a car, results from a combination of formal study, interactive learning, and practice. While considering cases is helpful, it is no substitute for experiential learning. Thus, many professions require a period of time when the newly minted professional must learn from a
seasoned pro. Much of this is to gain the benefits of real-world experience, without having to actually suffer through mistake after mistake as the unguided new professional uses trial and error to finally learn the best approaches beyond textbooks (patients and clients would not allow this!). But, this is also to help the new professional become inculcated into a new scientific and professional community, with its distinct and often unforgiving norms and mores. This can be likened to the new driver spending time behind the wheel with a seasoned driver. Only after a certain amount of accompaniment, can the driver be expected to know the subtleties of merging left, parallel parking and other skills gained only after ample practice.

The distinguishing feature of a professional is what the Ancients referred to as ethike aretai. Roughly translated from Greek, it means "skill of character." Thus, the ethical professional is not only competent and skilful within their technical discipline, but they are equally skilful in how they go about their profession.

Noah Pickus, Director of the Kenan Institute for Ethics has described ethical development as a continuum from awareness, decision making and behavior. First we learn what to do, then we learn how and when to decide what is right under various scenarios, and finally, our behavior reflects our moral development. Likewise, we learn to be professionals iteratively from our academic preparation to internships and practice, to membership in professional societies and, finally, as we mentor others on how we and they "ought to live!"

Figure 1
Hypothetical extinction curves. Curve A represents the most memorable case and Curves B and C less memorable. Curve C is completely forgotten with time. While the events in Curves A and B are remembered, less information about the event is remembered in Curve B because the event is less dramatic. The double arrow represents the difference in the amount of information retained in long-term memory.

Figure 2
Hypothetical extinction curves. The solid line represents a single learning event with no reminders (reinforcements). The dashed line shows reminder events in addition to the initial learning event. The double arrow is the difference in retained information retained in long-term memory as result of adding reminders.

WHAT IS ETHICS?

I'm not going to tell you what ethics is. I'm not sure what ethics is. I have a pretty good idea of what questions are at its core. Questions about what sort of life you should lead and what kind of life you think you're leading right now. Because people often mistake themselves and mistake the assumptions in the life that they are leading. That doesn't mean that I know the answers to these ethical questions, but maybe I can help them to see their own presuppositions.

WHAT IF “RIGHT” ISN’T “RIGHT”?

Even robbers think robbing is a good thing to do, because if they didn’t think it was good then they wouldn’t do it. If they thought it were a bad thing to do, wouldn’t that be a bit curious? In fact, I get kind of nervous any time people simplify morality into strict terms of good and evil, because it’s inevitable that they are on the ‘good’ side and everybody else is on the ‘bad’ side.

So we are always trying to do something we think is good for us, but what if it isn’t? What if we made a profound mistake? What if the assumptions we have been carrying with us since we were children are somehow profoundly wrong, or lead to places and the becoming of people that are very different from what we would hope?

‘TRAVELLING COMPANIONS’

I hope the texts of the course (Ethics Certificate Program)—the Republic, Oedipus the King, the Zimbardo and Milgram Studies, Melville, Machiavelli, Samantha Power, and others—become something like traveling companions: people who are in your head both to debate with when confronting ethical choices to and help us in recognizing what constitutes an ethical issue. Of course, I hope students continue to talk with real people and that they don’t do too much of the conversation with the texts out loud in public.

IS STUDYING ETHICS ENOUGH?

Ethics has a lot to do with what you are doing in the university as a whole, and not just in the classroom. One of the paradoxes to this is that some of the head members of the SS, the storm troopers of Nazi Germany had advanced degrees in philosophy, including moral philosophy. So clearly that kind of an education doesn’t ensure that people won’t do horrible things.

GOTTA “RISK” IT!

If you’re going to question the decisions you have made and the life you have chosen, it cannot be just going through the motions. If you don’t risk something, if you remain aloof and make it an intellectual game, then everything you read and hear will confirm what you already know and already plan on doing. Somehow and someway you need to bring your life to the class and the class back into your life. There is a sense in which I need to be a student of my students so I can be a better teacher of them.
Peter Euben is a Research Professor of Political Science and the Kenan Distinguished Faculty Fellow in Ethics. He specializes in ancient, modern, and contemporary political thought; literature and politics; political education; democratic culture and politics; and the politics of morality.

ETHICS N. PL.

1: I’m not sure what ethics is. I have a pretty good idea of what questions are at its core. 2: Questions about what sort of life you should lead and what kind of life you think you’re leading right now.

Origin: Professor Peter Euben

The Ethics Certificate Program helps students to analyze the ethical challenges of everyday life, to see the world from an ethical perspective different than their own, and to engage the Gateway Course authors—Sartre, Job, Plato, James Baldwin, Machiavelli, Nietzsche, Sophocles, Arendt, and Melville—in a moral dialogue that will continue throughout their lives.

Peter Euben, Ethics Professor

“The Challenges of Living an Ethical Life was the best course that I have taken at Duke. I found myself connecting and applying the themes of our readings and discussions to my daily life constantly.”

Scott Pappel, T’10

“The Ethics Certificate Program is new and innovative, and has a galvanizing energy behind it—it will be an exciting and beneficial endeavor for any Duke student.”

