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Where does one place the soul in the seemingly objective and rational modern world? Is there still space for a subjective sense of ethics? In this issue, Encompass Magazine centers on these questions, focusing on society’s sense of spirituality amidst ever-growing conformity. We aim to situate ethics within modernity to show how it plays an integral role in both secular and religious life.

The domains of religion and spirituality naturally intersect. How is ethics interwoven with religion? How do we use religion to define ourselves (pg. 14)? Can ethics provide common ground for all religions (pg. 22)?

But the essence of ethics goes beyond religiosity, shaping our civil and social structures. Where does the subjective nature of spirituality fit into governmental practices (pg. 26)? How do past ethical wrongs affect our liberty in the future (pg. 20)? And do lawmakers have the right to dictate the use of our bodies (pg. 4)? We question how the standard of justice is affected by a spiritual interpretation of ethics.

We also highlight the often-neglected connection of science, the current touchstone of rationality, to ethics and spirit. From a perspective that sees life as merely a series of chemical reactions, what are the ethical implications of our ability to legally kill (pg. 6)? What is at stake for humanity in the destruction of the environment (pg. 7)? And what is the ethical import of arguments pro and against evolution (pg. 9)?

We hope that from reading this issue of Encompass Magazine our readers will gain an understanding of ethics in terms of spirituality. Modernity increasingly aligns with standardization and objectivity, whereas at the heart of ethics lies a sense of individual responsibility. Living spiritually also requires that we recognize this irreducibly subjective dimension of ethics.

Enjoy, engage, and encompass ethics!

Jacob Golan and Theresa Vellek
Should Prostitution Be Legalized?

Matt Peterson, Trinity ’16

The United States Constitution instilled a foundation based on the freedom of speech, religion, and trade upon a growing nation. However, the current American legal system outlaws prostitution even though it involves consensual sexual relations between adults. The nation’s founding fathers did not desire active governments; they wanted power to rest in the hands of normal citizens. Currently, many people condemn prostitution, yet they fail to suggest any possible resolutions to ameliorate the issue. The government currently spends millions each year in futile attempts to eliminate a widespread underground industry. If the US government legalizes the sex industry, it will help both prostitutes and society as a whole.

When analyzing the debate over legalizing prostitution, citizens must first study the failure of the Prohibition period that lasted from 1920 to 1933. Parallel to the case with prostitution, a thriving underground “bootlegging” industry circumvented federal laws. As a result of the ban, the government lost a lot of money in tax revenue, increased yearly spending in the Bureau of Prohibition from $4.4 million to $13.4 million, and faced an immense logjam in the criminal justice system (1).

Not only does Prohibition demonstrate the failure of an illegalization of a large industry, but also an analysis of abortion before and after the groundbreaking Supreme Court Case Roe v. Wade highlights another analogous basis that demonstrates the ineffectiveness of limiting sexual rights. Prior to the legalization of abortion, 17% of deaths due to pregnancy were consequences of “back-alley” abortions (2). Even when there was no legal discourse to terminate a pregnancy, about one million women sought abortions each year. Both abortions and prostitution are much more dangerous when the government does not legalize and regulate the industries.

The illegalization of prostitution leads to the same insufficiencies shown during Prohibition and the ban on abortion; making the sex industry illegal fails to trigger significant and productive change. When the government ceases to regulate alcohol distribution, abortions, and sex workers, conditions almost always deteriorate for both producers and consumers. In all three cases, the bans cost the federal government significant sums of money. Escalating the stringency of the already severe American legal system only increases the amount of money spent on fighting crime and the number of citizens detained by the police.

There are clear economic benefits that will arise if the government legalizes prostitution. Currently the government spends an exorbitant amount of its fiscal resources on efforts to catch and persecute prostitutes and customers. What difference does arresting prostitutes make when most of them immediately return to the streets after their detentions end? Los Angeles alone spends nearly $100 million annually to fight prostitution (3). The legalization of prostitution would allow the government to divert these funds to help improve public education, reduce unemployment rates, continue to expand infrastructure, and combat more dangerous and important crimes.

In addition to protecting the fiscal health of society, the government is obligated to protect the actual physical health of the nation’s citizens. The legalization of prostitution is essential to improve prostitutes’ health and working conditions. If society legitimizes the sex industry, ex-

Prostitution Country by Country

Key:
- Legal
- Restricted
- Illegal
- No Law

Source: http://chartsbin.com/view/snb
changes between prostitutes and customers will occur in safer environments; prostitutes will have access to health benefits that all workers should receive; and the government will be able to combat pimps and clients who physically and mentally abuse prostitutes. A study by the US Department of Health and Human Services reveals that sex with a prostitute is the third most common way for an American male to get the AIDS virus; almost half of the prostitutes in Washington D.C. and New York City are HIV positive (4). Additionally, American prostitutes have revealed instances in which they have sought protection and help from the police, only to be condemned and scolded.

A study of the legal brothels in Nevada reveals the positive possibilities that a legal sex industry offers. Nevada’s system is heavily regulated; brothels cannot be near counties with 400,000 plus residents, county governments can ban the industry in their area, all workers face regular HIV and STD testing, and the brothels cannot be located near schools, churches, and main roads. With all these conditions in place, not a single registered prostitute in Nevada has tested positive for AIDS since tests began in 1989 (5).

Under proper regulation, the legalization of prostitution can only benefit America. It is understandable that groups may find this against their morals, just as some groups do not agree with abortion. However, our government must “manage” the issue instead of “ignoring” it.

Sources:
2. Before and After Roe: http://www.now.org/issues/abortion/roe30/beforeafter.html
5. Nevada Counties Legislations: http://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-244.html#NRS244Sec345

$58 billion sex industry is the fastest growing criminal industry
40 million prostitutes are at work at this given moment
22 countries have legalized and regulated prostitution
$1 is the median price for many prostitutes in South Africa
$25 is the average hourly wage of a prostitute in Chicago
1 in 10 men in the world have purchased a prostitute
80,000 U.S. citizens are arrested per year for soliciting sex
$200 million in court and jail fees per year in the US from the industry
2.5 victims are currently being trafficked
204 of every 100,000 is the murder rate for an American prostitute
When we first pose the question of whether permitting physician-assisted suicide (PAS) and voluntary euthanasia is morally permissible or not, the slippery slope argument is usually a key issue. This type of argument is supposed to metaphorically convey the idea that although the first “step” or action is not morally objectionable, the final one is. Yet, it is somehow impossible to get off the slope at the right point and even harder to know what that point is.

Many people try to use the slippery slope arguments to support the claim that PAS should remain illegal. If we allow PAS now, physicians may begin abusing PAS, or we may encourage people to take their lives in other inappropriate situations. Seemingly the strongest argument proponents of this view make against legalizing PAS is that by not stepping on the slope at all, one can be sure to avoid ending up at the bottom of the slope.

One could say that it is possible to stop midway on the slope and regulate certain circumstances in which physician-assisted suicide is permissible. However, I am less optimistic about the potential to “get off the slope” at the “right” moment. I have difficulty imagining a principled reason for legalizing PAS for patients who are already dying, but not for those who are not dying. If it were legalized for some, it would most likely need to be legalized for others.

Alternatively, we might think the last step is not so bad, and therefore the argument of ending at the bottom when you first step on the slope is not so worrisome. This would translate into a hypothetical cost-benefit analysis in which the benefit of having terminally ill patients able to receive PAS would outweigh any negative consequences of having people who were not dying use this form of treatment.

If the first step is taken to legalize it for some cases in which individuals are already dying, then it will be difficult to deny a broad right to die for individuals who are not already dying. Essentially, it is hard to distinguish between certain types of cases in which PAS is permissible and those in which it is not. Most supporters of PAS think it should be legalized for patients who are terminally ill, in a lot of pain, competent, informed, and want to die because self-creation and avoidance of pain are both extremely important. However, under this reasoning, we would also have to allow PAS for people who are not terminally ill but are in a lot of pain, competent, informed, and want to die because self-creation and avoidance of pain are both extremely important. However, under this reasoning, we would also have to allow PAS for people who are not terminally ill but are in a lot of pain, competent, informed, and want to die, as with the case of Elizabeth Bouvia, a woman who was living with cerebral palsy and sought PAS.

The American philosopher Ronald Dworkin argues that a moral distinction between the two groups of terminally ill patients and those who are not already dying can be made and that a line in fact can be drawn mid-slope to stop the slippery slope conclusion. Dworkin argues for terminally ill patients to have a right to opt for PAS, but notes that there need to be precautions in place to avoid having emotionally unstable patients make rash decisions. Dworkin reaffirms that patients should have input in these decisions because they are the best judge of their own condition, although they are still fallible. Having the option to choose PAS is important because as self-creators, humans are concerned with how all their choices fit together to form an expression of each individual. Therefore, the final decision makes us self-creators and, as such, being at the bottom of the slippery slope is permissible if the advanced directives of patients are honored when written in a time of clarity (Dworkin, 1993).

