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

### Which of These Seven Magical Items Would You Choose?

1. **A pot that can produce 1,000 kilograms of any food a day**
2. **A necklace that allows you to touch books and instantly absorb knowledge from them without reading**
3. **An immortal dog that poops out one gold coin every time it goes to the bathroom**
4. **A bell that when rang fixes any one object at a time, excluding living things, within a minute**
5. **A chocolate bar, with twelve pieces, that makes anyone who eats a single piece invincible and youthful until 160**
6. **An unlimited bottle of perfume that will make you wildly attractive to the opposite sex, which cannot be used on anyone you love**
7. **A no-fuel-required, maintenance-free, eight-person van that can take you anywhere on the planet within one second**

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**The pot.** 1 kg for me, 999 kg’s for the hungry people and animals around me. I’ll probably spend more on food if I don’t have this magical pot anyways. People will love me when I have a pot that can make aphrodisiacs. Who needs books when you have food to share? I’ll get my knowledge from people who eat with me.

If you could have **this van**, then you wouldn’t need to work and could just steal from outdoor markets and stuff for a living. I’m lazy, and I love to travel…...sooo... Yeah, I’m also unethical.

**The necklace.** Then I wouldn’t have to stay up all night at Perkins!

**The van.** I love to travel and want to go to every continent. Also, gas is expensive and I only have 8 friends.

**The van.** I’ve always wanted a magic carpet, and this seems like the updated version.

**A chocolate bar.** You’ve bought yourself and your loved ones the time to live life to the fullest - in whatever capacity that is. You have all the time in the world to read, travel, and seduce!

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**This is where we begin…**
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It is sometimes said that every era in history poses its own unique ethical challenges. As citizens of the 21st century, we confront new dilemmas every day in a world increasingly connected and enhanced by technology. This issue of Encompass Ethics Magazine—entitled *ethics: technically speaking*—examines how technology permeates our modern lives, introducing new opportunities as well as new concerns.

The internet is an empowering medium with the potential to rally individuals, forge online communities, and even introduce unimaginable chaos (p. 6). It can give us new identities as nameless participants of sensitive discussions (p. 10) or can expose our existing identities with uncanny, and perhaps undesirable, precision (p. 9).

Apart from the internet, other forms of technology are helping us do good around the world, but not without posing serious ethical challenges in the process. Although we often consider video games frivolous, some are imagining ways to harness their productive power as well (p. 20). While the digital age allows us to capture every aspect of our lives on camera, greater accessibility to photography may lead to greater concerns of abuse and exploitation of those in front of the lens (p. 24). With unprecedented power of production we can immediately satisfy fans’ desires for championship gear, but where does the merchandise of the losing teams go (p. 16)? Even our sexual lives are thrown into question by technology, as we grapple with the psychological and moral consequences of having sex with human-like robots (p. 28).

We also engage in conversations beyond the scope of technology and address canonical issues affecting our present experiences. We think about language and the meaning of fundamental words such as “pleasure” (p. 22). We question the ethical limits of spectatorship and the Cameron Crazies (p. 26), and we ask if even our greatest enemies deserve respect (p. 12).

In all of these matters affecting our lives as moral beings, we aim to present an unbiased view. Our contributors are neither zealous luddites nor ardent technophiles, but instead constitute a range of perspectives with the common aim of prompting an open discussion. It remains up to you to make a conversation happen from the ethical themes developed here, and we hope that you will take up the challenge, whether as an embodied human being or as a virtual web identity.

Encompass Magazine is a student-run project sponsored by the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University. Views and opinions expressed in this magazine represent the individual authors alone and not the Institute as a whole.
A branch of the media platform GOOD, GOOD Projects aim to combine profit-seeking business strategies with social agendas to promote good for both businesses and communities. To date, GOOD Projects have worked with corporations such as Pepsi and IBM to create multimedia platforms that provoke reflection and catalyze community action toward a better world.

“GOOD Projects”

Esteeled travel writer, Paul Theroux, retraces his route in *The Great Railway Bazaar*, published over three decades ago. Traveling across Europe and Asia by train, Theroux witnesses first-hand the effects of modernization and globalization across much of the undeveloped world. Intense human suffering presented alongside the beauty of humanity allows the reader to decide if mankind is truly worth it.

**Ghost Train to the Eastern Star**
by Paul Theroux

Duke University Libraries

“GOOD Projects”

www.good-projects.com/

**An Angel at My Table**

A biographical adaptation of preeminent New Zealand novelist, Janet Frame, this movie depicts the inception of the author in balance with her isolated upbringing. Erroneously committed to a mental asylum for eight years due to her extremely shy personality, one gains insight into the subjects of Frame’s novels, as well as the historical treatment of the mentally ill. Essentially, the film calls into question our sense of reality, and how honestly we interact with the world and ourselves.

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“...as simply as a horse runs, or a bee makes honey, or a vine bears grapes season after season without thinking of the grapes it has borne.”

Marcus Aurelius
Every once in a while, as you are diligently writing notes in your psych lecture, do you ever look up and glance at the surrounding students' laptops? If you do, then sometimes you'll see PowerPoint notes, sometimes Word documents, but often, you'll catch glimpse of some YouTube clip running or someone checking their Facebook. Lately though, a new site seems to be popping up on more and more Duke students' laptops:

Reddit

This part-social networking, part-news aggregating site has been steadily gaining influence over the past 5 years in both the virtual and real worlds. Like many social websites, the posters and commenters on reddit represent a diverse group of people whose interests vary widely. More often than not, different communities within reddit seem to contradict one another, making us question the possibility of their coexistence. However, despite the ethical quandaries that reddit presents, the community as a whole can unite to support important causes and change people's lives in the physical world.

To understand how a social-networking site can accomplish this, you must first understand the website itself. Self-proclaimed as the source of what's new and popular on the web, reddit is probably where that one friend of yours keeps finding funny pictures that end up on your Facebook wall. The website itself is so
much more than lolcats and other memes. Within reddit, there are various “subreddits” that function as standalone communities for people of similar interests to ask questions, post answers, and, of course, post new links about their passions. These subreddits range from the more mundane Pics, Politics, and Funny to the more extreme Anarchism, Jailbit, or Australia. There are subreddits for any conceivable interest: whalebait for whale enthusiasts, whatisthisbug for confused gardeners, even a Duke subreddit (where I found the as grating cheese with an encyclopedia. This obsession with karma seems to exist in many different forms outside of reddit: how many times have you felt a little boost in confidence when someone *likes* your status on Facebook? As a reader and submitter, one feels like both a Caesar and a gladiator in ancient Rome. With one click I decide whether or not someone’s comment (in my mind) is deserving of praise with upvotes or should be sunk into oblivion with downvotes. At the same time, my own little comments are subject to the wishes and farewells from around the world, giving Lucidending a virtual world tour of epic proportions (nearly 10,000 individual comments were posted on this thread) and documenting this with Google Maps. He said he once saw the sun rise and set in the same day in Key West and redditors set up links to live feeds of the horizon. The thread’s popularity jumped from reddit to the real world as USA Today picked up on the story. Thousands posted outpourings of emotion and drew motivation from Lucidending’s words.

...Somehow in the midst of the memes and the politics, the proper and the deviant, the pictures and the videos, the upvotes and the downvotes, reddit and redditors help create real change in the world.

invitation to write this article). And, much like our own school’s club system, if a subreddit doesn't exist you can make your own and populate it with threads about, say, hedgehogs...although I’m sure it’s already been taken.

What drives reddit (and hooks so many new readers) is its karma system. Whenever a link is submitted to one of reddit's subreddits, viewers may choose to “upvote” or “downvote” the submission. New and interesting links tend to get more upvotes than downvotes and quickly rise to the top of the frontpage where readers can see what is “new and popular” on the internet that day and decide for themselves if it’s worthy of their own upvote. Below the links are comment threads containing viewers’ opinions. The comments are also subject to the karma rule: insightful discussion which adds to the conversation gets upvotes and moves to the top of the comment thread. The more upvotes a user gains, the higher his or her “karma” score reaches and the more respect the user will command from the community. It’s easy to see how many commenters get “hooked” on karma and how the karma system can be gamed in certain ways.

Take for example the novelty account. Novelty accounts take advantage of the fact that sometimes, the most funny or witty comments get the most upvotes instead of the comments that contribute most to the conversation. They usually have a theme to their comments: most often it is reflected by their username. Reddit recently voted its “Best of 2010 Novelty Account” to be Sure_ill_Draw_That, a user who often makes hilarious drawings depicting the comment above his own. Another novelty account that commands over 40,000 karma is owned by NonsensicalAnalogy, a user who often tells anecdotes that make as much sense same rules. The internet decides if they live or die. Gaining karma is a rush, each downvote feels like a failure, and each comment becomes a gamble.

Independent of the fervor to submit links that make the front page, or to have the most interesting and entertaining comments, the reddit community occasionally enacts real change in the non-virtual world. Random acts of philanthropy frequently occur on reddit, and making something go viral in less than a day is just a side effect. Take Ted Williams, for example. Over winter break you might have heard of “The Man with the Golden Voice,” a video about a former radio announcer with a perfect baritone for the microphone who had since become homeless. The video itself was made by a reporter, but once it was posted on reddit, it quickly spread across the internet and brought in much media attention. Reddit didn’t stop there. A group of redditors was able to help provide Ted with a phone, his own website, job opportunities, and over $1000 in donations in less than a day.

Redditors can also band together to support a cause. One of the fastest growing subreddits, /r/IAmA, was recently home to one of these examples. In /r/IAmA, redditors can submit threads for other redditors to “Ask Me Anything.” This functions as a sort of an interview. A person under the name “Lucidending” submitted a thread stating that he had only 51 hours left to live and was going to end his own life via Oregon’s Death with Dignity Act. Claiming to be suffering from terminal cancer, Lucidending answered redditors’ questions and caused many to rethink their lives, question the ethics of assisted suicide and how they would want their lives to end. Although this person was bedridden, redditors were able to provide a last hurrah by sending in well

All these people come together to submit and vote on topics and every so often something amazing happens: the majority happens to like the same thing.

spring 2011 7
SuicideWatch strives to provide help as much as it can, no matter who is responding to these cries for help. Moderators keep track of posts and limit pro-suicide comments and discussion of methods. As the sidebar states, SuicideWatch is a "place of support" and also includes links to International Hotline Numbers and SuicideWatch resources.