Jared Blau, T’10

“Peter Euben has been one of the most important influences in my life at Duke. The books for The Challenges of Living an Ethical Life remain on your shelf—and reappear on your reading list—long after you’ve finished taking the course.”

Jimmy Soni, T’07

HOW TO TEACH ETHICS?

There is no one way to teach ethics any more than there is one way to think about ethics. I don’t have to be the person with the answers. But I do have to be the person who may not yield a conclusion or solution of indicating that such arguments can be made and that a good ethical argument may not yield a conclusion or solution in the way these are available in other fields or aspects of life. I am not sure why students take my classes—you should ask them. But perhaps one reason is that I love to teach, and they may see that passion in me. It doesn’t hurt as much when it comes to ethics. I also have to make ethical arguments as a way of saying that such arguments can be made and that a good ethical argument may not yield a conclusion or solution in the way these are available in other fields or aspects of life.

WHAT IS MORAL IMAGINATION?

A moral imagination is the capacity to see the world as someone else sees it. There are people that can project themselves into the situations of others. Not become others, they can’t possibly do that, but they can imaginatively go visiting where those people live in the world and see the world from their point of view. That’s a kind of essential quality to ethical inquiry.

THE CLASSROOM: MICRO-ETHICS

Ethical issues are all around us even in what we think of as the mundane parts of our lives. In certain respects, what goes on in the classroom itself can be morally instructive. Do students respect each other even when they strongly differ on an issue or the reading of a text; are they able to make an argument and hear counter-arguments; are the stakes in the arguments clear or are people playing intellectual games or talking to show how smart they are? Do they take responsibility for what they say and the way they say it?

BOOK OF JOB: LOSING IT ALL

Many, but by no means all, students at Duke have a sense of privilege. They do not doubt that they deserve to be here and are confident that they can realize their “career trajectories.” But the Book of Job, with which I begin the Gateway course to the Ethics Certificate Program, suggests otherwise. Here is a wealthy, honored, powerful man who has everything anyone could want and is reduced to a stereotypical homeless person—unwashed, full of sores, despised, smelly, and shouting things that seem absurd. This sense of radical reversal, the idea that there but for the grace of God go I, is central to Greek tragedy. The acknowledgment of loss, the recognition that we are all mortals with its attendant sense of vulnerability may be a necessary condition for serious, sustained ethical reflection.
ENCOMPASS

Moral Holiday in South Africa

However, despite the ideal living conditions, I couldn’t shake off this nagging uneasiness, a feeling I identified, upon further reflection, as a sense of guilt. Why couldn’t I simply enjoy the luxury of comfort and familiarity with my hosts without feeling conflicted? The key reason, I realized, was the context of my environment. If I had been in America, I would not have felt as troubled as I did then. As it were, I was in South Africa, a country with one of the greatest wealth disparities in the world, and the mansion I was living in belonged to a white Afrikaner family in Stellenbosch, the Napa Valley of South Africa.

Wealth inequality exists in America and the rest of the world, but South Africa’s situation is unique in that much of the wealth of the white South African minority was built on the recent oppression of the vast black majority.

From 1948 to 1994, black South Africans were systematically and legally discriminated against, exploited, and disenfranchised by the apartheid government. Based mostly on the color of their skin and the texture of their hair, people were classified as “white,” “colored,” “Indian,” or “black,” and their rights were determined based on these classifications. People were forced to live in segregated townships according to their race, and many non-whites were physically removed from their homes in order to make space for white neighborhoods. Although most white South Africans did not actively participate in the apartheid regime, they all benefited from the privileges of being white.
John Schaar, a political theorist, addresses this question. He writes:

"It is comforting to men to think that someone else is competently in charge of the large and dangerous affairs of politics: Somebody else rules; I just live here. Hierarchy and oligarchy provide subjects with that comfort and with easy escapes from shared responsibility and guilt."

He calls this phenomenon “a moral holiday”. Taking a moral holiday — believing the apartheid government’s actions out of their control — was the easiest way for most white South Africans to deal with the wrongness of apartheid. But is a claim to powerlessness a legitimate defense?

I believe the answer is a complicated “No.” There is a marked distinction between guilt and responsibility, between legality and morality: one can be found legally innocent and yet still be held morally responsible. The majority of white South Africans are clearly not guilty of personally committing apartheid. Nevertheless, because the apartheid policies have benefitted — and indirectly continue to benefit — white South Africans as a whole, I believe it is their moral duty to recognize and take collective responsibility for the continued effects of apartheid-era policies. It shouldn’t end there, however; positions of privilege should be recognized as a legacy of apartheid and, at the very least, leveraged to redress past wrongs.

One common defense among white South Africans is that the government hid the facts from the white public; they simply did not know the extent of apartheid’s brutality. While this may be quite true, to what extent does ignorance validate inhumanity’s brutality. While this may be quite true, they simply did not know the extent of apartheid.

Nevertheless, because the apartheid policies have benefitted — and indirectly continue to benefit — white South Africans as a whole, I believe it is their moral duty to recognize and take collective responsibility for the continued effects of apartheid-era policies. It shouldn’t end there, however; positions of privilege should be recognized as a legacy of apartheid and, at the very least, leveraged to redress past wrongs.