Dworkin believes that competent people have the right to make momentous personal decisions that invoke convictions about life’s value for themselves, a notion that is very similar to humans being self-creators of their own “work of art” in life. Following this argument, Bouvia should have been allowed to choose PAS because she did not want to live with her cerebral palsy for an extended amount of time even though she was expected to live with it for another 30 years. I agree with Dworkin in that self-determination and self-creation are so impor-
tant that we should allow PAS both for patients who are already dying and patients who are not already dying. His argument is persuasive because it appeals to the notions of patient self-determination in the time leading up to death; that is, there is a certainty of death being full of suffering that is established for a terminally ill patient, so having a final act in which they could choose PAS for themselves would avoid the negative alternatives. Accordingly, patients who have imminent death from a terminal illness should be granted the right to choose PAS so that they can be self-ruling to the end of their lives, especially when the end of their lives is approaching regardless. In doing so, if they chose PAS they would be ending their lives with less pain and suffering and on their own terms instead of through illness, thereby making a final self-creating decision. If competent, informed adults have been able to decide for their whole lives what is in their best interest, it only seems reasonable that they should be allowed to make judgments regarding what is best for themselves until their death.

Patients who are well informed of what living with their disease is like, confidently knowing the quality of life they will be able to achieve will not change, should be able to make self-determining decisions for themselves. Granting them this is worth being at the bottom of the slope, so to speak.

So, yes, there is a valid slippery slope argument when it comes to the legalization of physician-assisted suicide. But why assume this is such a bad thing? I think we will be better off at the bottom of the slope.

Legalization of Physician Assisted Death in the U.S.

34 STATES have statutes explicitly criminalizing assisted suicide

NINE states criminalize assisted suicide through common law

THREE states have abolished the common law of crimes and do not have statutes criminalizing assisted suicide

In Ohio, the state’s supreme court ruled in October 1996 that assisted suicide is not a crime.

In Virginia, there is no real clear case law on assisted suicide, nor is there a statute criminalizing the act, although there is a statute that imposes civil sanctions on persons assisting in a suicide.

Only the states of Oregon and Washington permit physician-assisted suicide.

References:
MINING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT IN MIND

Alan Boudreau,
Professor of Geology and Director of Graduate Studies, EOS

I am largely into economic geology by accident. My main interest is in igneous rocks in general, and in what are known as ‘layered intrusions’ more specifically. Layered intrusions are bodies of rock that formed when magma intrudes into shallow levels of the crust. As the magma cools and crystallizes it forms a layer-cake body of rock. How these layers form is still a matter of some controversy and is the subject of much of my research. Some of these layers are enriched in economically valuable minerals such as chromite (a chrome-rich mineral) and the platinum-group element.

For example, the Bushveld Complex in South Africa is an approximately 8 kilometer thick layered intrusion that intruded an area roughly the size of Switzerland. Two layers of rock in this intrusion, which combined are only about 1 meter thick, contain about half the world’s known reserves of platinum, which is typically found alloyed with a few percent sulfide minerals found in the rock. A similar but less extensive intrusion, the Stillwater Complex, occurs in Montana and has a similarly platinum-enriched zone, containing about 10% of the world’s reserves.

The mechanism by which the platinum became to be concentrated in such narrow zones within these intrusions is the subject of much current debate. Unlike many economic mineral deposits where the concentration mechanism is generally understood and research focuses on refining the models, in the case of platinum in layered intrusions there is still disagreement on the most basic concepts. There are two endmember models to explain these deposits. One involves the magma becoming saturated in sulfide minerals during crystallization. This dense sulfide then acts as a collector for the platinum as it settles through the magma column. This is currently the majority model and is known as the “downer” model. An alternative view is that the crystal-liquid mush separates a vapor late in its crystallization. This fluid then scavenges sulfur and platinum as it moves up through the partly solidified rock to deposit the ore minerals at a higher level. The “uppers” currently are a minority view and is the subject of some of my research.

So how does a geologist feel about mining? I can only speak for myself, but I suppose that most geologists look at it in the way a forester looks at cutting trees in a forest: there is a right way to do it and a wrong way to do it. The mining done in the Stillwater complex in Montana perhaps shows to proper way to mine. The Stillwater in located along the northern edge of the Beartooth Mountains in the Galatin and Cuter National Forest, about a 1-2 day hike from Yellowstone National Park. Between the Yellowstone and the Stillwater complex is a wilderness primitive area. The proximity to environmentally sensitive areas places extra constraints on the operations there. Mining in the eastern half of the ~30 mile long ore zone is largely built on existing chromite mining areas existing since the 1930’s. Mining in the west, however, required development of a new mine site. While the mining company could perhaps have placed much of their operations within the National Forest close to the ore zone, they instead placed the western portal in the east bolder river valley about 4 miles north of the ore zone and at about 4,500 feet lower elevation. Access to the ore zone is by a 4 mile long tunnel (Figure 1). The mine operations are thus away from both the wilderness areas to the south and the more developed (mainly ranches) to the north. To minimize traffic in the ranching communities, the mine staff is bused in from Big Timber and Columbus, two main towns located along the interstate to the north.

Working the ore zone is all by underground mining and thus has very little surface effects in the fragile high elevation alpine environment. To walk around at the surface, one would never know that there are over a hundred miles of underground development just under your feet. Waste rock is returned to fill completed areas of underground development. Indeed, in the thirty years I have been working there, the most notable change up on the plateau area is an increase in the number of forest service roads that appear to have been made to accommodate a growing recreational off-road vehicle industry.

What does one get out of this? The short answer is clean air: about half of the world’s platinum production goes to making of catalytic converters as are found on all new cars since about the 1970’s.

As a geologist, what I find most fascinating about these rocks is the size and the scale of the geochemical processes involved. The Stillwater is old; at 2.7 billion years its age is 20% of the age of the entire universe. The rocks deserve respect. As an academic geologist who does not have to worry about earning a living in the “real” world, I would prefer the rocks be left alone for future geologist to study and appreciate. However it is also true that the Stillwater will not last forever. The Laramide event that thrust the Stillwater and the rest of the Beartooth Mountains upward 70 million years ago also initiated the destruction of the Stillwater complex by the slow but steady process of erosion.
The United States is an outlier among western countries with regard to the degree of public skepticism about evolution. The exact percentage of Americans who doubt the reality that all of life on earth developed through “descent with modification” (as Darwin referred to it) depends on the way the question is phrased, but it’s clear that at least 50% of the population is highly skeptical. One recent survey showed that only about 35% of Americans agreed with the statement, “Human beings evolved from less advanced life forms over millions of years”, compared to 61% of Canadians and 68% of British responders. To the contrary, some 47% of Americans agreed with the statement, “God created human beings in their present form within the last 10,000 years,” whereas only 24% and 16% of Canadians and Brits, respectively, agreed with that statement (1).

More broadly, a 2005 study out of Michigan State University showed that fewer Americans profess a “belief in evolution” than did respondents from all but one (Turkey) of 34 western countries included in the survey. The percentage was approximately 40% for Americans, whereas evolution had greater than 80% “approval rating” among residents from three countries: Iceland, Denmark, and Sweden. More than 80% of the (surveyed) population in each of 19 other countries accept the reality of evolution. There is a strong correlation between Gross Domestic Product of a country and the percentages of those who respond positively to the statement, “Human beings, as we know them, developed from earlier species of animals.” The U.S., however, is an extreme outlier with one of the highest GDPs but very low acceptance of our evolutionary history (2).

Is this just an odd but harmless aspect of American culture? In their formal position statement, the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) states that it “strongly supports the position that evolution is a major unifying concept in science and should be included in the K–12 science education frameworks and curricula. Furthermore, if evolution is not taught, students will not achieve the level of scientific literacy they need.”

Nevertheless, there is a lot of variation among U.S. states in how evolution is treated in public schools. The Education Research Center published a report in 2005 in which state science standards were evaluated with regard to their coverage of evolution. Four states, Arizona, Indiana, New Mexico, and Ohio, received perfect scores because their standards mention all of the ten core concepts of evolutionary biology formulated by the National Research Council’s National Science Education Standards (NSES).
to half a mean scale point” (3).

The NSTA recommends unequivocally that “Science curricula, state science standards, and teachers should emphasize evolution in a manner commensurate with its importance as a unifying concept in science and its overall explanatory power.” Teaching evolutionary biology is a great vehicle for mentoring students about the scientific process generally, and the nature of scientific evidence. Human evolutionary biology has also taken a prominent position in medicine, psychology, anthropology, and just about every other academic and applied discipline dealing with humans. Formulating state science standards is not enough; teachers and parents must be better educated.