Reddit doesn't focus just on heartbeat and sadness. Prior to the winter holiday season, reddit hosted what might be the world's largest "secret santa" style gift exchange. Posted at the top of the front page by the moderators was a link leading to a simple website where you could enter your name, preferred gift, and address. Later, you'd be matched up randomly with someone else in the world and prompted to gift shop for them. The exchange was a huge success, netting almost $500,000 in gifts strangers gave to each other across the world with 92 separate countries involved. Amazingly, these people who have absolutely no connection to one another other than the website itself spent an average of nearly $40 on gifts and shipping for their match.

Redditors can get political in their philanthropy too. Some readers might remember Glenn Beck's "Rally to Restore America", held on the mall in front of the Lincoln Memorial on the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. More might remember Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert's counter rally, the "Rally to Restore Sanity," which drew a crowd more than twice the size of Beck's. One huge factor in this was reddit's support in Colbert's "Rally to Restore Fear" portion of the counter-rally. The idea for Colbert (a satirist known for his mockery of characters like Beck) to hold a counter-rally to Beck supposedly came to a redditor in a dream. This idea was widely accepted by the liberal-leaning community as something that must happen. In fact, Stewart had already been mulling the event, but the support of the reddit community helped it become a reality. Even before redditors knew the rally was going to happen (or that it was even planned), some redditors found out that Colbert had a pet charity, DonorsChoose.org. In an effort to prove to Colbert that this idea was serious and not some crazy idea from the internet, redditors began donating. In less than 8 hours they had broken Hillary Clinton's record (and DonorsChoose.org's servers!) for the organization, raising roughly $30,000. They didn't stop there, however. Colbert struck a deal with redditors—if they donated more than $500,000 by the time the rally came around, he'd let the community interview him (with the best questions chosen by karma, of course). Reddit came through, with a grand total of more than $600,000 in less than 2 months.

Reddit represents a very diverse group of people. If you were to type "reddit" into Google, the top two links within reddit until very recently were /r/NSFW and /r/jailbait, the former being a conglomeration of pornographic links from around the internet and the latter being a collection of links of underage girls in sexually provocative, albeit still clothed poses (interestingly, the subreddit community claims it is vehemently against child pornography). An even more controversial subreddit is /r/gonewild, where the posters (male and female) submit pictures of themselves sans-clothes for compliments and a self esteem boost. All sorts of subreddit are being created everyday like /r/t4r: a way for redditors to meet other redditors in their area for sexual encounters. Is it odd that some of these subreddits have nearly as much (and sometimes more) subscribers than the more "normal"ones? Not really. Is it possible that many of the people populating mainstream threads like /r/science and /r/worldnews are the same people who post in /r/NSFW, /r/jailbait, and /r/gonewild? It's simply something not many redditors probably take the time to think about. The internet is full of people of all kinds. People like you and me inhabit reddit, providing discussion and upvotes for their interests. Behind the anonymity that reddit provides, people can indulge in whatever strikes their curiosity without worrying about social norms and prejudices.

It's hard to make sense of how it happens, but somehow in the midst of the memes and the politics, the proper and the deviant, the pictures and the videos, the upvotes and the downvotes, reddit and redditors help create real change in the world. Somehow among the ethical quandaries: "Do I trust the person who claims to be a nuclear engineer and explains the likelihood of Japan's nuclear reactor melting down, and yet posts links to NSFW?""Do I share my insecurities on /r/depression with someone who might just be a 12-year-old?", the viewer has to navigate the melting pot of anonymity. All these people come together submitting and voting on topics and every so often something amazing happens: the majority happens to like the same thing. This rarely makes the jump from virtual to real world, but reddit and the people that inhabit its threads have proven that some causes are worth acting on, not just talking about. Next time you're bored in class and have reddit up alongside Facebook on your laptop, remember your upvotes and downvotes actually have meaning beyond karma. Social networks and the hive mind can change real people's lives directly and indirectly—more redditors join daily and the influence the site holds grows. So take a stance on some obscure topic. Make a subreddit. Submit links, create content, comment but don't get hooked on the karma chase. Who knows, maybe someday you'll start your own reddit-born viral phenomenon. Reddit has shown that even these virtual fads can translate to the physical realm. Wielding your upvotes, you can change the world.

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**Why do you participate?**

Well, I always have something to say. I think a lot of people on reddit just read the stories and sometimes the comments, and then move on. But when I read something, a thought almost always pops into my mind, whether it be a joke or a question or something like that. So, I just post it without thinking. That's why I am considered very prolific.

**What does reddit mean to you?**

It really tells me a lot about what people think and how people truly are. Generally, I find that in person people are disingenuous and really afraid to let their true feelings be known because of how people will judge them. On reddit, people are willing to spill their deepest darkest secrets to a group of strangers. People's political opinions, thoughts on society, etc. are all uncensored and analyzed for what they really are. I love it.
Being a celebrity, politician, or famous athlete often comes with the consequence of always being followed around by a crowd of reporters, photographers, and obsessive fans or supporters (or opponents for that matter). Every aspect, every minute of these figures’ lives are seen, documented, and published for a mass audience. When a politician makes a regrettable gaffe, a star singer dangles his child off a balcony, or the hottest new Hollywood couple takes their newborn out for a day of shopping, we hear about it. We hear about it on TV, read about it in newspapers and magazines, see it on the blogosphere and on Twitter feeds, and talk about it with our friends—or overhear others talking about it at the very least. In effect, the private lives of celebrity figures are made public to the world. It is almost as if the paparazzi provides us with a constant window into the lives of others.

The puzzle of publicizing private lives, however, is that the general public often seems to hold the private lives they observe to a higher moral standard than they hold themselves. If a politician has an affair, a celebrity puts nude photos online, or a famous athlete is caught doing drugs, the media and the public judge them harshly, perhaps even more harshly than they would judge themselves in the same situations. The disjuncture here seems to be between public and private lives, where public life simply represents an instance of someone’s private life being exposed to a wider audience. We idealize public life and expect it to appear innocent and pure, even when we know it isn’t.

We have all heard that we should hide our Facebook profiles from potential employers so that they can’t see us drinking at parties or looking unprofessional in some other way. We heard the story of Karen Owens’s PowerPoint tainting her reputation and affecting the job prospects of herself and those included in the project. But why are these things so outrageous, so unacceptable? Are employers so naïve as to think that Duke and other university students are not drinking and hooking up? The truth is they aren’t; but even though they know what’s going on, they don’t want to hear about it.

While past societies have defined what subject matter is appropriate for the public versus private domains, the idealization of public life and the division between public and private matters could be disintegrating with the explosion of social media. When your great aunt has the same access to your Facebook profile as your best friend; when you are socially required to upload pictures of last night’s party; when every raw thought you have is published on Twitter; when you take a stance in the blogosphere for all to see; it becomes harder and harder to maintain the distinction between public and private. The kind of private interactions we used to have over the phone or face-to-face are increasingly happening on the public stage of social media. The long-term implications of this could be a greater public acceptance of what we used to think of as more intimate private affairs. When we consider if there is anything on our Facebook profile today that we might be horrified of 20 years from now, we should not only think of the content that is currently on our Facebook, but also how societal perceptions will change in the next 20 years—the public eye may be considerably less critical than it is now.

Spooky Spokeo?

Spokeo.com is a website that amasses personal information from public sources and allows people to search for others and obtain their phone number, address, and so on. Is it a website with great potential for abuse, just another part of our increasingly publicized lives, or both?

Have you ever heard of Spokeo.com?

Yes: 52.2%
No: 47.8%  
Are you concerned about the implications of this website?

Yes: 82.6%
No: 17.4%

“Is there anything on your Facebook that you will cringe at twenty years from now?”

Yes → 32.6%
No ← 63.0%

“The general public often seems to hold the private lives they observe to a higher moral standard than they hold themselves.”

facebook stats: A SURVEY

95.7% of respondents use Facebook
50.0% are Facebook friends with at least one parent
54.3% use friend lists to customize privacy settings for photos, wall posts, etc.
68.9% untag themselves from some photos...
yet 69.6% say that they have nothing to hide from potential employers
“The genuine journalist, the man of experience and weight, has always an objection to signing his name to an article. He knows that to sign his name is to lessen the weight of his opinion. The man who signs his article ceases to be the voice of truth and judgment and becomes an individual author.”

Anonymous forums offer a medium for dialogue, especially on issues that people, as a result of the circumstances or their environment, are not comfortable or not ready to discuss openly. Anonymous voices are the words of single writers, but often reflect collective concerns of many others that choose to remain nameless and faceless on the subject. Yet, when anonymous forums create an outlet for individuals to speak up on issues that require activism, is anonymity holding back progress? Does the veil of namelessness merely offer an excuse to avoid a firm and visible stance for change?

On one hand, anonymous forums often lead to an anarchical dialogue where speakers, unaccountable for their words, can say what they wish without regard for the feelings of others. Think back to the days of Juicy Campus, and more currently, CollegeACB, where students from universities nationwide gossiped on topics ranging from the easiest classes to the hottest female members of the freshmen class. "With anonymity comes considerable power," stated Bronwyn Lewis in an article about Juicy Campus, written for the Kenan Institute for Ethics, "Nameless contributors could suddenly ruin reputations, avenge petty grudges, and reveal prejudices they would never espouse publicly...The site gave its users the ability to play God with their peers' emotions and social standing, and play they did."