The Xhosa make up 18% of the South African population, and are mainly located in the Eastern and Western Capes. Famous Xhosas include former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki.

**The Xhosa**

Arno & Louise, “Sunrise”, November 7, 2008 via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution

**Afrikaners (also known as the Boers)** are the white, Afrikaans-speaking people descended from northwestern European settlers who first arrived at the Cape of Good Hope at the end of the 17th century. Afrikaners is a young language based off simplified Dutch.

**Did you know that language can be used as a tool of oppression?** Imagine what harm it would do to our people if it was passed into law today that a language other than English would be used for instruction in schools in The United States of America. This is what happened in South Africa in 1974 when the Afrikaans Medium Degree was passed into law.

**FALL 2009**

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Building a Community of Education in St. Louis
By Lauren Lee-Houghton, Public Policy ’10
with Elad Gross, Political Science and Economics, ’10
The summer of 2008, Duke sophomore Elad Gross saw the need to improve upon the glaring disparities in education he had witnessed firsthand in his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri. He attended a suburban high school with a busing program, one of the original desegregation efforts of the city, which brings white suburban students into predominantly white suburban communities, and a smaller number of white suburban students into the city. When DukeEngage launched its first full-scale programs, Elad took the initiative and recruited other Duke students to apply as individual participants to serve as volunteer teachers assistants in one struggling St. Louis public school. In total, four other Duke students joined Elad’s makeshift group project in what would become the foundation for a service organization led by Elad and myself.

After our DukeEngage experience, Elad and I set two main goals: 1) continue sending Duke students to volunteer in St. Louis public schools, and 2) integrate students from St. Louis colleges and universities into our model. We decided to focus on college students because they are not only apt to offer new and different knowledge to their younger students, but because they also function as role models who those young learners can look up to and easily connect with. Using Duke students was a model that we were already familiar with, but we decided to add participants from local colleges and universities. We did this to ensure our program’s future sustainability and to fulfill a greater purpose: the development of a community of education that is lacking in St. Louis.

With these goals in mind, we looked for any opportunities at Duke to improve our program. We met with professors and local community organizers and leaders and discussed the logistics of creating a successful community organization from the ground up. We entered the Duke Entrepreneurship competitions and attended their workshops where we developed elevator pitches and business plans. Even our spring semester plans were impacted by our work. Elad studied in New York, where he published our work in an expo held in the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum and attended a non-profit boot camp. I spent the semester abroad in Chile and Argentina, where I studied different education systems firsthand and gained a new perspective on the U.S. system. At the same time, we were both working with DukeEngage to expand the original project.

During the fall and spring semesters after DukeEngage, we developed a more ambitious DukeEngage group program that ran this past summer. We strengthened our ties within the St. Louis community by reaching out to local universities, of which two participated in the expanded DukeEngage program. Seven students from Duke, ten from St. Louis University, and around eighty participants from the University of Missouri St. Louis worked in one of three elementary school sites serving around nine hundred children. We ran the program during the six weeks of summer school, and DukeEngage students also participated in internships at the St. Louis Public Schools headquarters.

What we once believed would only be a summer volunteer program has now grown into much more. We are already planning for next summer’s program and offering other universities in St. Louis the opportunity to partner with us as we try to include more elementary schools. This fall, we are running a pilot regular school-year program with our longtime partner elementary school, and more than forty college students are participating.

We are also seeking ways to improve our program through research. During the summer, we were able to visit with the Memphis City Schools and the Chicago Public Schools to learn how other districts deal with community involvement and what opportunities there may be for programs like our own in different urban school districts. Elad and I are also jointly writing an honors thesis that measures the effect of summer program participation on the local community’s social capital. One of our future plans is to link student researchers from multiple universities to share ideas and data, leading to innovation and deeper analyses of current issues.

Today, we are developing a service organization to encapsulate all of these activities: In-class teaching assistantships, district headquarters and community internships, and research into education. This organization is called the Education Exchange Corps, and we plan to incorporate as a non-profit organization this upcoming spring. Other organizations bring volunteers into classrooms on a regular basis, but our unique focus on college students and encouraging academic interests in the field of education allows our service organization to affect two generations of students: the children we work with receive the extra help they need to succeed academically, and the college participants who work with us participate in a potentially life-changing experience that impacts their career choices.

The journey Elad and I took to build upon our original service project has been long, strenuous, time-consuming and, most importantly, rewarding. We pushed through times of uncertainty, dealt with set-backs, and have received both negative and positive feedback on our program—though mostly positive. However, not all service projects have to result in the founding of a new nonprofit to be deemed successful. Ultimately, helping out in the community is a giving of time, our most precious endowment. Thoughtful planning, rigorous evaluation, and a motivation to improve lives by improving the education system and its ties with the community—that is what we have striven to do.

**What is DukeEngage?**

DukeEngage provides funding for Duke undergraduates who wish to pursue an immersive (minimum of eight weeks) service experience by meeting a community need locally, domestically or internationally. Thanks to funding from The Duke Endowment and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, DukeEngage funded and supported 350 students in both group programs and independent projects during the summer of 2008. Since the program began in 2007, more than 800 Duke students have participated.