So what’s up with Americans? Various polls and surveys converge on some patterns. One obvious correlate is religiosity. A Gallup poll estimated that 67% of Americans who “attend church weekly” believe that “God created humans in present form within last 10,000 years.” Only 28% of respondents who “attend church seldom/never” agreed with that statement. There is significant variation among religions in their (albeit, generalized) responses to evolution. Results from a Pew Foundation forum indicate that 81% of Buddhists and 80% of Hindus believe that “evolution is the best explanation for the origins of human life on earth. Jews are close behind, with some 77% in agreement. Only about 58% of Catholics agree that evolution is the best explanation for human origins, 45% of Muslims, 24% of Evangelical Protestants, 22% of Mormons, and 8% of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Other correlates of accepting the reality of evolution are political affiliation —fewer Republicans than Democrats accept evolution; education level—there is a clear gradient of increasing acceptance of evolution from those with a high school degree or less, through those with some college experience, those with a college degree, to those with graduate education. Men tend to accept evolution more consistently than women; Americans who earn more than $50,000 annually (in 1991) tended to accept evolution more than those who earned less than $20,000 annually. Not surprisingly, scientists accept the reality of evolution more commonly than do the general public.

A recent report from the National Center for Science Education suggests that American views on evolution have remained nearly unchanged since polling began some 30 years ago (4).

In my opinion, there are a number of reasons why Americans are, in general, so far out of whack relative to residents of other developed countries. We are obviously doing a poor job educating our citizens about the overwhelming evidence for evolution. In addition, members of the conservative right have been waging a successful war on evolution (and on science in general) for many decades.

When asked the question, what is the evidence in support of evolution, most biologists would or do respond, all of biology! An influential orthodox Christian biologist from Columbia University, Theodosius Dobzhansky, famously observed in 1973 that “nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.” The Harvard biologist, Edward O. Wilson, wrote a book about evolution entitled Consilience. The Unity of Knowledge. The point is that every aspect of biology points to the same interpretation: that all living organisms share an evolutionary history and are related by descent with modification. Viewed in that light, so very many diverse biological observations make sense. While evolution explains and even predicts much of what we know in biology, creationism cannot predict anything. I won’t try to even summarize “the evidence for evolution,” since it really is “all of biology.” Suffice it to say that the evidence includes the overall hierarchical pattern of biodiversity (species nested within genera, genera nested within families, etc.), the geographic distributions of living organisms, the fossil record (including the temporal progression of life over the last 3.5 billion years, as well as numer-
ous intermediates that bridge gaps separating organisms alive today, the details of genome structure, and the way our genomes control organinal development.

I'll be the first to admit that the idea that whales, for example, evolved from something that looked rather like a hippo, seems fantastic. Or that modern birds evolved from dinosaurs. Let alone the view, accepted by virtually all biologists, that all of us animals evolved from single celled organisms that lived billions of years ago. It's amazing! Almost incredible! Yet the evidence is overwhelming. And when you think about it, these well-supported biological theories any more amazing than the theory that our seemingly rock-solid continents have drifted apart and together multiple times through earth history? Or that mountains that once towered more than five miles above sea level could slowly erode away and disappear? We do indeed live in an amazing universe. That's why science can be so exciting, even spiritual!

But to many Americans, the evidence in support of evolution is irrelevant. In contrast to other areas of science, the origin(s) of biological diversity is to be taken on faith as an act of God.

The religious objections to evolution erupted immediately upon publication of Darwin's On the Origin of Species in 1859; indeed the battle was simmering long before that, since Darwin's ideas did not come out of the blue and various evolutionary ideas were out there well before publication of The Origin (including the writings of Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus). Why this attack on evolution, when there has never been similar opposition to other scientific theories for which evidence is largely indirect? Consider the evidence for the existence of effectively "invisible" sub-nuclear particles in physics; has anyone actually ever seen the earth's molten inner core? Why aren't these bits of scientific knowledge controversial? Clearly, it's not about evidence.

Opposition to evolution is based on perceived philosophical and religious implications of Darwin's theory. Our evolution from non-human Primates makes us brutes, without souls (or, alternatively, that all organisms have souls and we are therefore not special), and without a spiritual (or fear-based) reason for moral behavior. It's worth noting that some biologists, the primatologist Frans de Waal (Emory University), for example, argue that the origins of human morality can be seen in our close relatives such as chimpanzees. Is evolutionarily-derived morality less "good," less "pure," than God-given morality? Is the Darwinian process of natural selection more brutal than "survival of the fittest" among human castes, races, or various socio-economic groups, central to the process of Social Darwinism practiced in any capitalistic society?

Many scholars and religious leaders recognize that there need not be a conflict between an acceptance of our evolutionary history, and spiritual views. Pope Benedict XVI, not known for his progressive approach to Catholicism, is quoted as saying "This clash [between evolution and religion] is an absurdity because there is much scientific proof in favor of evolution, which appears as a reality that we must see and which enriches our understanding of life and being as such." The prominent Roman Catholic theologian, John Haught (Georgetown University) gave a lecture at Duke several years ago where he argued (as he has elsewhere many times) that evolution strengthens his faith rather than weakening it. Haught's God shows his love for humans, much as a parent shows love for his/her children, by empowering them to evolve and learn, even if through painful mistakes at times. What could be more sterile and unintesting, according to Haught, than a God who created life as we see it today, with no room for exploration and growth? Whereas some argue that evolution shows there is no God, many argue evolutionary biology has nothing to say about the existence, or not, of a God. A viable, purely naturalistic explanation for life on earth may make God unnecessary, but it does not provide evidence that there is no God. Believe what you will; evolutionary biology is no threat to you.

It is a central tenet of Christianity that humans are the pinnacle of creation and for that reason have dominion over all other creatures on earth. One philosophical consequence of Darwin's "descent with modification," and the metaphor that all organisms on earth are related in a "tree-of-life," is that any notion of one organism being more advanced than another is nonsensical. By analogy to a real tree, no one twig-tip is more "terminal" or "advanced" than another. Each is the crowning "creation" of that twig. A bacterial species that has survived to the present is a tip on its twig in the tree-of-life, just as we are at the tip of ours. There is no "advanced" versus "primitive." A recent biography of Darwin posits that in fact Darwin's views about evolution were strongly influenced by the abolitionist movement in which his family was so deeply involved; his evolutionary view of life means that all humans, whatever their skin color or other racial features, share a common ancestor such that "all men really are created equal."

I once asked a student in my Darwinian Revolution class (LS 790-14), who was raised in a conservative fundamentalist family, if John Haught's arguments gave him an "out" through which he could both accept evolution and maintain his spiritual beliefs. I was initially surprised that his answer was a resounding, "No!" As a fundamentalist who was raised to believe in the literal truth of the Bible, he responded that either the Bible is true or it is not, and it's unthinkable to consider that some parts might be true and others not. This is indeed a dilemma, and all the scientific evidence in the world is irrelevant to how some people deal on a personal level with that problem. My student was clearly troubled because he could see that the overwhelming evidence for evolution.

A materialistic worldview can be empowering. If there's no supernatural power out there from which personal morality and meaning for life can be derived, the responsibility for these things is up to each of us alone. That seems exciting to me. It makes me happy. It makes me want to be the best person I can be. But that's my view; I encourage you to seek out and develop your own!

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(2) www.data360.org/graph_group.aspx?Graph_Group_Id=286
Meal Swipes

Gayle Powell, T’16

The structure of Duke’s freshmen dining plan is a source of constant complaint among undergraduate students. With meal swipes that don’t roll over each week and a shortage of food points for use in other eateries on West Campus, freshmen students have limited options when it comes to eating. While the first-year dining plan was developed intending to serve as a vital part of the community building experience amongst first-year students, the Marketplace’s restrictive hours and options make it hard for the eatery to be enjoyable. From my experience, students seem to feel as though they are being taken advantage of by the dining system. Resentment builds which leads to general avoidance of the whole facility, food stealing, and Marketplace bashing.

Each week the majority of students are left with unused meal swipes. Why? The hours and rules of the Marketplace do not work well with everyone’s schedules. Many first-years do not have time to sit down and eat a full meal every morning and night on East Campus. Since students are not allowed to bring food out of the facility’s dining area in to-go containers, students that are pressed for time simply have to eat elsewhere and use food points or cash.

The inflexibility of this system makes it difficult for students to use all of their swipes and makes them rely heavily on food points. Each student receives 5 breakfast and 7 dinner or brunch swipes every week. These swipes (the equivalent of $9 at breakfast and $16 at dinner and brunch) disappear at the end of each Sunday as a new week commences. So if one misses two dinner swipes the total cost sums up to a shocking $32. From personal experience and talking with other students most miss at the very least two swipes a week and some refuse to go to the Marketplace altogether. The fact that the dining facility is charging us so much is frustrating especially when the regulations as to when and where we can eat are so strict.

Moreover, very few people can consume $9 of food at breakfast or $16 worth of food at dinner. While it is an all-you-can-eat buffet, students don’t stuff their faces every morning and night. Students eating regular proportions of food feel taken advantage of. Here they are paying a preposterous sum for a typical size meal. The other option is even worse: students can’t make it to the Marketplace, don’t use their swipes, and have now wasted a whole $16. Where does all of this money go? What is done with all of the extra food?