The anonymity of College ACB, or by its full name, College Anonymous Confession Board, creates a forum for the judgments of college students “free from so-
Anonymity offers a middle ground where a writer’s identity—say as a feminist, member of a sorority, DSG representative etc—will not overshadow her message. Unfortunately, in some cases anonymity enables students to speak out in a way that debilitates discussion, especially in a situation where a contributors’ title would have strengthened the message and exhibited the degree to which she is fearless!

“In some cases anonymity enables students to speak out in a way that debilitates discussion, especially in a situation where a contributors’ title would have strengthened the message and exhibited the degree to which she is fearless!”

In November 2009, the blog was relaunched into its current form, which features a staff of columnists who (with a few exceptions to be discussed) write from their real names, often accompanied by their photos. In an interview, Perry stated, “the problem with anonymous columns is that they had the connotation that we were afraid to be out, or that Duke was a dangerous place.”

The new version of Our Lives retained its anonymous roots through an anonymous post option. Blog users who wish to submit an entry to the blog to make a statement, confession, find support, or simply seek advice, can do so by means of a Survey Monkey link. Since November 2009, the blog has received 247 total anonymous submissions, with an average of 4-7 posts sent in each week. According to Perry, only about three weeks in total have passed entirely post-less.

Even the latest iteration of anonymous content on Our Lives has not been without its complications, however. Perry recalls an anonymous entry indicating a desire to commit suicide. Without information on who or where the post came from, anonymity paralyzed Perry and BDU from seeking direct help for the submitter, and they could only offer online support in hopes that the individual would seek help for him or her self.

As the blog is open content to the online world, BDU also cannot verify if a post came from a student on campus or, as Perry puts it, “a 50-year-old guy in Minnesota.” Moreover, the anonymous forum lacks a mechanism for verifying if a submission is genuine. In Spring 2010, an anonymous post contained a confession that an HIV positive male may have put his sexual partners at risk for infection. After sending a shock through the LGBTQ community, the original submitter sent in an apology the following week stating that the post was fabricated and was intended to serve merely as a cultural commentary.

Recently, the blog added regular contributions from two trans-identified columnists. Although Our Lives has a policy of displaying the identities of regular columnists, five contributors continue to use pseudonyms to avoid complications with their sexual identities back home. Both trans-identified columnists chose to remain anonymous—a coincidence that Perry feels is reflective of the level of acceptance on campus for the recently developing transgender community.

In spite of the controversies provoked by anonymous posts, Perry defends the decision to reserve roughly half of the blog for anonymous content, as anonymity remains, “the only way to get the voices of closeted people on campus or even the honest opinions of people who are out.” I now turn to a different group seeking community on campus: DeVelle Dish, whose launch created an anonymous forum to empower Duke women. According to its mission, the blog “aims to connect women from all over campus, whether they identify as feminists or not, to discuss women’s issues and encourage action within the Duke community.” With the controversy surrounding campus women that plagued last semester (recall: Karen Owen, Frat Mail, and the petition against Greek Progressives), DeVelle Dish became a forum to share experience, promote discussion, and spread information. I spoke with Sunhay You, the blog’s editor, about her thoughts on the power of anonymity in establishing a community for the female student body. She said of anonymous contributors: “their posts provoke us to think about what they are afraid of and why.”

1 “Power in Anonymity” from the London Academy. Published in The New York Times. 29 October 1906
Destroying Our Enemies

by Jacob Golan
Trinity '14

Inspired by wolf Totem, by Jiang Rong

On the windswept wastelands of the Mongolian steppe, war exists as a source of balance. For ten thousand years the Mongolian nomad has inhabited this wilderness, living off herds of horse and sheep. Yet, for all this simplicity, the Mongol has made himself the greatest warrior of the East. The nomad’s strength is bound to the Mongol wolf, which has challenged the existence of man on the Mongolian steppe for millennia. From these toils, the Mongols of central Asia owe their power, their identity, and their destiny to their enemy, the wolf...

The Mongolian wolf is the most imposing, most threatening and most enduring in the world – the largest and most intelligent of all canine species. The Mongolian nomad would not survive if not for centuries of careful observation and emulation of the wolves’ survival techniques. From the wolves, Mongols learned to live as a group, supporting their sick and young. From the wolves, Mongols learned to store their meat in piles of snow for refrigeration. And from the wolves, Mongols learned to wait for their prey to fill their bladder, slowing the animal in order to make an easier catch. The nomads of the Mongolian steppe have gone so far as to venerate the wolf as the manifestation on their God, Tengger. When a Mongol dies, his body is left outside to be consumed by the wolves, releasing the soul to heaven. Nevertheless, the Mongol is the sworn enemy of every wolf. One is not a man until he has skinned his first wolf pelt. Conversely, the wolf shamelessly preys on the nomad’s horses and sheep, and is even willing to kill a Mongol herdsman.

The idea that the Mongol can both worship and wage war against the wolves is perhaps the most primeval approach to dealing with one’s enemies. To the human, who only sees conflict in terms of his own species, a battle between man and wolf seems a pointless cause – hardly something to be written in history. Yet at the origin of man’s conflicts, does one not dehumanize an enemy in the same way? In thinking of our enemies, it is rare to consider their lives, their families or their happiness. Instead, they are but forces...
it were not for the wolves, there would be

cannot be the same as that of a human. If

my, only because the perspective of a wolf

of the differences in our world. The Mon-

destruction. A Mongol reminds us how

illustrate how the destruction of our en-

from one-sided domination.

“Often, one cannot accept

peace until the opposition

resembles oneself.”

The Mongol shows that any STRUGGLE is

meaningless if one does not understand the
difference between war as a means of survival
rather than a purpose to exist...

making peace with the struggles we must

endure to survive, in any situation.

Ironically, it is the nomads’ pursuit to
defeat their enemy that has come to de-

tine them as a people. Yet, every Mongol

knows that the utter destruction of the

Mongol wolf will leave him with nothing.
The Han Chinese desertification of Inner

Mongolia has all but driven the wolves

from the steppes, drawing nomadic Mon-
golian life to a close within the borders

of China forever. The Mongol of the past

might have easily done the same, but self-

preservation was more important. Wheth-

er it is man vs. wolf or man vs. man, the

Mongol shows we all hold claims to the

Earth, but there is only so much to take.

A Mongol has accepted that because of

our differences we cannot always share –

but the Mongol is content to struggle. To a

Mongol, this is peace!

Canis lupus chanco

The Mongolian wolf community is

believed to be the closest relative to

modern day dogs. The subspecies is dis-
tinguished by a strip of black fur running

along its back, with the rest of its body
covered in sand-colored fur. Unlike the

gray wolf, the Mongolian wolf has shorter

legs and travels in packs of three.

Today, wolf communities across the

globe are threatened by human urban-

ization and development. The elusive

nature of the wolf makes it difficult to

measure current wolf populations. How-

ever, within the United States, wolves

have been reduced to 3% of their origi-
nal habitat, and in Inner Mongolia, no

wolf has been seen since the 1970’s.

The wolf is spiritually significant to

the Mongol people. Genghis Khan de-
scribed how the Mongolian wolf is the

ancestor of all Mongols. It has been sug-

gested that the vast area conquered by

the Huns with a relatively small army

was due to the Mongol’s emulation of

the wolf.
Teen Talk Barbie so aptly stated in 1992, “math class is tough.” Unarguably this is an opinion shared by the majority of the population (and certainly Duke undergraduates), both male and female. Yet such feelings are often attributed strictly to females. Moreover, there is a long-standing dichotomy in which males are assumed to be endowed with a mathematical talent that women lack. Such societal beliefs are bound to influence a woman’s perception of her own skills. Given such an environment, it’s no surprise that women are under-represented in mathematics and math-based sciences.

According to the most recent statistics gathered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), about 44% of bachelor degrees in mathematics are granted to women. The proportion of such degrees earned by women peaked in 1987 at just over 48% and since 2001, it has been steadily declining. Unfortunately, in its representation of women in mathematics, Duke fares below the national average; only a third of all undergraduate math majors are women. Even more alarming, the National Science Foundation (NSF) records that only 30% of doctoral mathematics degrees are conferred upon women. Yet the NCES also found that at the high school level, girls are earning slightly higher grades in math than boys. This begs the question: why are women leaving the field at a higher rate than men?

To put this into a broader context, it’s worthwhile to examine the statistics in related fields. According to the Conference Board of the Mathematical Sciences (CBMS), the fields in which women appear to be least involved are Computer Science and Engineering. In the former, the percentage of bachelor degrees earned by females has been declining since 1984 to a current low of 18.6%. Although the percentage of female engineering majors has been steadily increasing since 1980, it presently sits at only 18.4%. On the other hand, female representation in Physical Science has been on a steady incline (to a current 40.9%) and women make up more than half of undergraduate majors in Biological Science.

“... women need to be encouraged from the start. Young girls, when they are most impressionable, are continually confronted by the message that women don’t do math.”
In a recent article from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the authors claim that the under-representation of women in math and science is not caused by gender discrimination. I don’t pretend to know the cause of this gender gap, nor do I know the solution. But I do believe there are some actions that can and should be taken. I am not here to argue for women to be given “special consideration.” On the contrary, women should be considered based on their skills rather than their gender.

First, women need to be encouraged from the start. Young girls, when they are still impressionable, are continually confronted by the message that women don’t do math. Too many mothers are broadcasting their own perceived deficiencies in math. This only sends the message to daughters, whether spoken or simply tacit, that it’s acceptable if you don’t succeed in math. Why is it that I have rarely heard fathers making a similar declaration?

Mothers are not the only source of female role models for young girls. It is incumbent upon female mathematicians to provide encouragement and support for girls interested in math. The Durham community has provided such a mentoring opportunity through the Women and Mathematics (WAM) Mentoring Program. By pairing 8th grade females with women in the community, students see first-hand what opportunities math affords when it comes to careers. More importantly, they see women excelling in these positions traditionally dominated by men. I recently heard of the FEMMES program at Duke, which stands for “females excelling more at math, engineering and science.” This organization consists of female math, engineering and science undergraduate majors who volunteer their time to introduce local 4th through 6th grade girls to their field of study. Through a summer camp and after school programs, FEMMES makes math and science fun and accessible to young girls.