**The Kenan Institute for Ethics and DukeEngage Dublin**

In partnership with University College Dublin, several Irish NGOs, and DukeEngage, the Institute is sending eight students to Dublin, Ireland, for eight weeks in summer 2010 to help understand and tackle growing problems in the Irish refugee community.

For more information: dukeethics.org
A ny public debate on ethics where the participants of the discussion do not share a common “ultimate” story is a debate that is likely to be decided by coercion and force. There is perhaps no better contemporary example of this than the ongoing debate on homosexual marriage. In particular, the November 2008 approval of Proposition 8 in California—an amendment to the state constitution that declared only marriages between females and males would be legally recognized and allowed—has lead to heightened debate on the subject nationwide. Opponents of Prop 8 argue that homosexuals should have the same right to legal marriage as heterosexual couples and that the state should not privilege one type of relational arrangement over another when defining marriage. Proponents of the ban posit that marriage by definition is a union between a man and a woman and has a particular quality to it that should not be equated with monogamously committed same-sex couples. Those supportive and critical of homosexual marriage incessantly argue with each other publicly and privately. Each hopes to sway the legal system and the broader culture towards believing that what they are arguing for is right, just, and moral. Contingents in both camps debate as though they possess a universal moral certitude regarding their positions. They maintain that through common sense and reason, any person should be able to see that their cause is clearly right. Nothing could be further from the truth.
In the gay marriage debate, common sense and reason cannot solve the dispute because neither exists in a universal way. Forms of common sense vary depending upon the traditions, habits, and thought patterns of whichever group is holding the sense in common; there is not one form or kind of common sense that is exactly and uniformly the same across cultures or even between groups within a particular society. With sexuality, the particular beliefs about the purpose of sex held by one religious group will inevitably create a framework of sexual sensibility that is different from another group that does not share the same notions. So, some, assuming a definition of “natural,” say, “The parts just don’t fit,” and conclude that common

sense says that gay relationships are not on the same level as heterosexual ones and should not be legally affirmed in the same way with marriage. Others assume that sexually expressed human relationships are not justified by the external anatomy and procreative capacity involved, but by the love and commitment that is present between two people; for them, this is common sense. Either way one goes, the foundational assumptions about the meaning and purpose of love, sex, and relationships in these scenarios are different. Here, there is not a common sense to be held in common.

One may concede the lack of universality in realms of common sense, but might ask if reason is not a more calculated, precise, dispensation, universal standard to which all people can appeal? In short, no. The notion of autonomous universal reason has the same quality problem that many conceptions of common sense have. How a group reasons and the “rules” of reason used depend upon what the group values both intellectually and in practice. In turn, these aspects are all held together by the story the group holds or tells about the nature, meaning, and purpose of life. Thus, different ultimate stories produce different forms of reason. So, if a group of people believe in a particular god with a particular character and a particular telos (“end” or “purpose”) for humankind and behavior, the content and nature of their reason will be different from a group that believes in no gods at all. This situation is perhaps best summed up by Catholic priest, Richard John Neuhaus, who said, “Debates between [Christian] tradition and reason are actually debates between two traditions of reason.”

When not recognized, this lack of a common foundation to which different groups can appeal for the adjudication of disagreements results in people arguing past each other and finding it incredible that those who disagree with them could be so ignorant and morally reprehensible. On the side of support for gay marriage, arguments are often made based on something called “universal human rights” believed to transcend any particular religious or cultural beliefs; these rights are supposed to be accessible to all through reason. Again, the “reason” problem here is that how one construes and3 flushes out the substance of these “universal” rights is entirely dependent upon one’s cultural, social, and ultimate assumptions about life. There is little chance for gay rights activists to convince conservative Catholics, Evangelicals, and Mormons that there is a universal human right to marriage that should somehow take greater precedent over the injunctions of the particular god of the universe that they believe is against homosexual behavior. There are no universal human rights that can universally be known as universal.

Of course, the difficulty on the side of those that argue against gay marriage is fundamentally the same. Instead of using human rights language, this side appeals to a definition of marriage itself that they cast as universal and unchanging. For religious conservatives, marriage is an institution that is ordained by God and, in great part, is a way to reflect the nature and image of God. It is believed that this reflection is only accurately done through monogamous male and female relationships with their capacity for procreation and the intrinsic physiological “otherness” embodied in them. The problem with this in the American socio-political context is that this particular logic does not work and carries very little purchase outside of Judeo-Christian circles. In other words, they are arguing for a definition of marriage on theological grounds that are not shared with those they are arguing against.

Now, if you are hoping that in this short essay I will somehow find a way to reconcile the differences and eliminate the tensions involved here, you will be disappointed. I cannot. The only way to get universal agreement on common sense, reason, and understandings of marriage would be to get everyone in the world to share the same ultimate meanings, purposes, and understandings of life and the universe; I do not see that happening anytime soon. In the American context, there will ultimately be one broad perspective on legal homosexual marriage that will have cultural and political dominance over the other. Though

The only way to get universal agreement on common sense would be to get everyone in the world to share the same ultimate understandings of life and the universe.