Nights when I go to the Marketplace right before it closes around 8:30 I am always shocked by the amount of food that is left over. Despite the fact that the eatery is about to close pots and platters of food remain overflowing. It seems like a whole lot of waste occurs. A recent paper focusing on reducing food waste at the Marketplace notes that the freshmen dining hall suffers from “a high volume of both food and non-food waste, specifically during the all-you-care-to-eat buffet-structured meals.”[1]

Over 33 million tons of food waste is seen in America each year, over a quarter of the country’s food. Duke is a place that seeks to be a leader in responsible environmental and global stewardship so why is combating food waste not a priority?

Food waste is problematic and unethical in more ways than one. Currently the world produces enough food to feed each person on the planet. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “Every human on earth could be allotted approximately 3.83 pounds of food a day if all food produced was evenly shared in global cooperation among humans…which suggests we have the capacity to end world famine.”[2]

Yet the distribution of food is so unequal and inefficient that the number of people worldwide that are starving and malnourished is shocking. The majority of America accepts this abundance of food waste as the norm—even though there are people within our borders without enough to eat. Too much? So what. Too little? That’s not a worry; for most, there will always be more. We do not take into account how ethically problematic our mindset is and the implications it is having on food distribution worldwide.

More so than this, the impact food waste is having on global climate change cannot be ignored. After food waste is deposited into landfills the decaying scraps are highly dangerous for the environment as they emit significant volumes of the greenhouse gas known as methane. Methane has been recognized as one of the leading causes of the temperature rise we have witnessed in recent years. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, “global average surface temperature has risen at a rate of 0.14 degrees Fahrenheit per decade since 1901. Worldwide, 2001-2010 was the warmest decade on record.”[3]

“The majority of America accepts this abundance of food waste as the norm—even though there are people within our borders without enough to eat.”

This shocking information makes solving the crisis of food waste an even more urgent necessity. Reducing the amount of food waste would be an ethical and environmental improvement as well as a critical step towards slowing down global warming.

To tackle the problem of wasted food and unused meal swipes many colleg-
es including our rival, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, have developed programs that allow students to donate their extra swipes each week. Each swipe is the equivalent of one meal for the homeless. The University of California at Los Angeles established the first Swipes for the Homeless program and in 2009 and since it has spread to over seven other universities. Programs such as this one create something positive out of what would be wasted money and food. Students don’t feel as guilty or angry about not using all of their swipes because they are helping those in the community; the needy are treated to a nutritious meal. It’s a seemingly win-win situation. Students at UNC-Chapel Hill, where 25 percent of meals bought through campus dining plans are wasted each semester, are very happy with the new system of swipe donations. I strongly believe Duke, a progressive and community based university, should consider adopting a model to create more equal food distribution between Duke students and needy Durham residents.

While Duke has made efforts to compost 100 percent of pre-consumer food and 9 percent of post-consumer food what would be better than sending the food to sit in composting bins, would be to fill the empty stomachs of hungry locals. Durham has an estimated 700 homeless people right now. Let’s stop those meal swipes from evaporating into thin air and start proactively feeding the homeless that live right off of our campus.

Of course, the swipe donation system comes with some complications. The Marketplace needs to overcharge students to some degree to accommodate worker’s salaries, unforeseen costs, the price of the food and its preparation, amongst other things. For instance, some universities have let students donate a portion of the swipes value and then kept the other, allocating those funds to keep the dining program’s finances above water. However, if we can find ways to eliminate food waste, economic costs for Duke will actually decrease by reducing the amount of food that needs to be purchased and the costs of disposal.

I would hope that Duke, a university that prides itself on its commitment to the community would be supportive of pairing with a program like Swipes for the Homeless. However, the team of students that runs this program admits that their organization often faces resistance from administrators who are nervous that implementing the program will cut into university resources. Yet, I am confident that at Duke a compromise can be reached that would satisfy both the Marketplace managers’ finances and the homeless population of Durham. Maybe if changes are implemented Duke won’t need to discard an appalling 602,520 pounds of food waste next year as they did this past year.

### Survey of First-Year Students

First-year students have an average of 3/5 breakfast swipes left at the end of the week.

First-year students have an average of 2/7 dinner/brunch swipes left at the end of the week.

95% of first year students would be in favor of donating extra swipes to a swipes for the homeless program.

On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being best and 1 being worst, students rate their satisfaction with marketplace’s food at a 4.6 on average.
Ethnicity is often used as a “soft” substitute for race, especially in European historiographical discourses that retain deep apprehension about the use of “race.” It does entail some communal conception of genealogy, or shared descent from ancestors, but descent is often imaginary. Ethnicity is therefore a cultural phenomenon, a culturally constructed category. In our case, the imagination of Jewish continuity, even biological, which recent DNA studies endeavor to vindicate, to show that cultural construction has scientific backing.

But DNA is not the crucial element in conceptualizing Jewish continuity or ethnicity. Jewish memory of destruction and hopes for redemption are sufficient to sustain a common destiny and a shared past. In imagining ethnicity, and defining the Jews as an ethnic group, there is a convergence of shared descent and cultural heritage.

In Jewish History, ethnicity emerges as a concept in the context of Jewish emancipation in Europe. In the 19th century, when the Jews were claiming citizenship and becoming members of the European nations, the counter claim was that Jews are foreigners, a different people, unlike us, indigenous Germans. You do not come from our tribal origin. One Jewish answer was to stop using the word “nation” to describe the Jews, and claim that they are an ethnos, one of the “tribes”—the Saxons, the Goths, and so on—composing the German nation. The more radical claim that Judaism is just a religion, as Protestantism and Catholicism are, never gained solid footing, and so the notion of Jewish ethnicity was a midway between religion and nation.

Why am I pointing that out? Because I am suggesting that Jews may have played a role in the very formation of the notion of ethnicity. In contemporary European academic discourse, “race” plays a smaller role than it does in the academic academy, and considering Europe’s past with “race,” understandably so. What I am suggesting is that ethnicity does not have to be a weak substitute for race, and, in my courses, I accentuate a cultural component. Descent itself is, to me, a good conception of a shared culture, shared memory, a shared past—whether the people biologically descend from the people from whom they imagine themselves to be or not—usually not—is truly immaterial to me.

But let’s go further, you asked about the normative grounds of teaching an ethnic history. While I consider deploying a cultural conception of ethnicity legitimate, I do not teach Jewish History as ethnic history. On the first day of class, I presented the question of what defines “Jewishness” and explained that Jewish history involves diverse categories of Jewishness, including religion and nation, which do not overlap some of the time. I further emphasized discontinuity in Jewish history, and the fragility, even artificiality, of any millennia-old narrative constructed. All the same, ethnicity is one category enabling us to imagine continuity, and, culturally understood, cannot and should not be excluded from Jewish history.
Since such definitions are potentially infinite, how do you overcome the ethical implications of stereotyping? Why is it still necessary to speak generally about particular group.

Are you asking if I think it is problematic to teach the history of a particular people? Even when I teach Jewish History, I teach it as part of European, American or Global history. The boundaries of the “Jewish” are blurry, and I always see it interacting with diverse cultures around it. Jewish identity itself is ephemeral, unstable, historically forming. But it is there—continuously. Why would you deny me the right to tell its story, or stories, ones I consider edifying, perhaps the most edifying I know?

Moreover, we have come to think of universal histories that are deprived of particular cultural experience as poor histories, not enriching ones because they cannot convey the fullness of life. They may still be essential to delineate the shared properties of humanity—essential for human rights and natural law. They are also crucial for the definition of state and citizenship. But our life and our histories would be greatly impoverished if they were limited to the universal, if cultural diversity did not express itself in fullness, and how can it be, if we do not tell the histories of particular peoples? Of course, in telling Jewish European history, we pay attention to both the particularly Jewish and universally European.

Finally, the Historian does not only describe collective memory, but participates in its creation, sometimes from a critical perspective. Collective memory is an invention that has created its own history, and both perspectives, critical and constructive, have a role in teaching and historiography. By conducting class conversations, and subjecting collective memory to inter-subjective criticism, we can and do change memory, sometimes our own. And so, teaching history is part of inter-subjective dialogue—you get feedback from students and colleagues, and this constrains one’s own prejudices, and engages one in a process of unending revision. There is no better cure to prejudice.

Have you ever received negative feedback from students—in terms of speaking about ethnic groups. How did you assuage the situation and why?

I am sensitive to the fact that there is diversity in class—students come from diverse origins, Jewish or non-Jewish, and most frequently both. Students bring their own definition of Judaism to class—some are entirely convinced that Judaism is only a religion, and not an “ethnicity.” Can they be offended by the notion? What about those Jewish students, wishing to learn about Jewish history but prefer not to get involved in any Jewish life? Granting, the assumption of shared past and collective memory may be a little overwhelming for them.

But I haven’t encountered any negative feedback yet. I would get such from the older generation in public lectures: Someone would stand up and declare that undoubtedly Judaism is nothing but a religion. I encourage people to discuss their own definitions of Judaism, and I hope to draw out any sense of discomfort in class, and more importantly, have dissent and divergent perspectives expressed, so as to enrich the class and make students feel comfortable. But, no, I have never encountered expression of discomfort yet.