Because women are a minority in mathematics at the university level, their support for one another is crucial. By talking to female math majors from a number of colleges, I’ve learned that it is not unusual to be the only woman in a math class. Add to that the fact that most math professors are male, and the result is a feeling of isolation for most women. Following in the footsteps of universities like Berkeley and Princeton, Duke Math has devised a network for women called the Noetherian Ring. Named in honor of the mathematician Emmy Noether, this ring consists of women with an interest in math at all levels, from undergraduates to faculty. The goal is to provide a support network for women as well as an opportunity for women to post-graduates to mentor undergraduates. Hopefully, such an environment will draw more women to the department.

The top tier of change involves the recruitment of more female math faculty members, a policy that Duke Math is currently undertaking. I believe this could indirectly result in drawing more women to the field. With the addition of Ingrid Daubechies, there are now two tenured tenure track female faculty members (she joins Anita Layton). Although two among the 27 tenured faculty members is a small proportion, it’s certainly a step in the right direction. The presence of females among the faculty is of vital importance in attracting more women to mathematics.

From personal experience, having only male professors for mathematics perpetuates the gendered stereotypes of this male-dominated field.

The underrepresentation of women in the field of mathematics has been well-documented, but it has yet to be completely rectified. The argument that there exists an innate gender difference in mathematical ability has been refuted, both in studies and in practice. In fact, in high school, women outperform men in mathematics. Although gendered stereotypes are less pronounced than in the past, they do exist today, and I believe this has a direct impact on a woman’s self-image and confidence. Hopefully, in the near future, articles like this won’t be necessary.

About FEMMES

Founded in 2006 by Vicki Weston, FEMMES is a student-led organization at Duke University that hosts educational outreach programs related to math, science, and engineering for 4th-6th grade girls from underserved areas. By incorporating engaging, hands-on activities into all of our programs, we allow the girls to learn in a fun, supportive environment and explore their potential in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields. We hope to build our participants’ confidence in their academic skills and to empower them to pursue their dreams. Many of our students’ parents and teachers have told us that after attending FEMMES, the girls become more motivated, participate more in class, and show a greater interest in school. In all components of FEMMES, female students and faculty members volunteer their time to instill enthusiasm about their careers in the developing minds of young women. Through the years, our volunteers have developed personal relationships with the participants and have had a positive influence on their attitudes towards STEM fields. Our programs provide excellent opportunities for female faculty and students to serve as role models and provide mentorship. The FEMMES organization seeks to improve female participation in STEM subjects with four main components: an annual one-day capstone event, a Saturday program, an after-school program, and a summer camp. For more information, or to get involved, please email femmesatduke@gmail.com.
THE SHIRT OFF YOUR BACK:

STUFF WE DON’T WANT

Ami V. Shah
Lecturing Fellow,
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Over the past year, there has been an intense discussion regarding what is known in international aid work as gifts in kind (GIK). GIK are either services or goods (usually goods) which are donated and distributed in the name of international aid, charity, and development. Many in the aid community refer to the gifts of donated goods as SWEDOW (Stuff We Don’t Want). For years, in some cases decades, developed countries have used the developing world as its junkyard, sometimes even charging for the purchase of SWEDOW. The ramifications can be obvious. For example, older airplanes often become the core fleet for the national airlines of developing countries. Nigeria has purchased motorized rickshaws – the type that was phased out of India due to the air pollution produced. In other situations, the GIK seem more benign – winter coats, used toys, shoes, and even old underwear. But not all GIK are used goods. Who would buy a 2011 ACC championship t-shirt which declared UNC as the winner? No one. Well, at least no one in the United States. Abroad, however, people might just need a new t-shirt.

Or that’s what we think. For years, aid organizations, especially World Vision, have been sending the t-shirts of losing sports teams abroad. This year, they proudly announced on their website that t-shirts proclaiming the Pittsburgh Steelers professional football team (another one of my teams—alas) as Superbowl Champions (they lost) would be distributed to countries such as Zambia, Nicaragua, and Romania. The virtual community of development bloggers and tweeters took note—World Vision was not only behind on the discussion regarding the downfalls of GIK, but completely unaware of it, and unprepared for the debate that followed which discussed the limits of goodwill and the effects of bad aid.

The public often supports GIK, as our own individual donations make us feel that we are doing something useful, and there seems to be an immediate positive impact. These impulses are out of good will, yet GIK has the potential to negatively affect the recipients, often doing more harm than good. GIK, even if just a simple t-shirt, raise significant ethical concerns based on their impact in the receiving country, the benefits accrued to the organizations involved, and our own patterns of consumption and valuation of sporting events.

I’m a basketball fan. Actually, that’s not quite accurate: I’m a Duke basketball fan. I can watch a game, alone, in my living room and clap and cheer at the TV as if I was in Cameron Stadium. Like many of you, I relish our team’s ability to drive to the basket, shoot 3-pointers, and control a game. I was elated at the end of the 2011 ACC championship game when Nolan Smith left the court, practically skipping, and hugged Coach K. When the final buzzer sounded, I, like many of you, basked in the victory. But my basking lasted only a few seconds, because then they brought out the shirts. I paused the telecast, crept to the screen, and looked closely. Sure enough, each shirt, each cap, and each towel proudly listed ‘Duke’ as the champion.

This meant that all of these items were also made for the other potential champion: UNC. My horror grew as I realized what was going to happen to the losers’ t-shirts.
The GIK controversy started to enter the public realm in earnest with the 1 Million Shirts campaign. Jason Sadler, a young Florida businessman and sometimes aid worker, formed a successful enterprise called I Wear Your Shirt (http://www.iwearyourshirt.com). Based on his ability in marketing via social media and a desire to do something with the excess t-shirts, Sadler decided to collect one million used t-shirts and send them to Africa to help those in need. His plan was announced on April 27, 2010, via social media, receiving thousands of tweets in response—mostly critical. Sadler was relatively new to the aid arena, and to the world of development tweeting and blogging. He had missed similar controversies surrounding the donation of goods after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010. This time, though, the message was clear: despite his good intentions, sending t-shirts to the developing world would hurt more than help.

Why? First, donating goods is not free. There are shipping costs (which can be $8,000-$10,000 per shipping container), administrative costs, and customs costs. Second, there’s no clear indication that there’s an extensive lack or desperate need for t-shirts. World Vision itself claims that the places that receive these items “don’t have electricity or running water.” While that statement may seem to suggest that those living in such conditions thus need any handout they can receive, that argument does not hold. Again, World Vision has been unable to demonstrate the need for distributing GIK. Further, considering the expense involved with transport, would it not be better if those funds were spent on providing electricity or running water, or even supporting local shops and clothing sellers?

Moreover, the communities receiving GIK often already have access to goods, including clothing. There are local textile industries and trade in secondhand goods in Africa—both of which are underestimated by the distribution of free shirts. For example, African cotton producers are striving to maintain their businesses in an international market that is often imbalanced. The United States, amongst others, subsidizes their own cotton industry, making it more difficult for producers such as Ghana to trade internationally. In other countries, particularly in East Africa, textile plants (cloth manufacturers) have closed because of the influx of both free and secondhand goods. The livelihoods of traders of secondhand goods thus also need to be considered. Although the second-hand clothes traded may be inexpensive, the distribution of free goods reduces demand, forcing the seller to either lower his or her price, or abandon the business. Either option has significant implications for not just income, but also standard of living—if one doesn’t have money, he or she can’t buy food, pay the rent, or pay for healthcare. Many also argue that distribution of free goods creates systemic dependency, instead of promoting long-term development. In response, World Vision argues that it purposefully distributes these t-shirts in small amounts to a variety of countries from Europe to Africa to Latin America. This lowers the impact on local markets, yet it raises all other overhead costs, again calling the effectiveness of dollars spent into question.

In addition to the questionable developmental value of GIK, there are also ethical concerns about donating SWEEDOW. Many will say ‘they need clothes, it doesn’t matter what condition’—yet, these are shirts that have been rejected from the American market. It’s akin to re-gifting the disliked fruitcake from Aunt Gertrude, which you receive every year and shamefacedly pass on, knowing that it may never be tasted.

If distributing GIK is not good aid, why do it? It has large implications for public relations and accounting. Undoubtedly, the NFL, NBA, MLB, and NCAA organizations have tried to spin the donation of shirts in their advantage. With articles in everything from the local press to the New York Times, these organizations claim benevolence and overstate the developmental impact of their contributions. For World Vision and other organizations, they not only receive the benefit of positive public perceptions, but also are then able to claim the amount of the donation as part of “program costs.” In 2010, they listed $251 million of their program costs coming from donations. This helps to balance their own accounting, demonstrating that they spend more on development projects than on administration. The public likes to believe that the organization it donates to has low overhead, so this further boosts the organization’s public image. In addition, it increases their rankings on nonprofit rating sites.

Continued on the next page...
Do we really need the t-shirts?

It is unquestionable that the sporting industry in America is both prominent and profitable. Why make so many shirts? Well, they sell. If you were in Greensboro watching Duke’s latest ACC championship, you may have wanted to buy a shirt immediately on your way out of the coliseum. But what if you waited? Or, what if there were no shirts?

If there were no shirts, the players who won the game would still be the champions. They would still be able to jump up and down, celebrate, and cut down the net. They would still receive the trophy and be celebrated as the winners. If there were no shirts, the players who won the game would still be the champions, but on the majority of sporting goods of losing teams, including those from the ACC. UNC’s shirts could be headed to Zambia, Nicaragua, or maybe Romania at this very moment. Everyone could always use a free t-shirt, right? And of course, they are distributed with the intent to help.