I do not see that happening anytime soon.
The proclamation "Race is History," which appeared on the front cover of the Beaumont Texas Enterprise on November 5, 2008, the day after Barack Obama was elected president, is actually quite ambiguous. On the one hand, this statement could mean that race is behind us; it is completely in the past. On the other hand, it could mean that the idea of race, in a way, defines history. The latter implies that we may never live in a post-racial society but, instead, asks if something can be done to eliminate racial inequality without eliminating the concept of race itself.

James Baldwin, a prominent writer of the 1950's and 60's, recognized that race was still an integral part of the nation's framework, even one hundred years after the abolition of slavery. In his essay, "My Dungeon Shook—Letter to my Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of Emancipation," Baldwin cites the "innocence" of white Americans as the reason for continued racial inequality. At the end of his letter, Baldwin tells his nephew that the country is "celebrating one hundred years of freedom one hundred years too soon." There is always hope during times of change, but Baldwin makes clear that freedom from racial disparity takes time and mutual understanding between blacks and whites. He says, "We cannot be free until they are free." Baldwin believes that the blinded sense of white rule is not caused by the incapacity of white people to understand what they have done to blacks in the past, but by an unwillingness to do so, a denial of wrong deeds. This is where innocence diverges from ignorance, and, according to Baldwin, "it is the innocence which constitutes the crime."

Today, in a new era of change, the issue of race has still not magically disappeared. Though the election of President Barack Obama is a positive step towards the goal of racial tolerance, the president himself recognizes, as Baldwin did, that freedom from racial barriers takes time. Obama said in his speech entitled "A More Perfect Union" that he has "never been so naive as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle, or with a single candidacy." Obama acknowledges that although racism is not as overt today as it has been in the past, it very much still exists—in the school systems, in neighborhoods, and in the criminal justice system to name a few. Glen Loury, in his Boston Review article entitled "Why are so Many Americans in Prison? Race and the Transformation of Criminal Justice," attempts to suggest racial inequalities in a more quantifiable, numerical way.

Racial Disparities: By the Numbers

- For every white American who is unemployed, there are two unemployed black Americans.
- For every white child born to unmarried parents there are three black children born to unmarried parents.
- For every white infant that dies before they reach one year old, three black children die.
- For every white American incarcerated, there are eight incarcerated black Americans.
objective sense. He found in 2007, for every white person who was unemployed, two black people were in the same situation. For non-marital child bearing, the black-white ratio was 3:1, for infant mortality, 2:1, and for incarceration, 8:1. From these numbers we see that the issue of race is not completely in the past. But what, if anything, can be done to remedy these unfortunate statistics?

Baldwin’s solution for ridding the United States of racial inequality is love. To love is to show empathy, to imagine yourself in someone else’s place. Thus, the inclination to act would not be dependent on personal benefit, but rather on the basis of what is just. In addition, Baldwin thinks that he who calls for change must take the first step by removing his veil of innocence and “cease fleeing from reality and begin to change it.”

Complementing Baldwin is Loury’s belief that the key to getting rid of racial barriers is the possession of a moral imagination. He tells his readers, “Imagine that you could be born a black American male outcast shuffling between prison and the labor market on his way to an early death to the chorus of nigger or criminal or dummy. Suppose we had to stop thinking about us and them. What social rules would we pick if we actually thought that they could be us?” But it is not enough to simply realize that inequality exists; from this acknowledgment must come a genuine effort towards change.

So, is race history? In the sense that race is behind us, I think the answer is undoubtedly “no.” Although, as Obama points out, racism is far less overt than it has been in past eras, Loury’s statistics speak to the reality of the disparity between black and white in America today.

In this way, race defines history because we cannot separate our generation from the long tradition of inequality in our nation’s past, but it does not have to be a source of constraint. Inequality can be eliminated...

Race defines history because we cannot separate our generation from the long tradition of inequality in our nation’s past, but it does not have to be a source of constraint. Inequality can be eliminated...

With the loss of what Baldwin calls “innocence,” or the denial of reality, comes a potential for real dialogue, the first step toward a future where race is history.

Sources:
The relationship between Duke and its surrounding Durham community has always been interesting, to say the least. While many Duke students use excuses such as crime and the lack of interesting places and events in Durham to keep from exploring the city, many Durham residents refer to the university as “The Plantation.” This has created what is now commonly known as the “Duke Bubble,” with an inner and outer world. A few groups have been working toward achieving a common understanding between the two worlds’ ethos and perspectives, including the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership and Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations, and Neighborhoods). In an interview with some of the leaders of these groups, I sought insight into their activities, objectives, and achievements so far.

Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership (DDNP)

What is the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership’s mission?

Sam: Civic Engagement – a unique collaborative between the neighborhoods directly beyond Duke. It is a defining feature of what it means to be a Duke student. There is a bottom-up interest from the students and also a top-down concern to create an environment that allows for good citizenship and a commitment to the community.

Michael: There are a few reasons why Duke wants to get involved in the community. First, for enlightened self-interest – the university is inextricably tied to its community and, so goes the community, so goes the college. Secondly, Duke students are the leaders of tomorrow, and they need to know the people that they are positioned to lead. This is achieved through service-learning engagement. Thirdly, the university needs to deal with global issues such as poverty.
What specific projects have you undertaken? How has the partnership, since its inception, improved the community’s realities?