If I were to have such, I would encourage students to historicize their, and my own, claims. I would attempt to explain why the particular position expressed is legitimate, and I would encourage the student to give an account of what the consequences of speaking about Jewish collective memory in such a manner could be. I would explain my teaching of an “ethnic” history as one approach on a spectrum of many. Ultimately one tries to create a discussion that is both open and civilized. It has been so far, and, for me, very rewarding. I hope for the students, too.

Imagine the notion of ethnicity or race as biological never existed. What would a “racist” look like with your cultural definition of “ethnicity” or collective memory?

Well cultural racists certainly existed! The fiction of a racial German culture of the Aryan race—although the Nazis claimed it was also biological—was potent. I guess your real question is, how the racial history of German culture still lives in my Jewish narrative, deploying ethnicity? How much do I vindicate a myth of collective memory? Yes, the effective heuristic use of “ethnicity” does depend on the existence of Jewish collective memory. The Nazi invention proved potent for a brief period, then was decried. Had it, God forbid, triumphed, would I (if left alive) use the myth heuristically? No, point well-taken.

Note, German responses to WWII have problematized even German national identity not only race. No modern German thinker can nowadays navigate with impunity around the topic of the Holocaust. Germany is reborn as recovering from its past, from its racial invention. It seeks to create a new collective memory to replace the myth of racial culture, the “new Germany” defined against its past. Nowadays, Germany highlights its Jewish heritage: You ride on trains called Hannah Arendt and Rahel Varnhagen, and every German city that had a medieval Jewish quarter resurrects it (of course, also to encourage tourism), endeavoring to revive a Jewish past and claim it as part of German, Germany and Poland now fight over Jewish art, as if saying “these were our Jews”. I discerned among students in class the idea that Germans are doing today the same thing they have always been doing. We do not recognize the depth of the change regarding the Jews, and how remarkable the world we live in is—in the U.S. and Europe alike. European Jewish intellectuals are heroes of European culture, the “Europeans” par excellence, and they are helping Europe find its new identity, and form a collective memory, through its Jewish past.
The prevailing standard in journalism is to disseminate the truth. I do not think that should come as a surprise. The purpose of journalism is to inform and educate tuned-in members of the public on the goings on of the world around them. A trusted journalistic source must employ the truth in its fullest capacity—a full, reliable, and balanced story must be told.

What is surprising and perhaps more interesting about the ethics of journalism is the way in which said truth is published. In the newsroom, reporters and editors decide what reported materials will be delivered to the public. At The Chronicle—Duke’s independent daily student-run media organization, where I have worked for the past two years as both a writer and editor—we decide as a team how to best package information. In a sort of triage, we, like all major publications, prioritize reporting in the best way possible.

It is not easy to decide what to include or omit at the time of publication. In any story, but especially with particularly “sensitive” or “controversial” subject matters, everything from the identity of sources, to minor words in a quotation, to the time of publication, must be deliberated. Editors must work with reporters to ensure not only that all information is true and objective, but that it does not legally or otherwise endanger sources or other parties.

From what I have gathered in my short time as a reporter and editor, the large majority of missteps occur when journalists indulge the interests of one of four bodies—themselves, their audiences, their sources, or an authoritative party like a government or university administration. Sometimes these interests overlap, but to value one or some of these parties over the others and, more importantly, over the hard truth, yields shoddy journalism.

Unfortunately, there are plenty of recent examples both on campus and on the national stage.

One of the largest journalistic flops in recent history was published by the New York Times—ethical misfirings can even occur at publications that are high discerning and reliable. Starting in September 2002, approximately year after the World Trade Center bombings, one of the Times’ lead Middle East security reporters, Judith Miller, followed and published a storyline that strongly suggested that Iraq was producing and harboring loads of chemical weapons and gathering resources to do the same with nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Miller’s reporting and packaging aligned
with storyline the George W. Bush administration was tracking which, unfortunately for the Times and its readers was later found to be untrue.

What exactly went wrong with Miller’s reporting? And what went wrong in the Times’ editorial process? Miller was stationed on the ground in Iraq at the time. Thus, she seemed to be a reliable voice. But her story broke the cardinal rule of journalism—to convey only and all of the truth in an objective manner. While the Times has published flurries of editorials explaining what might have been the problem, Miller still stands by her argument that she was reporting all of and only what she was able to gather at the time. She holds fast that her sources were reliable and that she had no agenda.

Of course, in the wake of an error so large from an organization like the Times, not all critics buy into her argument. She may have been overly invested in the interests of any or all of the four bodies I previously mentioned. Miller herself was a political conservative. After leaving the Times, she went on to contribute to Fox News and sat as a fellow of the conservative Manhattan Institute think tank. Some critics believe she was influenced by her own right-leaning agenda. Or perhaps she was playing into to palm of the Bush administration, some suggest. She could have been swept up in the storm of American post-9/11 fear and anti-terrorist sentiment. And certainly Miller’s sources were not as trustworthy as she had hoped. Among her lead sources were Iraqi defectors who might have brought their own anti-Iraq sentiments to the narrative.

I do not mean to accuse Miller, but these are the pitfalls that must be considered by reporters and, ultimately, editors. A bad source, let alone a handful of them, is among a reporter’s worst nightmares. A powerful pre-war American government can pester, plea, or threaten an editorial staff in an attempt to censor certain information. But it is the responsibility of a media organization to work as a team to quell these requests. This relationship becomes even trickier when dealing with a source who, because he or she is a go-to contact with the media organization, must be kept on relatively good terms. For a university outlet like The Chronicle, think President Brodhead, Michael Schoenfeld, Victor Dzau, and other administrative figureheads.

Frustrating for media outlets, these type of sources and their information have a bit of clout. They are fully aware that the stream of information over which they preside is and will continue to be important to The Chronicle. In this type of interplay, powerful administrative sources can employ policies like an embargo—a set time at which information can be published by a media outlet. If a media organization breaks an embargo or otherwise deeply disturbs the trust of the powerful source, the journalist-source relationship and stream of information could be damaged for some time—possibly a worse punishment than the frustrating exercise of obeying an embargo.

When I started my work at The Chronicle, what I found to be particularly exciting and also a bit scary about journalism is that there is no ancient, static tome of ethics. A media organization must be truthful, accurate, objective, accountable, and fair. That much is universal. Outside of those foundations, a budding journalist learns the gritty ethics from his or her experiences and, above all, his or her mentors. At The Chronicle, as I can imagine is the case at many media organizations, the intricacies of ethics are passed down in a sort of oral tradition. Years-old newsroom debates are remembered by the senior editors and revisited to become models for contemporary ethical problems.

And although common themes are threaded through every ethical newsroom debate, each encounter is a bit different, with its own rough edges to smooth. The uniqueness of every editorial decision not only brings to light new problems, but appendes to an outlet’s comprehensive understanding of itself as a media organization—an organization that works to turn a constant grey, humming flow of information into a black and white truth-bleeding product.
Benedict XVI’s recent resignation caught me off guard as it did most of the world and even the most senior Vatican insiders. As his announcement has sunk in, I have returned a few times to re-read his statement which articulated his rationale for stepping down from the Chair of Peter. He writes: “…in today’s world, subject to so many rapid changes and shaken by questions of deep relevance for the life of faith, in order to govern the bark of Saint Peter and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary, strength which in the last few months, has deteriorated in me to the extent that I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me.”

The rate of change impacts us all, even the 264th successor of St. Peter. Do we fully appreciate some of the unintended consequences that change brings?

While no one questions the intellectual fortitude of this man (he is still as theologically prolific as ever), we see that his body cannot withstand the demands of the job. In this case, few criticize his decision to step down, appreciating what those demands must mean. But I wonder if we appreciate how the same rate of change has impacted our own lives, and the possibility that we have “resigned” ourselves to lesser ways of thinking and acting because our moral muscle is not up to the task. The sad reality is, many have already given up on thinking more critically in rapidly changing times, and given in to the quicker responses because it is speed that is most simply demanded. The rapid rate of change in our time has the unintended consequence of causing us to make decisions and respond to life, often without the benefit of the important subtle nuances embodied in truth. And as Glinda sings in *Wicked*: “There are bridges you cross you didn’t know you crossed until you’ve crossed!”

This is the rate of response that often accompanies our daily lives. Things happen and in an instant we are called to act. We are expected to have an answer that is cogent and impactful. I walked into a curious question the other day from an undergrad at a pizza party: “Father, how would you describe the three things that differentiate Catholics from Lutherans?” While still trying to discern pepperoni or plain, I heard my mouth launch into a response that never even questioned the assumption that there were only or even three such differentiators!

An answer is expected, and while I am in love with the speed of a Google search to any good dinner conversation debate, I fear we are losing our sense of nuance. So much of the moral life is lived near a fine line. Many in our time...
bristle at that truth, claiming instead that too often people hide behind such distinctions as ways to hedge – it's the religious person's bob and weave. And yet it is nuance that enables us come to greater understanding, more depth of understanding, and more appreciation of our understanding. When getting somewhere is the goal, a speed bump can seem more like a pothole, rather than its intended call to slow down and take this path of thought a bit more astutely.