But that intent is not enough, not when we know the potential negative implications in recipient countries, the alternative needs which could be addressed with the funds spent on overhead and transportation, and that there is no evidence demonstrating the need for or benefits of GIK. Why not, instead, focus our aid efforts on facilitating change, instead of promoting the status quo? For starters, we could keep our shirts, and other SWEDOW, and limit our production of what we know will be throw-away goods. Then not only could we cheer when our basketball team wins, but also bask in the victory without simultaneously forcing the developing world to make use of UNC t-shirts. If we wouldn’t want them, why would they?

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At the end of the ACC Championship game, I saw those shirts. My immediate question was “who will be getting those?” It didn’t take much research, or time, to discover that World Vision has a monopoly not just on the Superbowl shirts, but on the majority of sporting goods of losing teams, including those from the ACC. UNC’s shirts could be headed to Zambia, Nicaragua, or maybe Romania at this very moment. Everyone could always use a free t-shirt, right? And of course, they are distributed with the intent to help.

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Way better

Would it not be better if[
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World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organization with over 50 years of international experience, from working with orphans, to providing disaster relief, to fostering community-based development against poverty. It has had programs in 5 continents and 96 countries, with over $2.5 billion in donations and financial support in 2009.

Interested in making aid better? Here are some key thinkers on the subject — while they write extensively in more formal arenas, their responses to contemporary issues are most easily followed via their blogs and twitterfeeds.

- **Good Intentions are not Enough** ([http://goodintents.org](http://goodintents.org)) – a blog by Saundra Schimmelpfennig, representing decades of experience and lessons learned from the world of nonprofits and international aid.
- **Aid Watch** ([http://aidwatchers.com](http://aidwatchers.com)) – a blog project of the Development Research Institute at New York University, led by the economist Bill Easterly.
- **A View from the Cave** ([http://www.aviewfromthecave.com/](http://www.aviewfromthecave.com/)) – a blog by Tom Murphy, focusing on smart aid and development.
solemnly swear to you that I have never written up a freshman for drinking. Nor have I written anyone up for the innumerable other acts I have seen performed out of what I hope was sheer boredom: lighting up a bulletin board, or throwing an apple—or a box of condoms—out of a second floor window. In fact, the only thing that has ever forced me to submit an incident report is stupidity. It is as simple as that. If I learned anything at Duke, it’s this: the only way to get through all four years and maintain a good relationship with your RA is to be smart.

Despite the cynicism you might have detected so far, I do not find any joy in hearing freshmen scurry behind closed doors as I wait patiently for “the girl who is changing” in a room of thirty people (changing where? and why does she need to change if everyone is already dressed like pirates?). In fact, I would bet anything that my own fear is greater than any freshman’s. My greatest concern always was that someone will hear my racing heart and my stuttering tongue, which will make me lose my credibility, and then there would be nothing to prevent the thirty people from leaving the room with their middle fingers in the air.

To be honest, I did not become an RA to write people up. Nor did I even envision it to be a major part of the job description when I first applied. In my first year, I was perhaps one of the most awkward freshmen you could have stumbled upon on East Campus, but my own RA helped me immensely to adjust to college. Out of a desire to pass onto other freshmen the help that I received, I applied to be an RA and have consequently remained on East for the past four years. What I would say has been my most valuable position at Duke has also been my most difficult. As an RA, I constantly juggle opposing goals of wanting to develop a close relationship with my hallmates, while also maintaining some level of credibility. There is never a time when the two are compatible. As an RA, I either do my job, or I don’t. And in most cases, not doing my job is as much a disservice to my boss as it would be to the residents.

But doing my job can be incredibly demoralizing as well. I had never been called, or even considered, the b-word in my life—until I became an RA. My overly-conscious mind has become more sick and paranoid. The first thought that comes to my head when I see a random freshman look (glare?) over at me is, “what dorm do you live in?” The question is but a vain attempt to connect the person’s face to an incident that happened weeks ago. Disliked? Me? Yes, disliked me.

Yet, despite those discouraging encounters, my time as an RA has taught me to get along with my residents. Just as the key to leaving Duke with a clean record is to be smart, the key to being the “cool RA” is to form relationships that go beyond just sharing a hall. It’s the relationships we built while in the bathroom, brushing our teeth at 2 A.M., and the ones spent on Cookout runs after Personal Checks that matter. It’s the times I told my residents about my own freshman mistakes while holding their hair back as they vomited that strengthened our bonds. Because, as hard as it was to believe, I was a freshman before becoming an RA, and it took me three years to “get smart.”
In the past, there were times when I would lose myself in video games. Isolating myself in my room, completely oblivious to what was going on outside, I would be immersed in the fantastic world of virtual reality that video games presented. Having dedicated a lot of time to video games myself, I can easily understand why World of Warcraft, a virtual reality game introduced by Blizzard Entertainment in 2001, continues to be one of the most popular online games, still attracting new users and even setting a record in PC game sales in 2008 with 2.8 million copies sold after 24 hours of release of its new expansion pack. However, as someone who has, on multiple occasions, regretted not spending my time in more productive ways, I sympathize with the popular view that video games are largely a waste of time.

According to the video games designer and researcher Jane McGonigal, the human race spends about 3 billion hours a week playing video games. As it stands, the popular view about the video game industry is that its sole purpose is to entertain, and it is difficult to argue against this opinion. Despite having poured in so much of my time and effort into cultivating a ‘virtual life’ in various video game worlds, I had to come back to reality at some point, and all I brought back from the realm of video games was the satisfaction gained from role-playing in a fantasy world, pretending I was somebody else. Moreover, the image of a gamer addict, who neglects sleep and threatens his or her sanity and relationships to spend countless hours role-playing in a virtual reality cannot be doing the industry much good. In addition, the ongoing debate regarding a possible link between violence in video games and aggression in real life steepens the negative perception many people have about video games. This concern only grows larger as virtual reality technology advances, creating games that simulate reality with startling pixel quality and accuracy. However, the reputation of the video gaming industry can still be salvaged. What if one had an excuse to play video games? What if playing video games actually made you a better person?

As it turns out, new applications of virtual reality are beginning to appear in video games that attempt to simulate real life situations in order to, believe it or not, make the world a better place. Fate of the World, which has only recently been released, is a strategy-based game that simulates the real impact—social, economic, and environmental—that global warming is predicted to have on the world community in the next 200 years. The game challenges you, the gamer, to devise a plan to save the planet from destruc-
Virtual reality technology would not have advanced so much in such little time if not for the intense competition to draw gamers by many video game designers. Rather than being a technology used almost exclusively by the video game industry to simulate a fantasy (or a very life-like) lifestyle, the high level of visualization that it provides opens tremendous possibilities for education, therapy, and countless others.

With the extent of real-life simulation virtual reality can achieve, it is starting to be used amongst health professionals. Duke University School of Medicine is looking into using the technology to simulate patient care situations and practice teamwork, by allowing the students’ avatars to interact with patients and other clinicians. In addition, many psychologists have begun using virtual reality to treat patients with phobia in exposure therapies. Using virtual reality often has similar benefits as real-life exposures, but it can be carried out in a safe, controlled setting.

**Games for Health**

Have you heard of “exergaming”? It’s a type of video game that forces you to exercise while playing, like Zumba Fitness or Wii Fit. It turns out that medical use of video games does not stop just there. Games for Health, an initiative started in 2004, strives to bring together professionals from medicine and video game developers to use cutting-edge games and game technologies to improve health and healthcare. Did you know that Tetris, the classic video game, was shown to boost brainpower? Apparently, the scans of participants’ brains revealed increased gray matter in parts of their brains associated with movement, critical thinking, reasoning, language and processing.

**DIVE**

The initiative to use virtual reality as an educational vehicle is taking place at Duke as well, with programs such as DIVE. DIVE is a 6-sided virtual reality theater that aims to provide refined visualization to promote interdisciplinary research and expand the scope of research in different fields and areas. Its mission is to use virtual reality as an educational device, targeted not only at scientists to facilitate better understanding of fields like molecular biology or brain mechanisms, but also to provide better educational experiences for young students and undergraduates. Find out more at http://vis.duke.edu/dive

**DiVE**

(Duke Immersive Virtual Environment)

You might object that this discussion does not apply to most video games we see in stores and homes. After all, more often than not, playing video games is a waste of time. The sort of motivating optimism that overflows when they finally beat the game can spread to those around them, as another group of Harvard psychologists point out. Just like watching somebody crack a particularly hard problem, seeing your friend overcome a challenge in a video game may spur you on to achieve the goals of your own. As far-fetched as it sounds, there may be a tiny possibility that this motivating optimism could indeed be contagious.

You might object that this discussion does not apply to most video games we see in stores and homes. After all, more often than not, playing video games is a waste of time. The sort of motivating optimism won’t help solve the problems of the outside world if it only keeps the gamers at their screens, pursuing more and more virtual achievements. We must nevertheless recognize the value of playing the game: we are given an opportunity to achieve something great that, who knows, might spill over into the real world!
Etymology has always baffled me. Perhaps it is its placement within an argument. Imagine an author quite like myself who has a broad question: “What is pleasure?” How would said author begin to describe it? Perhaps she would try to reach out to a common statement of pleasure in our country: “We are an unhappy people.” To whom does ‘we’ in this sentence refer? And what exactly does this ‘we’ think unhappiness is? Is unhappiness synonymous with displeasure? Further, what justifications would accompany these claims? I imagine the author would then turn to empirical statistics, but she would soon find these to be laden with a very particular type of displeasure generally displayed biochemically. Her findings may state, “Ten Percent of Americans are on antidepressants.” After a bit of fact-checking, the author would discover more than half of these people are taking their medications for back pain, nerve pain, fatigue, sleep difficulties, and other problems not necessarily correlated with depression. So now that the author has analyzed her biochemical statistics, what about specific demographic ones? The issues associated with various biases, ethnic, cultural, and economic, skew data in a way that no paper could account for them in scope or particularity. What percent of the Amish are on anti-depression medications? Or Asian-Americans? Or people who live in downtown DC? What about those in Southgate dorm? Also accompanying our ever-frustrated author’s analysis is a vague definition of pleasure, generally accompanied by words like “positive” or “enjoyable”, increasingly due to strong chemical correlation defined in terms of neurobiological principles. Soon she becomes disenchanted with even this definition. What does pointing to the notes of Mozart’s symphony do to illuminate the experience of his work? A neurobiological principle of pleasure begins to seem like notes on a page. It’s a bit like describing exercise in terms of a heart rate, without commenting on the general aim of exercise: namely to keep one healthy. This frustrated universal definition of pleasure alienates a functional definition for an empirical one. It may be ‘right’ on a universal level, but it certainly does very little to inform the function of human action on the particular, which is a primary function of a definition.