Sam: We focus on three major themes: academic achievement and youth development, neighborhood growth and development, and Latino outreach and engagement.

Michael: We’ve achieved some level of success that has been grounded in personal, neighbor-neighbor relationships.

Sam: These relationships have built trust and created effective ways to address affordable housing, healthcare, at-risk youth, educational specialties, and the strengthening of the non-profit and business sectors.

Michael: We have developed a listening strategy – listen to the community and let them articulate the issues, and then you can figure out how to move their agenda.

From personal experience I know that the community sometimes resists adversely to Duke’s actions and feels that it does have a higher responsibility in the community’s future. How has the receptivity of the community been since 1996?

Michael: The response has been good for our work because of the consistency and the quality of the people we work with, both staff and students. I think that has helped us evolve a relationship that used to define Duke as a vague, big thing over there. There is no Duke flag waving and saying, “Look what Duke did!” Instead it reads, “We were able to accomplish this with Duke’s support.”

Private higher education is a complex [entity]. While people assign to the university capacities of wealth and privilege, most of the money is earmarked for specific purposes and the university does not necessarily have the ability to allocate a 10 million dollar donation in any way it sees fit.

Sam: We also have to raise money, just like everyone else. The average Durham citizen is unaware that there are more than 300 student organizations within the university that compete for funding. We don’t have unlimited resources. When we make certain decisions we have to constantly be thinking about funding resources.

Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations, and Neighborhoods)

Ivan Kohar Parra
Senior Organizer of the Industrial Areas Foundation in North Carolina

Ivan, a Colombian native, helped build El Centro Hispano of Durham into one of the largest grassroots Latino organizations in North Carolina by blending services, education, and community organizing. He co-founded the Latino Community Credit Union as the first financial institution owned by Latinos in the state. Further, Ivan directs the North Carolina Latino Coalition, a network of 70 grassroots Latino organizations that publicly negotiate improvements with private and public actors in North Carolina. Ivan is a senior organizer with the Industrial Areas Foundation in North Carolina, a network of five interconnected, multi-racial organizations working for social change throughout the region. He has been in Durham for 14 years working with El Centro Hispano for the first 7 years and with Durham CAN for the past 7 years.

What is Durham CAN’s mission?

To identify and develop the skills of leaders inside different institutions in the community and help them develop effective solutions.

Duke is the third largest employer in NC. How do you gauge the relational history between Duke and Durham?

It is not easy to judge the relationship because both entities are extremely dynamic and complex.

Duke has been very proactive in many areas and has built relationships with the Durham community, especially in the surrounding neighborhoods which are in Duke’s self interest. However, there are other areas where disconnections exist. Duke has a lot of intellectual capacity throughout different programs and could be more focused towards identifying and resolving problems that exist in this community; sometimes the academic world and the real world don’t make that connection.

It is also apparent that not all of Durham’s neighborhoods have the same exposure or benefits from Duke’s policies. The benefits should extend to other neighborhoods where Duke is not present via a more targeted approach.

Once Duke pulls out, those services are not sustainable anymore because the capacity to maintain them is not present in the community.

Has Duke been socially responsible?

Yes, in some areas, but there is also room for improvement. One essential factor is to get proactive interaction and planning between Duke leaders and various lay and clergy leaders in Durham, like Durham CAN achieves.

Do you feel that Duke has affected Durham politics, economics, etc.?

Duke is a big player in many different areas in government, business, and development. Sometimes there are open democratic conversations, but at other times those conversations have been difficult because of Duke’s self-interest. However, that is part of the world as it is. The role of organizations like Durham CAN is to craft a space for discussion – to complete the 3-legged stool: government, private industry, community.
Closely embedded within Duke's academic community is an invisible workforce comprising student workers who are often overlooked. Among them is John Chin, a janitor in the engineering dormitory. For most students, his presence is merely a blur of activity as he cleans the halls, shops for deliveries, and assembles equipment. John's story, however, is a testament to perseverance and self-reliance.

When he first arrived at Duke, John was immediately pulled into menial tasks. His role stretched beyond his job description, providing the support that many students rely on. Despite the workload, John has maintained a passion for learning and aspires to continue his education in the future.

The Invisible Workforce on Campus: A Photo Essay by Josh Lim, English '11

Photographs by Josh Lim, English '11
It is hard for me to judge how apathetic students are to the Duke Maintenance Staff. I don’t know if they’ve ever stopped to think about who cleans their dormitories after a weekend of hard partying, or if they’ve ever considered the force that magically makes their vomit on the bathroom floor go away.

I can’t say for sure that Duke students have never taken the time to meet the maintenance staff, nor can I assert that they don’t know their names or even what their faces look like. I don’t know what is true for Duke undergraduates as a whole, but I know what is true for me: I was guilty of all of the above, before I decided to take my camera and go meet Keith Jones and Shariff Conley. These two individuals clean all five floors of Kilgo House—I where I reside—on Monday through Friday, starting at 7 am. They clean every shower stall and every toilet in every bathroom on those five floors. They clean the common rooms and the kitchens, the nooks and the hallways, and they do it all before most students return from the day’s classes.