Operating from a religious tradition (Roman Catholic) that moves at a glacial pace, it is interesting to watch the rate of change that marks much of our culture. Life happens today at such a pace, and the expected response to much of life demands that we keep up. We are called to respond in a relative instant, often times on topics that are complex and difficult. The rate of response being what it is, I often feel as if we are called to paint with too big a brush, and leave the subtleties to another time. If it can't be captured in 140 characters or a sound bite, it probably won't be read anyway. And yet, in times of complexity, it is the subtlety of nuance that can be most important and often times most lost.

We live in wonderful times and in complex times. The wise person keeps pace with the speed of the current, but works hard not to fail to appreciate the beauty and wonder of the water molecule for the sake of the wave. We are called at times to step out of the current and prayerfully consider our surroundings and the subtleties therein. We are challenged to reflect upon the distinctions of life and to challenge our broad stroke generalizations that too often paint everyone with the same brush. In a world of inclusion and tolerance, let us not give in to the temptation to always focus on the big picture simply because we were running too fast to notice anything else.

The 19th century German composer Robert Schumann once wrote: “We have learned to express the more delicate nuances of feeling by penetrating more deeply into the mysteries of harmony.” We are likely to experience that harmony the more we look for the nuances of everyday life. Slow down, take a breath, and think more deeply. Enjoy the subtlety of your life!
A Traveling Transformation: Exploring Civil Rights

A fter months of preparation and last-minute packing, the “Roots to Rights” alternative spring break trip was finally underway. Itinerary in hand, I loaded my bags onto the bus, unaware that it would become witness to a lifetime of experience. I was overflowing with excitement to explore some key occurrences of Black-Jewish relations during the Civil Rights Movement (CRM).

Over the course of six days, I quickly began to internalize a realization that I had a limited idea of what the CRM stood for. Although I knew dates and facts, I wasn’t really interested in learning more. I wasn’t really prepared to experience whatever truth we would find in Selma.

Traveling on that Carolina Livery bus, cooped up in a single row for hours, and surrounded by ever-deepening friendships, I began piecing together a small portion of the picture, rekindling how influential the CRM has been for me. On the third day of our trip, while en route from Atlanta to Selma, a very real, and dark family oral history activated within me. The excitement I had previously felt slowly dwindled as anxiety crept into the background of recollections I had repressed of personal experience and horror tales from sage family elders. Growing up in the Midwest with ever-present ties to my home base in Georgia, I had a uniquely limited understanding of Alabama; and I wasn’t really interested in learning more. Although equality had been pronounced its presence during the ‘50s and ‘60s, fear and prejudice still existed. I knew this for a fact; but I didn’t know that I myself was engaged in similar prejudice. Up until the point of crossing into the foreign territory, I had not recognized my fears concerning Alabama’s violent history and I began to place myself in a judgmental position. Negative perception overflowed into misattribution, and I was ready and willing to write-off the entire state as holistically corrupt and backward.

Somewhere between the Georgia-Alabama state line and our Selma destination, my perception began to change. Seeing the highway lined with thousands of commemorative marchers headed from Selma to Montgomery, something clicked. A surge of sincere curiosity grew within me as I wondered what on earth could be so important that crowds of people would annually to march the 54 mile-stretch. With “Selma, Lord, Selma” playing in the background, I couldn’t help but open myself up to experience whatever truth we would find in Selma.

Although the real Edmund Pettus Bridge was a mere 100 feet from a museum we visited, I still managed to miss seeing it until we loaded back onto the bus to continue toward another location. The first time we crossed the bridge, we were cool and nonchalant - Even though we had seen and heard historic accounts of Bloody Sunday and the bridge’s significance, it all still seemed vague and distant. But when one of the tour members suggested we cross the bridge on foot, the entire area seemed to transform before us. Here we were, 47 years later, crossing the same bridge that had hosted so much conflict on March 7, 1965. Not only were we there, but we were united as an inter-racial, cross-ethnic, and diversely religious whole. We sang “We Shall Overcome” in an awkwardly festive and reverent manner as we rounded the topmost curve.

Advancing directly upon the distant line marking where road barriers had blocked the original marchers, deep sadness and gratitude entangled my heart. I think I can speak for everyone present in saying that we all felt it. The moment was dreamlike in more than one sense. As relatively inexperienced undergraduates living in the 21st century, it was difficult to place ourselves in the shoes of the original marchers. It was hard to imagine the strength required to overcome their fears and an oppositional society. At the same time, the moment we were living had been envisioned long before our existence. By refusing to acknowledge the danger that confronted them, the original marchers chose to instead concede the security of their future in us; and we were the finish line they had dreamed about.

With all this is mind, I reconsidered the commemorative marchers we had previously seen. While mourning most certainly played a role in the process, the entirety of the annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee memorialized much more than the violence that occurred on Bloody Sunday when Governor Wallace and troopers confronted hundreds of peaceful protesters with dogs and hoses. Instead, there was an immense positivity dedicated to the achievement of cooperative perseverance. The Edmund Pettus Bridge wasn’t just the location of a tragic incident; it signified the successful completion of the third and final protest effort on March 21, 1965. It continues to stand upon a strong foundation, a symbolism of a unity as loud as Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s supportive presence alongside Dr. King and John Lewis during the final march.

Prior to this “Roots to Rights” trip, I hadn’t even thought of Judaism beyond what I’d observed in the Freeman Center. Duke’s Jewish Center had been my only reference point to “Jewishness”, and I had no idea of any real distinctions between the entities of Jewish culture, heritage, and religion. In fact, I had never even heard of Black-Jewish relations until the applications were advertised for the trip. In hindsight, I’m grateful for my ignorance. I was able to come into the program with a relatively blank slate and absorb reformation as I swapped stories of past experiences with other tour members. Being able to visit the Hebrew Benevolence Congregation Temple, Auburn Avenue, the 16th Street Baptist Church, and the Stax Records Museum (among other destinations) exposed me to a synergy and awareness that I wasn’t prepared for.

My major takeaway from the entire experience has been that we are all living-pieces of history. Although we may not see the effects of our actions right away, they have tremendous potential to affect the lives of our children. In order to continue on the pathway to equality, we must realize that inequality knows no color, gender, or nationality. Sure, it is colored through instantiated variations of social discrimination. But because inequality is itself colorblind, it is the one thing that makes us equal.
A Southern Journey through Civil Rights History

Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture, explores key historical sites of the Southern Civil Rights Movement in relation to Black/Jewish Identity Development.

Elisabeth Pitts, T ’13
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This past spring, ten of my peers and I had the privilege of participating in Roots to Rights, a civil rights tour of the American South, sponsored by Jewish Life at Duke and the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture. The program focused on the black and Jewish struggles for civil rights in the United States, especially during the 1960s. The Sixties era in the United States is well known as a period of social revolution and political upheaval, when historically marginalized groups took unprecedented action to secure their rights as full American citizens. As a History major with a particular passion for the Sixties, I wanted to immerse myself in civil rights history and visit the sites and cities where that history was made. As a Jew, I wanted to learn about the past struggles of my people and better understand how they relate to those of black Americans.

Over the course of our six-day journey, we spent time in Charlotte, Atlanta, Selma, Montgomery, Birmingham, and Memphis, cities that played central roles in American civil rights history. Each stop on our trip gave us invaluable insight into not only the history of our country, but also our personal histories and the histories of our ancestors. In each city, we explored museums, monuments, and historical sites. One highlight of our trip was our visit to Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birth home in Atlanta, since no study of the Civil Rights movement is complete without an understanding of the key role played by Dr. King. While we celebrated the heroism of a cadre of well-known leaders, like Dr. King, we also came to realize that the movements of the Sixties were truly popular movements, drawing their success from the active participation of a great number of Americans, the names of whom are often absent from the history books.

Some of our favorite moments of the Roots to Rights experience were spent talking to individuals who have personally fought in the struggle for civil rights. One of the people we met was Sherry Frank, an advocate for the Jewish community and the former executive director of the Atlanta chapter of the American Jewish Committee. Ms. Frank not only understands the importance of the black-Jewish alliance, but also founded the Atlanta Black-Jewish Coalition, a permanent partnership between the two communities. Another highlight of our trip was spending time with Carolyn McKinstry, a survivor of the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, which killed four young girls—friends of Ms. McKinstry. Ms. McKinstry recalled her childhood in the context of the violence and bigotry that characterized Birmingham during the Sixties. Of all the memories that Ms. McKinstry shared with us, the one that resonated with me most was her recollection that bombings occurred so frequently in Birmingham during her childhood that they were considered commonplace, a way of life.

“...Bombings occurred so frequently in Birmingham during her childhood that they were considered commonplace, a way of life.”