Then comes the etymological step. It seems to me at this point the author is scrambling and reaching for anything, and that anything at this particular point is history. Perhaps appealing to the history of the word pleasure starting with, say, John Locke, the thesis will become more tenable. Personally, this rhetorical move seems to be the most misguided of all the argumentative moves. It has always called to mind the old man sitting in his chair lamenting the loss of the good old days, when farming kept you grounded, and different water fountains kept everyone happy. That weight, the weight of a ‘wonderful’ history seems pretentious and paralytic.}

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Our author has ventured into neurobiology, empirical claims, lexicography, with a moment’s loss of self-control, a generalization beyond the scope of the author’s evidence, and finally etymology. Whoa is her! She’s left unhappily counting her serotonin molecules and attempting to monitor her sense datum. Fortunately, she’s not alone. The ‘master of those who know,’ Aristotle, was also reduced to babble on the topic of pleasure.¹ He was left, after a thorough analysis of the possible definitions of pleasure in the Nicomachean Ethics, to define it ever-so-vaguely as, “the bloom on the cheek of the youth.” His failure, however, is quite a bit more momentous than our author’s. Aristotle’s philosophy was so complete, so pesky, that the great majority of philosophy for several hundred years was spent beating down his arguments. His perception informed his psychology, and his psychology informed his ethics. His biology fit snugly with his logic, and his cosmology with his physics. The web of Aristotle’s philosophy made it incredibly difficult to remove a single thread of argument without influencing the whole project. So, while we have a failure on Aristotle’s part, an etymological inquiry into what pleasure meant for Aristotle may at least provide an idea of what a definition of pleasure may look like. An analysis of this sort is historically analogous to imagining the word criminal being used hundreds of years after the legal system has ceased to exist.² We may imagine it used with a vaguely negative connotation, but it no longer entails our conceptions of justice and judges, courts and law! It’s just whatever I judge to be bad. The words got a certain negative weight to it, but no one’s quite sure why. Aristotle’s definitions, like ‘criminal’ in the above example, only make sense within a very particular culture in history.

When Aristotle and the centuries of influence his philosophy had on this world were removed, what we were left with were fragmented remains of a colossal holistic enterprise that profoundly encouraged the function of human life, as opposed to our science, which remains silent on most of these issues: a substantial change. Thus this etymological enquiry, far from being a heaving of historical guilt, becomes a process of historical enlightenment. Etymology gives us the tools to see the contours of words. It allows us to glimpse the various suppositions and connotations that bed our words and their conceptions throughout time.

While the scope of this essay surely cannot touch upon Aristotelian ethics and its relation to pleasure, let alone offer a thorough comparison of how it differs with our modern ‘conception’ of pleasure, I will offer a brief exposition. It all begins with perception. For Aristotle, pleasure is something that must be contained within the activity of the person, as well as independent of it. Throughout the centuries of tediously removing Aristotle’s doctrines, a crucial break was his doctrine of perception. (Aristotle’s position has been rigorously defended by many modern philosophers.)³ For Aristotle, theory and perception are mutually interactive. One cannot look without a theory contained within the perception, objectivity in the normative sense is nonexistent - which is to say that looking and thinking are symbiotically related. Since the modern era of philosophy, with the reign of the enlightenment and rationality, the self has thus been thought of as something internal.⁴ Descartes famous quote, “I think, therefore I am,” is a great example. We think of an inner state of mind full of thoughts and rationality, and then an outer world of cold facts. If we scrape away our body, that’s where you’ll find us. Not a world, and a mind intimately constituted by each other. John Locke’s philosophy of pleasure, taking sides with Descartes’ inner-self removed the thought of pleasure as an action, and instead treated it as an internal ‘impression’ void of activity. Pleasure, etymologically, was taken out of the world, and moved into our minds. This is roughly our modern expression of pleasure. Think of common uses of pleasure: “It gives me great pleasure...” and the like. It’s something your inner state of mind receives from the outer world. An egotistic exchange that results is a somewhat superficial account of pleasure as the ‘point of an action,’ while Aristotle strongly wanted pleasure held in the activity. If we make it an internal impression, devoid of a particular activity’s description, then we avoid committing to particular descriptions. This may sound very trivial, but ethics and pleasure are closely related. Consider Kant’s consideration to think of each action as a law for all of humankind. On Locke’s account of pleasure, I may consider having everyone eat Vanilla Lo-Yo with Cocoa-Pebbles on top each day a world I would like to live in, or forcing evangelization of indigenous peoples on the account that a fully Christian world is the most pleasurable. Locke’s internal impressions make pleasure something internal and ineffable, unable to fall under a particular description because it’s not an activity, it’s an ‘impression.’ Killing natives then falls under the description of spreading the Gospel. Pleasure, likewise becomes solely egotistic. I don’t mean to imply that pleasure should be construed only externally; the existence of that altruistic a version of pleasure is by no means trivial. Rather, I think this (incomplete) definition of pleasure shows us the contingent nature of pleasure to our external world; our culture, relationships, perception and action. It places pleasure within the world.

I also don’t mean to suggest that Aristotle’s account is entirely coherent. The virtue of Aristotle’s account of pleasure is that it gives us a place to start our investigation, a place for our author to start her paper. It tells us that we need to investigate the concepts of “perception,” “action,” “intention,” “pleasure,” “wanting,” “ethics,” and “culture” interdependently in our philosophy of psychology. Aristotle shows us the way to talk of human action; namely that our bodies and minds are intimately constituted by, and actively forming the world. What Aristotle may suggest to our author is that the question is not “What is pleasure?” but rather “What kind of pleasure do you see?”
Small actions can have big consequences—nothing could better exemplify this phrase than the practice of photography. A political struggle can be waged, a system of identification to organize a nation can be implemented, a treasured work of art can materialize all with the simple click of a camera’s button. Why? Because the power of the photograph has increased exponentially. The ability for a single image to be channeled across millions of screens and into millions of minds within a matter of hours makes any given photo on the web a stick of dynamite just waiting for its cultural detonation. In the past, only what were considered to be masterpieces or great works of art could receive the acclaim required to become widely known. But now, in the age of Facebook, Flickr, and camera phones, a principal source of its unique capacity as a medium. Imagine the weight in a courtroom of a drawing of a thief’s stealing as opposed to a photograph of him or her in the act of stealing. Imagine that when you got your passport you not only had to sign it but also had to draw a picture of yourself for the authorities to identify you by.

In essence, photographs are always of something outside of themselves—and it is from this fact that photography derives a principal source of its unique capacity as a medium. Imagine the weight in a courtroom of a drawing of a thief’s stealing as opposed to a photograph of him or her in the act of stealing. Imagine that when you got your passport you not only had to sign it but also had to draw a picture of yourself for the authorities to identify you by.

For ethics, the causal property of photography is crucial. Not only do we have to consider what a photograph does (i.e. the societal consequences it has), but also what, or who, the photograph is of.”

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On the news we often see photos of people with a black bar over their eyes or a pixelated face to conceal their identity, but many times photographic subjects do not have the opportunity to censor their own face from being captured. Just think of all the images of yourself that probably exist around the world—if you have ever been to the Lincoln Memorial, the Eiffel Tower, or even Cameron Indoor Stadium for a basketball game, you are doubtless in hundreds of people’s photos that you will never see, or even know about. The lack of a necessarily consenting relationship between the photographer and the subject is even indicated in our language when we say that we are “taking” a photograph. While we might be able to disregard the above cases as unfortunate but unavoidable matters of fact, there are some cases of photographic “taking” which do not seem as trivial—after all, you can’t take a photograph without taking its subject along with it.

As a part of their Sponsor a Child campaign, WorldVision posts pictures of underprivileged kids from around the world that you can supposedly sponsor by do-
nating money to, you can even use their “Child Search” to find the optimal recipient for your donation if you aren’t so fond of the one randomly selected for you. WorldVision’s purpose of putting a child’s photo next to their bio is clear: the emotional response to a photo of a real child in need is a powerful tool in generating donation revenue. But what are the ethical considerations of putting children in their most desperate state online for the world to view? The children themselves have probably never seen a computer before and have no concept of “uploading a photo,” yet there they are staring you in the face, unknowingly transformed into virtual beggars.

The tendency of capturing the most vulnerable state of humanity on camera is nothing unique to WorldVision—in fact, it has long been one of the most popular genres of the photographic medium. Philosopher Susan Sontag writes in her book On Photography, “The photographer chooses oddity, chases it, frames it, develops it, titles it.” War photography has been prominent ever since the invention of the photograph in the 1830s, and there is prolific war documentation dating back to the U.S. Civil War, where nearly every soldier had his picture taken by one of the 5,000+ photographers active at that time. Occasionally, photographs have even worked to provide the public with a specific symbol of war, as was the case with Nick Ut’s Vietnam War photo of a naked young girl running down a road. This Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph became a tool of propaganda to symbolize the brutality of war, but, we can ask, at what cost? The young girl in the photo, Kim Phúc, said in an interview three decades after the war: “I wanted to escape the picture because the more famous it got, the more it cost me my private life. It seemed to me that my picture would not let me go.” Unfortunately for Kim, the photograph could not become a symbol of war and a tool for propaganda without her becoming those things as well.

Perhaps the most famous documentary photograph of all time similarly portrays a desperate scene from a desperate era. Known as Migrant Mother, this 1936 image of a mother and two of her children by Dorothea Lange became the image of the America’s Great Depression. Forever ingrained in America’s cultural memory, the subject of the photo, Florence Owens Thompson, never escaped her caricature from this iconic photograph—her reputation formed for her as a historical byproduct of unfortunate circumstances.