“I hope that these photos will help to give a face to those who so often are ignored”
The heat index had topped 105 degrees when Carmelo Fuentes collapsed in the Eastern North Carolina tomato field. The thirty-six-year-old had been toiling in the sun all day, yet his supervisor repeatedly ignored his pleas for rest and hydration. Once the heat stroke had hit Fuentes’ internal organs, it was too late. Today, this former farmworker lies mute and motionless on a rusted bed in central Mexico, where he suffers from the irreversible brain damage he contracted on that fateful day in the fields.

Fuentes’ tragic tale is just a glimpse into the harsh realities that many workers face under North Carolina’s H-2A guestworker program. The H-2A program must immediately be reformed in order to curtail the rampant abuse and mistreatment of immigrant workers.

The H-2A program, in theory, is very valuable for both American employers and migrant workers. Through this program, the federal government authorizes the lawful admission of temporary, non-immigrant workers into the United States to perform temporary or seasonal agricultural labor. This visa directive is intended to provide “an efficient and secure program for farmers to legally fulfill their need for agricultural workers within the law rather than outside the law.” It is especially concerning, then, that many ethically objectionable conditions exist not only for undocumented immigrants, but also for workers who have come to the U.S. through governmentally endorsed means.

Over ten thousand of these foreign guestworkers work in North Carolina farms each year, more than in any other state in the country. In fact, the two-story metal warehouse in Vaas, NC, which every H-2A worker must pass through each growing season, is the nation’s largest single distribution point for imported farm labor. Given the large number of H-2A workers situated in our state, it is an outrage that so many of these laborers continue to suffer from inhumane living and working conditions that escape the public eye.

The federal government is supposed to regulate the working conditions of H-2A farms, but many farm-owners flagrantly mistreat H-2A workers without fear of being penalized by authorities. A six-month investigation of the program revealed widespread complaints that some growers have refused their workers water in the fields; housed them in crumbling, rat-infested buildings in which sewage seeps up through the drains; denied workers medical care after exposing them to pesticides; and even threatened them at gunpoint.

Much of this injustice goes unreported and unnoticed by those outside the fields and farms. Because guestworkers are legally tied to a single employer, they are vulnerable to being
deported to their home countries if they complain about worker protection violations.

Twenty-seven tobacco workers in Wilson, NC, for example, suffered through the excruciating symptoms of nicotine poisoning for over a week before they were given medical attention. Upon questioning the victims, the nurse practitioner discovered that these workers had been too afraid to notify their employer until the dizziness, cramps, headaches, and vomiting became too agonizing to bear any longer.

The few regulations that actually are enforced by the government offer little remedy for mistreated H-2A workers. In North Carolina, the housing standards include no provisions for locks on doors or windows, and only mandate one refrigerator per 27 people and one washtub per 30 people. Because there are no sanitary requirements for bedding provisions, many workers opt to sleep on the concrete floor rather than endure worn, moldy mattresses. Dozens of men are forced to share toilets and showers, neither of which have partitions for privacy.

The current state of the H-2A program bears a striking resemblance to the notorious Bracero program, which was established during World War II to address a massive labor shortage by importing millions of Mexican farm workers. The government terminated the program in 1964 after a television documentary exposed squalid living and working conditions and ignited widespread public outcry. Today’s H-2A program displays similar levels of maltreatment and exploitation. This program, like its WWII predecessor, must be eliminated if it continues to demonstrate such a propensity for abuse and neglect.

Drastic reforms in the government’s regulation and enforcement of proper living and working conditions must immediately be enacted.

The government must raise its standards for H-2A living and working conditions, as well as actively enforce such regulations. Workers must also be released from their tethers to a single employer, allowing them the opportunity to voice their objections to abuse or neglect. Such urgent measures are only the start of what must be a comprehensive investigation and reform of the H-2A guestworker program. We cannot continue to turn a blind eye to this grave problem, and must respond with aggressive and effective measures that eradicate the exploitation that currently plagues the H-2A program.

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ETHICAL CHALLENGES TO KEEP IN MIND:

- The H-2A program is restricted to temporary workers. Do (or should) these individuals have different rights than immigrants who intend to stay in the United States? Why or why not?

- Where do the values of the farmers and the farmworkers clash? How might these contrasting viewpoints be reconciled to encourage cooperation in immigration reform efforts?

- The National Council of Agricultural Employers has written to the government to urge changes in the H-2A program, such as speeding up the H-2A application process, relaxing housing standards for guest workers, reducing the required wage for these workers and increasing the types of work they are permitted to do --- poultry processing might be included, for instance. Grower groups have also urged the administration to ease requirements that they run newspaper advertisements to determine whether American workers want the jobs. What effect might such actions have on the working conditions of H-2A workers?

- How do ethical considerations play a role in immigration policy in general? Does (or should) the legal status of an immigrant change these considerations?
Did you know that apes are being eaten up? I can safely bet that you didn’t. Even I, a proud conservationist, didn’t know that. Of greater surprise is that they are neither being eaten up by a mysterious disease nor by aliens. The primate order, from tarsiers and lemurs to our cousins the apes, are “being guzzled down the gullet of humanity!”