In addition to the many personal histories we encountered, we also learned from the intellectual and cultural exchange that took place among the program’s participants, who came from different backgrounds, cultures, and embodied different beliefs. As we spent time together we became fast friends. We opened up; sharing our views on race and religion, recounting our personal experiences, and teaching each other about our respective cultures. In just a few days, we uncovered countless fascinating similarities, and just as many intriguing differences among the members of our group. In less than one week, we understood our country, each other, and ourselves better than we could have imagined at the beginning of the trip.

Roots to Rights was an eye-opening experience. Any thorough study of the Sixties exposes certain aspects of American history of which we are not proud. However, it also reveals some of our country’s greatest attributes. During the Sixties, many groups of Americans reflected on their status in society and stood up in defense of their human, civil, and political rights. Despite persistent, often violent resistance, those Americans remained steadfast in their pursuit of their noble cause. They recognized, as Dr. King asserted, that “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” They looked to our nation’s founding ideals of life and liberty, and never wavered in their assertion that all men are created equal. They also looked to the future, risking everything so that their children might live in a more perfect society. During the Sixties, the fabric of American society was torn apart at the seams and refashioned in a fairer and more just manner. It is the job of our generation, the Roots to Rights generation, to pick up where the Sixties generation left off, as just the members of that generation made society better for their children, we must make society better for ours. As a participant in Roots to Rights, I am proud to know that I have ten allies in accomplishing that goal.
Throughout history all of the great religions and spiritual traditions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, have ethics as part of their training. Most human beings want to be happy and know inner peace. Yet many of us do not know how to realize this desire. So where is happiness and inner peace to be found?

This is a question I asked myself as a young man in the early 1970’s. The Vietnam War was raging and there was a division and unsettledness that pervaded our nation. I grew up in a Christian family and had a deep love of Jesus as a young person, but became disillusioned as a teenager with what I preserved as the hypocrisy of the church I attended, especially as it related to our nation’s involvement in the Vietnam War.

Besides this political and ethical discrepancy, I intuitively felt a need for more effective tools to aid me in the exploration of my spiritual life. After being introduced to yoga and meditation at a yoga center in Manhattan, New York and practicing there intently for a year, I decided to travel to India to pursue these practices full time. It was in Nepal and India, while staying with Tibetan refugees, that I was introduced to Buddhism and ultimately decided to ordain as a Theravada Buddhist monk in Thailand. During eight years of monastic living in Southeast Asia I became deeply immersed in the teachings and practices of Gotama Buddha, who lived more than 2500 years ago.

In the Buddhist tradition, ethics is called sila (pronounced seela). The essence of sila, is living a life of non-harm to oneself and others. There are five primary precepts.

1. I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures.
2. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that, which is not freely given.
3. I undertake the precept to refrain from unskillful speech.
4. I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.
5. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking into my body substances, which lead to carelessness or harm to others and myself.
In the Buddhist tradition, the precepts are not viewed as commandments, but rather as training or a tool for reflection in how we use our body, mind, speech and energy. The wording of the precept is, “I undertake the precept to refrain from unskillful speech and action.” In this regard, the precepts are seen as being a mindfulness practice in which, for example, I see an impulse to say something untruthful or to gossip about someone else, and as a result of seeing this intention, I refrain from actually saying it. This process of being aware of the intention is critical to working with the precepts. The Eastern traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Taoism place great importance on being mindful and present with what we are experiencing in the moment. Indeed, before we actually say or do something, there is a thought that arises in our minds which is the intention. Becoming aware of this intention or volition creates a space in our experience. It is in this pause that we can decide to say or do what we intend or not.

A question we can ask ourselves at this time is, “what am I afraid to say, is it going to lead to more happiness and well being or is it going to lead to more conflict and suffering?” If we sense it will lead to increased pain and suffering, then it would be helpful to use restraint and reconsider our strategies for the moment. In consideration of skillful speech, we may want to reflect on the following: Is this the right time and place to be saying this? What is the most skillful way of expressing what I need to say? What kind of impact will this have on the person I am speaking to? A lot of unnecessary suffering can be avoided when we are mindful about our intentions and use restraint in regards to our speech and actions.

One of the most misunderstood concepts coming to us from the Eastern spiritual traditions is the word karma. Karma, simply means, action. That is, action as verbal expression or a physical action of some kind. This includes how we use our energy in relationship to others, including animal life and the earth itself. If I am fearful and angry about something and I dump that anger on another, then it’s likely that I will receive that anger back in some way. A popular phrase that is often heard is, “what comes around, goes around.” Intentions and actions born out of fear, ill will and deceit will ultimately create pain and suffering. Intentions made from wisdom, compassion and kindness usually lead us in a different direction. It is important to note that in the Eastern traditions, it is not the action itself, which leads to unwholesome adhering karma, but the intention behind the action.

During the years spent in Southeast Asia, and even today, I have learned a lot about the importance of living ethically and the consequences of not doing so. When we live with kindness and non-harm we experience much less blame, guilt, shame and suffering and we are support-

ing the harmonious existence of the earth and everything upon it. Acting unskillfully from greed, hatred and delusion increases our fear and anxiety. To give an example, as a youth growing up in the New York Metropolitan area, a friend and I stole cars. Neither of our families owned a car and so we felt it our right to take some vehicles. We did this as a means of transportation and for fun, not with the intention of stripping the car for its parts and selling them. Our intention was for the owner of the car to ultimately recover it without damage to the car, if possible. Fortunately for my friend and myself, we never got caught, although there were a few close calls.

Some years later I was living in a monastery in the Northeast of Thailand. A foreigner, who was temporarily staying in the monastery, had his camera stolen. It was highly unusual for anything to be stolen in this particular monastery, especially something of value. The abbot and teacher of the monastery, Ajahn Chaa, gathered all the monks in the chapel. He instructed each person to find a rock and wrap it in a banana leaf, tie the string around it and then place the rock in a basket that was stationed in the middle of the grounds. He requested the person that had the stolen camera in his possession to also wrap it in banana leaves and place it in the basket as well. That person should then leave the monastery.

Upon hearing these orders from the teacher, I became quite agitated and paranoid that everyone thought it was me that had stolen the camera. I remember going up to the most senior Western monk and saying, “I didn’t steal it, honestly, I didn’t!”. To which, he replied, “No one is accusing you of stealing the camera.” Of course it was my own fear and paranoia, which was a result of my history of stealing things that was making me so paranoid. This is an example of karma as action and the results of our actions. Even though I didn’t steal the camera, I was still suffering from my past actions. This particular incident happened towards the beginning of my monastic training. It opened my eyes to the fact that we do not get away with anything! Ultimately, each of us is responsible for how we express ourselves in the world and indeed, “what comes around, goes around.”

The essence of the precepts is to live with compassion and non-harm towards all beings and ourselves. In the Buddhist tradition the code of ethics are seen as a guideline for living, a kind of meditation, in which we become aware of our intentions before we speak and act. As we become increasingly aware of our intentions, a space opens up which allows us to see clearly the direction in which we are moving and what will be the results of our actions. Using the precepts as a reflective tool grounded in the practices of mindfulness, loving kindness and restraint enables us to make skillful choices that lead to inner peace, joy and freedom.

Precepts of the Order of Interbeing

Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. All systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth.

Do not think that the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth. Avoid being narrow-minded and bound to present views. Learn and practice non-attachment from views in order to be open to receive others’ viewpoints. Truth is found in life and not merely in conceptual knowledge. Be ready to learn throughout your entire life and to observe reality in yourself and in the world at all times.

Do not force others, including children, by any means whatsoever, to adopt your views. However, through compassionate dialogue, help others renounce fanaticism and narrowness.

Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world. Find ways to be with those who are suffering by all means, including personal contact and visits, images, sound. By such means, awaken yourself and others to the reality of suffering in the world.

Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry. Do not take as the aim of your life fame, profit, wealth or sensual pleasure. Live simply and share time, energy and material resources with those who are in need.
Take your body out of your large home and warm bed, folks at a homeless ministry in Atlanta told me, "and place it on the streets for twenty-four hours. Sleep (or try to) on the cold concrete and wake up shivering. Look unsuccessfully for a toilet—and don't forget you can be arrested for relieving yourself elsewhere. Stand in line for hours for a meal, stomach growling. Walk the streets all day. Experience even if only for a brief time the urgency and exhaustion of homeless people."

"Take your body into the Fulton County jail," they encouraged me. "Visit with inmates through a pane of glass, unable even to shake hands. Notice the lipstick marks on the glass, the residue of kisses which fell short of human lips—each one a cry for physical contact with a husband or lover. And take your body to death row in Jackson, Georgia. Pass through a barred, electronic gate, a metal detector, another set of bars, and another, and another. Then, finally inside, hug death row inmates and receive their hugs. Experience the isolation and humanity of people sentenced to die."