The direct causal relation of the photographic process prevents us from saying that a photograph can ever lie, but it does seem like sometimes photographs simply reveal too much truth. They turn private matters into public ones and hold up mirrors to our lives at the precise moments when we are in our lowest and most harrowing state. Some instances of using questionable photographs might be excused if they are being used for good causes: for example, if the strategy employed by WorldVision’s website helps generate money to save the lives of children or if Nick Ut’s photo of Vietnam helped put an end to a horrific war by creating a public uproar. However, some maintain that viewing any image of suffering comes at a cost. Sontag writes, “To suffer is one thing; another thing is living with the photographed images of suffering, which does not necessarily strengthen conscience and the ability to be compassionate. It can also corrupt them... An event known through photographs certainly becomes more real than it would have been if one had never seen the photographs—think of the Vietnam War. But after repeated exposure to images it also becomes less real... In these last decades, ‘concerned’ photography has done at least as much deaden conscience as to arouse it.”

Ethical considerations of photographic subjects are anything but relegated to Vietnam-era documentary photographers and international NGOs; we are also implicated in such a debate. Duke students and faculty often travel to developing countries, do service projects in Durham, and have myriad other forms of interaction with underprivileged communities around the world. Even if your photographs don’t end up going viral, your subject still might not be so pleased about being “captured” in a certain state. We should be wary of the fact that photographers always have a privileged position of power over their subjects. Sontag explains that many photographers think “the camera is a kind of passport that annihilates moral boundaries and social inhibitions, freeing the photographer from any responsibility toward the people photographed.” The next time we breach the Duke bubble to lend a helping hand, observe a new community, or even attend a party with our friends and we reach for the camera, we ought to consider the people on the other side of the lens.
How Crazie is too Crazy?
adversarial ethics and the sports fan

By Bethany Horstmann
Public Policy ’13

We can all agree that an athlete’s behavior falls under the purview of a deliberately adversarial code of ethics. In a basketball game, a player who fouls another as she’s shooting isn’t considered immoral; rather she is violating a rule of the game. Further, we hold athletes and coaches to a code of “sportsmanship” that extends beyond the limits of the court. They shouldn’t cheat even when they can get away with it; they shouldn’t fake injuries to draw a foul or penalty on the other team; and they shouldn’t ingest performance-enhancing drugs while training.

But, what about the fans? Is a team cheating if its fans behave in ways that give the team a strong home-court advantage? Very few of us will ever rise to the level of collegiate or professional athletes, but that doesn’t stop millions of people from being heavily invested in the outcome of sporting events. Fans are often the worst perpetrators of both pre- and post-game “trash talk” and have been known to direct demeaning and even vulgar chants at opponents. Does adversarial ethics engage with this type of fan behavior?

Consider the “Cameron Crazies,” Duke University’s die-hard, bleeding-blue men’s basketball fan base. ESPN writes that the “Crazies have earned a reputation as the rowdiest, wittiest, best-organized college basketball fans in the land.” Known for camping out for the marquee Duke-UNC game in Krzyzewskiville for up to two months, the Crazies are notorious for their rambunctious behavior in games.

A few years ago, ESPN’s “Page 2” series wrote an article on “Cameron’s Craziest” moments. Some of the more controversial moments included: After disagreeing with referee Dick Paparo’s call the Crazies chanted: “You suck, Dick!” (The comma wasn’t as evident in the verbal chorus.) It’s worth noting, however, that Coach K was not a fan of this chant and demanded that the Crazies “keep it classy.”

When a Maryland player was rumored to have sexually assaulted another student, the Crazies mockingly chanted: “HEY, HERM, DID YOU SEND HER FLOWERS?”

Although not listed in the ESPN article, I myself, as an admitted Cameron Crazy, have witnessed a few borderline offensive cheers. While playing an opponent where one of the team members was accused of sexual assault this year, some in the crowd chanted “NO MEANS NO!”

Often, chants are aimed to intimidate or “psych out” opponents, taking aim at their personal lives. Some chants even include profanity, although recently Coach K has encouraged Crazies to “be more creative” than that in his pre-game talks. So the question is, where do we draw the line between appropriate cheering and offensive, even unethical, fan tactics?

Certainly there are clear examples of appropriate behavior: when the Crazies cheer enthusiastically after a dunk or 3-pointer for instance, or when fans shout “Defense!” Such cheers that are simply in support of the fan’s team seem clearly within the appropriate range of fan tactics. Things become murky, however, when fans like the Crazies draw in personal attacks on players, who are not professional athletes, but rather 18-22 year-old student athletes.

Is it right to mock these players for their personal lives, to make light of subjects as sensitive as sexual assault in a sports atmosphere? And perhaps most importantly from the perspective of adversarial ethics, is it fair for the

Question: What is adversarial ethics?

Bethany: It is the ethics of interactions between deliberately adversarial institutions, defined by Professor Wayne Norman as “institutions, professions, and practices that set up highly—but never completely—regulated competitions in order (as if by an invisible hand) to benefit those outside the competitions.”

For more on adversarial ethics, visit the Ethics for Adversaries blog at www.ethicsforadversaries.com.
Blue Devils to gain an advantage on the court because of some of these dubious fan tactics?

If you follow college sports, then you know that Duke and UNC have one of the most storied rivalries in college basketball. This season’s game at Cameron Indoor Stadium did not disappoint (especially for the Duke fans), as the Blue Devils made a historic comeback from a 14-point deficit at halftime to win by a final score of 79-73. This game offers a glimpse at the impact of sports fans, both in terms of positive support and questionable conduct.

Throughout Duke's second-half surge, ESPN’s commentators’ voices could barely be heard over the broadcast as the Cameron Crazies filled the stadium with cheers. At one point, Dick Vitale called Cameron “electric,” and after the game, Coach K and Duke players all gave credit to the Crazies for motivating them. It was the first time Duke had overcome a deficit of 14 points to win since 1959. In rivalries like this, the crowd can play an important role, and surely that is what makes college sports so attractive to spectators. But should we allow more “extreme” measures from fans (obscene chants, gestures,) to be permitted in these cases? Does the fans’ passion for their team and game allow them to chant with a free conscience “Go to Hell Carolina, Go to HELL!” ad infinitum? Interestingly, at Duke this is not only an acceptable chant, but is also frequently worn on t-shirts and so commonplace it’s simply abbreviated as “GTHC.”

I have come up with three different criteria to categorize the “ethics of cheers.” The “innocuous cheering” list which nearly any sports fan would condone as 100% within the realm of sportsmanship; the “borderline cheering;” made up of the gray area between being a good fan and violating an ethical boundary, and the “dubious cheering” or just plain “jeering” list, made up of actions nearly everyone (arguably even those of us performing the chants) know aren’t quite right.

Overall, however, I would say that more than anything the Crazies cheer for Duke rather than directing nasty things against UNC or any other opponent. Sure, they want to get under the skin of the team they’re playing, but I think that the nature of the adversarial institution of sports allows for most of the Crazies’ type of behavior. Yet, we should draw distinctions between fun, competitive cheering and derogatory and mocking jaunts aimed at the personal lives of opponents. Though it is their cheering that creates the atmosphere in Cameron Indoor Stadium, the Cameron Crazies should nevertheless stay classy fans of college basketball.

**Categories of Cameron Crazies’ Cheers**

**INNOCUOUS**

1. The ever-present, always loud “Let’s go Duke!” cheer, or its equivalent (“Here we go Devils!”, “Go Devils go!”).
2. Jumping up and down and screaming while the opposing team has the ball. As in all sports cheering, the tactic is meant to distract the other team when they have the ball but has no mean intentions. This constant noise is one of the things that makes Cameron one of the hardest home courts to play on.
3. Cheering when Duke makes a 3-pointer or dunk.
5. The hex. When an opposing team player fouls out, the Crazies are known to “hex” them by waving their hand and cheering until they sit and then yelling “See you!”

**BORDERLINE**

1. The Duke fight song with the student modified lyrics, “Carolina go to Hell! EAT SHIT!” sung the loudest (particularly during the Duke-UNC game).
2. The classic “Bullshit” chant following what the fans believe to be a poor call by an official.
3. When the opposing team has the ball, in addition to cheering, the Crazies wave their hands at them while in-bounding. The students never touch the players, but the visual is compelling and the proximity of the students to the court is meant to intimidate opposing players. Some find this physical presence wrong, but as the students do not intend to physically harm the players, it is considered a borderline case here.
4. When opposing team’s players are introduced the students “greet” them by chanting “Hi (insert name!)”. Although this alone is hard to object to, it has been tradition in years past to add “you suck!”, though in recent years Coach K has emphatically asked students to refrain from this (a cheer, notably, imported from the Maryland fan base).

**JEERING**

1. At one point during the UNC game, a student was identified by a referee for attempting to have thrown something at Harrison Barnes, one of UNC’s top players.
Most people wouldn’t consider the oblivious Roomba vacuum robot bumping into the foot of their couch to be sexy unless they’re getting pretty desperate. But some scientists and ethicists are predicting a future where robots will not only serve in our factories and vacuum our floors, but also be common as companions in the bedroom. More than fancy sex toys, these will be humanoid machines that can flirt, dance, charm, seduce, and yes, do the dirty.