Moreover, this practice is not limited to a handful of impoverished farmers. Dale Peterson, in his book “Eating Apes”, tells us that there are a host of other actors implicated. Peterson raises questions such as, where do the guns and ammunition used to hunt the apes come from? How do the hunters get into pristine (and sometimes protected) forests? Why are they killing far more than is necessary for subsistence? How does the meat end up in the city markets? And finally the big question, who is actually eating the apes?

Before he answers these questions, however, Peterson first explores what exactly is wrong with eating apes. Is it that they are our closest relatives, and the ordeal fairly reeks of cannibalism? Chimps share over 98% of our genetic code, and exhibit many of our ‘human’ characteristics such as theory of mind and awareness of self. To many, eating something so close to a human being is like eating another human, and thus morally wrong. On the other hand, let it be known by some accounts that we also share 50% of our genetic code with bananas, and we sure eat a lot of them.

Maybe the ethical issue is that in some situations, there may be fewer than four hundred individuals of a species remaining in the wild. Eating apes, without regard to their population numbers or reproductive rate, as is currently being done, risks sending them the way of the dodo.

When we lose the gorilla, the chimp, or the bonobo, we are once again burning the proverbial Library at Alexandria. Furthermore, the roots of many super-diseases, including Ebola and HIV, have been traced back to origins in the primate order. In Eating Apes, Peterson gives multiple accounts of hunters who happened upon a “mysteriously” dead gorilla and, upon butchering and eating the carcass, developed symptoms of Ebola. Similarly, groundbreaking epidemiological research by
Beatrice Hahn has shown that both HIV 1 and HIV 2 are the offspring of Simian Immunodeficiency Viruses (SIVs), found in populations of chimps and sooty mangabeys respectively. Can we really risk introducing more of such horrendous diseases into the world?

So, why with all these ethical arguments against it, is everyone still eating apes? In a brilliant piece of writing, Peterson drops the anvil on two groups who are not usually associated together: the usual suspect, Big Logging, and the surprise, Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN).

Big Logging companies (CIB, SIBAF, etc.) have been the notorious villains around the world for ages. They are famous for ravaging nature without concern for the consequences.

However, the damage to the primate population is not directly resulting from these practices. Rather than providing its loggers and their families with food, the logging companies provide them with guns, ammo, and paid time off to go hunting. These workers not only feed themselves, but also ship plenty back to urban areas where bush meat has become somewhat of a luxury. With the demand in the cities growing, gorilla, chimp, bonobo and all sorts of bush meat make its way from the newly opened forest treasure chest to the city markets.

Big Conservation fits into the situation in a remarkable way; by endorsing it all. “Big Conservation” (WCS, WWF, CI) dropped the ball in its shining hour, right when it had the chance to put a choke hold on Big Logging and save the day. Instead, it climbed into bed with the enemy.

During the early 1990s Big Logging had been exposed and was under much pressure to change its ways to be more ecologically responsible. In a big show, put on by CIB, a scientist under WCS, signed a treaty inadvertently approving CIB’s actions. Deciding that working with the enemy was better than fighting, the rest of Big Conservation followed suit, approving false and nonexistent “responsible” changes in Big Logging right and left.

Peterson goes on to explain that this had to do with Big Conservation’s need to show its donors and supporters that it was using their money productively.

Of the many points Peterson makes in this tale, one that resonates with me (and hopefully will with others) is the fact that it is not only Central Africa, or the apes, that is suffering.

The carnage of the apes will have extensive economic, health, spiritual, and scientific effects on all of us, and every other human, will suffer and pay for this. We will pay for it through disease, lack of scientific information, global warming, impure water, and cold hard aid money.

Sources:

A Book Review
by Locky Stewart
Trinity, '09

EATING APES

A Book Review
by Locky Stewart
Trinity, '09
Across:
2 - Killing of national, racial, political, or cultural group
4 - Division of the psyche in psychoanalytic theory
5 - Death as a philosophical notion
10 - Excessive belief in one’s own abilities
11 - Synonym for assessment
12 - Nasher exhibit Fall 2009
13 - Theory of moral obligation
14 - Complete trust
16 - “I think therefore I am” (author)
18 - ________ ethics; the study of ethics in practice
22 - Location of Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke
24 - Chinese philosopher, author of the Analects
25 - “Nothing in ________” living a balanced life
26 - Treating in a fatherly manner, often overbearing

Down
1 - Theft without economic motive
3 - “An ______ life is not worth living” (Socrates)
4 - Freedom from advantage and disadvantage
6 - Domination of one over another
7 - Different one
8 - Principles of conduct governing a person or institution
9 - “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”
10 - Excessive belief in one’s own abilities
11 - ________ for assessment
12 - Intellectual theft
15 - Branch of philosophy dealing with reality and being
16 - A particular principle, e.g. of law
17 - Makes ethics a cornerstone of the Duke experience
18 - ________ ethics; the study of ethics in practice
19 - Greek philosopher, author of The Republic
20 - Principle of unselshy concern for the welfare of others
21 - ________ theft

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