Over the past few years, Project TURN, a ministry that brings together incarcerated persons and Duke students to learn alongside each other, has given similar guidance to students and professors at the Divinity School: "Take your bodies out of your comfortable, well-equipped classrooms. Walk through the razor wire fences and barred electronic gates at Butner Federal Correctional Complex, Raleigh Central Prison, or Raleigh Correctional Center for Women. Once inside, in makeshift classrooms, learn together with students who live behind those bars, students labeled 'inmate' or 'felon.' Write your papers by hand because your fellow students have limited access to computers and printers. Listen to voices you would never hear behind the closed door of a Duke classroom. Learn in an unsettling environment where you are the visitor, rather than the one in control."

Charles L. Campbell, Professor of Homiletics
The homeless ministry in Atlanta and Project TURN in Durham both challenge us to consider the importance of spatial location—where we physically place our bodies—in education and ethics. Both groups invite us to reflect on the ethics of the classroom; they remind us that the physical spaces where we learn shape what and how we learn. Sensitivity to social location—to concerns such as gender, class, and race—is critical, but not sufficient. Spatial location is also important. It’s easy to forget the exclusiveness of the classroom space. Classroom walls provide a border that keeps many people outside—and keeps others inside! That space is usually familiar and comfortable for professors and students alike. In that space people know their places, and education happens in a relatively predictable environment.

Leave that space, however, and much changes. Both students and professors become more vulnerable. Roles are upended and education redefined. Take a class into a prison and then discuss the structures and systems of oppression in the United States. The students from the prison will become the professors from whom everyone must learn, their insights reinforced by the physical space. And many of us will be confronted by structures supporting our own privilege, which we can usually ignore. Take a class to spend twenty-four hours on the streets with a group of homeless people. Consider who has the “higher” education in that space. “You can’t stay out here tonight without some cardboard,” the concerned homeless man told us. “It’s going to be in the mid-thirties.” “Follow me,” he said. For the next two hours we were led on a backstreet tour of Atlanta’s best dumpsters for gleaning cardboard. Places many of us had never even imagined. As we walked the streets, we heard stories about the fragile lives of poor people, for whom a single misstep can mean homelessness. Reflection on the layered dimensions and dynamics of that experience shaped our learning for weeks to come. Where we learn profoundly affects what and how we learn.

In A Feminist Ethic of Risk, Sharon Welch argues that ethics calls for a “mutually critical engagement with difference,” a “thorough engagement with other communities, other systems of knowing and acting.” This engagement with difference enables us to discern the fundamental flaws in our own systems and values, which often serve as masks to perpetuate power, alienation, and control.[1] For people with privilege and power, ethics should not involve managing the future, but giving up control. We are called to listen to unsettling voices, including angry, confrontational voices, different from our own. We are called to engage with forms of wisdom and ways of knowing that may challenge our own education. Ethics of this kind is risky; no one can guarantee or control the outcomes.

Ethics in this sense is also spatial, leading us to place our bodies in unsettling spaces. In certain spaces, including the classroom, significant self-critical engagement with difference often does not occur. Leaving the classroom, however, we give up control and risk having our assumptions and values unmasked. As we move into different spaces, our previous education itself may be critically engaged; students and professors alike may come to recognize and appreciate wisdom and learning different from our own. This kind of dislocated education should not be romanticized or idealized. Learning in unsettling spaces is a messy, difficult undertaking. Imbalances of power and privilege remain. “Public transcripts”—the acceptable forms of relating imposed by social hierarchies—continue to shape our engagement.[2] People still relate through socially and culturally imposed masks. Real honesty and unmasking require time and trust. But the first step often involves crossing the spatial barriers, whether classroom walls or razor wire, that separate us from others, reinforce privilege, and harden stereotypes. Crossing these barriers is unsettling, but it can be the beginning of a journey toward new ways of learning and living.

References:
Since its founding, the United States of America has been a nation full of Christians, and in 1892 the Supreme Court officially declared us a Christian Nation. Everyone is familiar with the separation of church and state, but few know that the phrase, “the Separation of Church and State” comes down to us from a letter Jefferson sent to the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802, and not the Constitution. This idea was novel at the time, but has since spread throughout many countries of the West. This separation of church and state may take many forms, ranging from American disestablishmentarianism (the federal government is prohibited from interfering in matters of religion) to French laïcité (government and religion are completely divorced). Each of these have extremely different implications for citizens, but here I will primarily discuss disestablishmentarianism.

The American separation of church and state is summed up in two clauses both found in the 1st Amendment. These are: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. This prohibition allowed room for a lot of interpretation, and this has led a complicated and contradictory body of case law. The American Revolution formed a new political project - an experiment in democratic republicanism. All agreed that this form of government depended upon a “virtuous people” and during these early years of the Republic, churches saw themselves as best able to shape and create this people. Political leaders have rarely refrained from “own[ing] their personal commitments” since the advent of the nation. (President George Washington started a National Day of Prayer in 1789.) The influence of the Bible on the United States was considered so important, that two of the most popular proposals for the Great Seal of the US were Moses lifting his rod and watching the Egyptians drown in the Red Sea (Ben Franklin’s proposal) or the Israelites marching through the wilderness (this was Jefferson’s).

Later, Moses was featured on the House Floor in the Capitol Building, the Library of Congress, on two pediments on the Supreme Court Building, and carrying the Decalogue in a frieze in the hearing chamber of the Supreme Court among other appearances. The Supreme Court building was erected in 1932 and the contained therein is emblematic of the attitudes toward religion and law at that time.

This was a time of great growth among Christian populations in the United States, and church attendance increased from 30-40% in the mid 19th century, to 80% in the early 20th century. This number slowly increased throughout the 20th century, as did the number of contested cases regarding the relationship between religion and the federal government. Historically, courts have not been afraid to cite the influence of the Bible on the United States. Among the arguments for the propriety of this practice is the importance of the Decalogue to Judaism, Christianity and Islam – three of the most popular faith traditions in the U.S. In his 2005 dissent to McReary v. ACLU, Justice Scalia wrote, “All of them, moreover (Islam included), believe that the Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses, and are divine prescriptions for a virtuous life... Publicly honoring the Ten Commandments is thus indistinguishable... from publicly honoring God... they cannot be reasonably understood as a government endorsement of a particular religious viewpoint.”

These friezes containing Moses’ image are granted a protected status because Moses is depicted with 17 other (mostly secular) lawgivers, and surrounded by arguments such as that the figure of Moses enjoys no special prominence or that the commandments displayed are secular.
in nature. Justice Rehnquist makes a particularly convoluted argument regarding the secular nature of Moses as well as the Decalogue when he says, “Of course, the Ten Commandments are religious—they were so viewed at their inception and so remain. The monument, therefore, has religious significance. According to Judeo-Christian belief, the Ten Commandments were given to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai. But Moses was a lawgiver as well as a religious leader. And the Ten Commandments have an undeniable historical meaning, as the foregoing examples demonstrate. Simply having religious content or promoting a message consistent with a religious doctrine does not run afoul of the Establishment Clause.”

The debate over whether Moses is a secular or religious figure is much more lively than ever before, due to increases in religiosity and religious pluralism in the United States. Displays of the Ten Commandments predate the Republic, as do assumptions about the religion of its inhabitants. To citizens raised according to the principles of Protestant Christian and American thought these principles are difficult to parse out, but now groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union have begun to combat new displays of these documents. The convoluted system of determining whether or not displays of the Ten Commandments are allowed under the constitution has recently been tested by the ACLU pursuing monuments erected by the Fraternal Order of Eagles (FOE). Over the course of three decades the FOE has erected thousands of identical monuments in communities all over the United States. [vi] Truly, the debate regarding the relationship between religion and government permeates all aspects of life for certain religious minorities, who have had to fight for Kosher or Halal food in prisons, the right to wear Yarmulkes in the military, and even the right to pursue a divorce according to the laws of one’s religious tradition.

The question at the core of these debates is: How can we honor the (Protestant) Christian traditions upon which the U.S. was founded, without excluding or disadvantaging non-Christians in the process?

[i] Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States; 143 U.S. 457 (1892)
[ii] Butler, Religion in American Life, p. 142
[iii] Butler, 161
[iv] Butler, 145
Across:
2 - one of the world's oldest trades
4 - a guarantee to benefits based on legislation
5 - the condition of being open and accountable
8 - unreasonably high
12 - to imprison
20 - religious doctrine based on a literal interpretation of the Bible
22 - punishment that is justly deserved
23 - improve
24 - affecting all people in the world
25 - revocation of the right to vote

Down:
1 - responsible planning and management of resources
3 - type of bargaining that workers do through labor unions
6 - conditional release of a prisoner prior to the completion of their sentence
7 - belief that the universe was created by God
9 - transfer of property from one person to another based on social policy
10 - the belief that true knowledge is uncertain
11 - Duke's first years' dining hall
13 - aspects of religious activity
14 - painless killing of a person that is suffering from a terminal and painful disease
15 - term for unauthorized immigrants
16 - a culturally constructed category
17 - a democratic right to vote
18 - Adam Smith's concept of a self-regulating market
19 - capable of making a mistake
21 - greenhouse gas that is a major component of natural gas
22 - supreme court case on abortion