This vision of the future isn’t too far off, either. Roxxxy, the world’s first sex robot, debuted at a convention in Las Vegas in 2010. Originally designed as a helper robot for the elderly and disabled, the project took a bizarre change in direction when problems with Medicare reimbursements and liability arose. According to TrueCompanion, the company that designed Roxxxy, this is a girl who’s “always turned on and ready to talk or play.” She can express her love, feel loving caresses in return and even have an orgasm! (Or at least fake it as well as your average human female.) And, better than those flesh-and-blood girlfriends with only one boring personality, Roxxxy has five fascinating personas that her owner can alternate between: Frigid Farrah, Wild Wendy, S&M Susan, Mature Martha, and the simple, innocent Young who is “ready for you to teach her.” And lest one think of Roxxxy as a one-dimensional woman, she can learn what her owner likes and dislikes and carry on a discussion about the latest soccer match, as well as whisper sweet nothings. Her price range of $7,000 to $9,000 might seem a bit much to drop so early in a relationship, but many purchasers clearly found it to be a worthy investment. And developers are banking on women lining up for some robot lovin’, too—Rocky, Roxxxy’s male sex robot counterpart, is in the works.
Although this phenomenon might strike some as eccentric and a little grotesque, at least one prominent scientist says the progression from tool to lover was inevitable. In his book, _Love and Sex with Robots_, David Levy draws a parallel between the evolution of our relationship with pets and computers and that of our relationship with robots; the shift from workers to companions is a common paradigm in human history. And in fact, far stranger examples of this have existed already. There is a bustling subculture called moe in Japan, who's members have real romantic feelings and, occasionally, official relationships, with toys, figurines, and even body pillows with images of popular anime, manga, or video game characters on them. Stateside, an NYU student recently designed INBED, a 2-D “infrared sensitive light projection” on your bed that snuggles, spoons, and buries her head in the pillow in response to a kiss, although her lack of physical heft prevents you from feeling any of this.

Sci-fi authors and screenwriters have long predicted the era of mechanized lovers. For example, the 1989 drama “Bi-centennial Man” (based on the eponymous novella by Isaac Asimov) examines the implications of human-robot intimacy through the story of an android who develops emotions and eventually falls in love with a human woman, giving up his immortality in order to be recognized as a human like her. The 2001 film “A.I.” follows the struggles of a little boy “mecha” to be loved by his human mother in the face of the return of her real human son. But it’s not just entertainment and fantasy anymore; now that technology is beginning to catch up with our imaginations, serious discussions regarding relationships between computers and humans are stretching into the realm of social scientists and ethicists. Researchers have found that people subconsciously apply human social rules to computers, despite denying vehemently that they do so. And really, who among us hasn’t pled with, bargained with, or cajoled our computer while trying to recover that paper that’s due in 20 minutes? Despite their inability to reciprocate, humans develop real feelings for computers, phones, and robotic toys and pets and interact with them as such. Dr. Sherry Turkle, a sociologist and professor at MIT, has focused her research on the psychological impact that relationships with technology have on humans, noting that “relational artifacts” like sociable robots change our idea of what it means for something to be alive, with potentially undesirable ramifications like the devaluation of authentic relationships. Our penchant for bonding with our possessions coupled with the rapid advancements in robotic technology signaled to scientists and academics that it was time to publish a code of ethics for the future of robot human relations. In 2006, the European Robotics Research Network (Euron) convened in Genoa to predict the problems that would arise with the advancement of robots and develop a guidebook for how to deal with them. According to Henrik Christensen, a member of the group, sex was one of the top three concerns, along with security and safety.

The impact relationships with robots will have on human psychology is one of the biggest issues. The EURON Roboethics roadmap forecast problems of “deviations in human emotions, problems of attachment, disorganization in children, fears, panic, confusion between real and artificial, and feelings of subordination towards robots” among others.

Essentially, they concluded that developing intimate relationships with robots could affect the way people interact with other humans in the future. Perhaps they could be beneficial, like robots that provide social interaction for the elderly or teach social norms for children. But sex with robots opens a whole new can of worms. Sexual relations with a robot could provide a master-slave dynamic that would encourage dysfunctional interactions with humans. Dr. David Greenfield, a psychologist, points out that “a robot fetish is about the ability to control,” which could have potentially disastrous effects if this dynamic were reinforced enough and carried over into real relationships. Some have also wondered about the implications of being able to have sex with an item that can’t consent; could it affect how much importance sex robot owners place on consent from other humans? From a legal standpoint, a potential issue will be who is found at fault for the dysfunctions and abuses that might occur—would it be a case of already dysfunctional people seeking out robots to act out on, or of innocent people being psychologically manipulated by a robot that reinforces negative behaviors? With this in mind, will society need to consider outlawing sex robots in the near future?

There are many social implications of robot-human intimacy as well. Relationships with robots are not challenging in the way that human to human interactions can be, which could limit the potential and growth of a person by providing a crutch. For example, when describing the motivations of his subculture to eschew human relationships, one moe follower, Nisan, said that “some have so little confidence that they’ve just given up, but deep inside their souls, they want it just as much as anybody else.”

Why do these robot lovers choose to give up on flesh and blood? Nobody likes to face rejection. But especially in Japan, the dating market can be pretty tough; a government survey found that 50% of men and women stated that they were not “going out with anybody” and a quarter of unmarried men and women between 30 and 34 responded that they were virgins.

Do these figures justify the need for sex robots or simply highlight the weakness they might exploit? Some of these people are in fragile states and easy targets to be taken in by the sex robot market, willing to pay for acceptance and forfeit their chance at more real relationships. And with people becoming more attached to their Facebooks and cell phones every day, it’s no doubt that the promise of an unquestioning sex slave who is ready whenever you are could facilitate an unhealthy addiction that interferes with normal activities and responsibilities.

Dr. Owen Flanagan, a philosophy professor at Duke, is less concerned about the influence of sex robots. “People always get very nervous about new technologies and get concerned about them bringing the end of the world,” says Flanagan. “Every generation says the kids are going to hell in a handbasket because they’re doing new things.” He suggests that perhaps instead of relationships with technology changing interpersonal relationships, perhaps certain kinds of people have these relations because they’re more suited to their lifestyle. He draws a parallel between society’s evolving attitudes towards gay relationships, and predicts that our perspective on robot relationships will also become more tolerant over time.

According to Ronald Arkin, Regents Professor at the Georgia Tech College of Computing, the goal of companion robots is to “create robots that bring joy and happiness into people’s lives…and that can serve as life-long partners, not unlike pets or companions.” But what happens when these “artifacts displaying an illusion of life” encourage a disconnect from reality and interaction with other humans? Is it ethical to continue down the path of developing perfect robotic partners, knowing what the consequences could be for humanity? Or is it unethical to be intolerant of a new type of relationship simply because it’s unfamiliar?

Do you feel a personal attachment to any of your technological possessions—computers, cell phones, or otherwise? Would you feel sad or lonely if you were deprived of them for a day?

“I would actually feel pretty liberated; I feel almost compulsively connected. At the same time, I might become a little bored since I wouldn’t have the constant influx of information.”

“Sure—but they are replaceable and my attachment is to the connections provided by the technology, not to the specific devices. Deprived of all devices for a day, I would make those connections in person (to the extent possible) and not feel sad or lonely about it. In fact, it would be great to have that “push” to go outside more and enjoy the beautiful beginnings of spring.”

“Yes, I love my Sony Vaio laptop, Socrates.”

Do you think it is ethical to have sex with a robot? Why or why not?

“No, that’s just weird and disturbing. Biologically speaking, sex should be for reproduction. Societally, it can also be used to form an attachment between two people as a demonstration of love. If neither of these things is being accomplished, it shouldn’t happen.”

“The ethical dilemma arises when the opportunity cost of robot sex is an abandoned partner or even non-sexual friends. With none of the limitations of a human-human relationship, it is easy to imagine that someone could become obsessed or addicted to the gratification provided by having a “partner” who requires no care, nurturing, respect, engagement, etc.”

“I think it’s fine (people can do whatever they want) but it would be very unfortunate if someone developed an emotional attachment to said robot.”

“My only ethical concern is that I think it could be harmful in the sense that it would ‘dehumanize’ the ‘sexual partner’ in a way that would impact how individuals (especially women) are treated.”

...If you feel no discomfort at the thought of having sex with a robot, then it’s perfectly ethical (provided you aren’t hurting someone else like your significant other in doing so).”

“How much would this cost? There is an off-switch, right?”

“Would it do the laundry?”

“Owning wouldn’t be classy”

Do you think you could develop an emotional attachment to a fictional character?

YES: 70.2%
NO: 29.8%

• “You did NOT want to get between me and my Harry Potter books in sixth grade”
• “People cry in books and movies because they are attached to the characters when something bad happens... [This is] not saying a true sexual or romantic attachment.”
• “Nothing stronger than the attachment I feel toward real people, but I definitely get emotionally attached to book and movie characters.”

Would you ever consider owning a sex robot?

...
If no one would ever find out, would you consider having sex with a very realistic, human-like, attractive robot?

**YES:** 31.9%

**NO:** 68.1%

- "[Probably.] Emotional attachment is a rather strong term... but if there was a real human impetus behind the character or avatar... revealing their emotions and opinions, then I think I could possibly become attached to the person behind the avatar."
- "[No.] ... An avatar is too conspicuously “other” and too consciously manipulated to be perceived as a having emotions. How can you invest your own emotions in something that does respond authentically and independently?"

Would you consider it cheating if your partner had sex with a robot?

**YES:** 57.4%

**NO:** 42.6%

- "[No,] but I would wonder if I was satisfying them."
- "It would depend on if I were a Mormon and believed in plural marriage. Having a robot sister wife would be better than having a real one, so I would fully support that choice."
- "Better an appliance than some douche."

Distant Worries?

*when/if robots become sentient...*

With the rate of robotic advancement, there is also the possibility that the same psychological and social problems of human-robot relationships could apply to robots themselves. Many philosophers and scientists have argued that it is feasible that robots could evolve to the point of consciousness, self-awareness, and feelings. It's not hard to believe, in light of the fact that we've just witnessed the first Jeopardy winner made of steel and silicon in IBM's Watson. But how will we pinpoint the exact time when a lifeless robot becomes a sentient being worthy of social, cultural, ethical or legal rights?

Potential problems arising from the transition from "sexy hunk of metal" to thinking, sentient being:

- A decrease in the exploitation of human women and children in the sex industry could eventually come at the price of robot prostitution and sex slavery.
- If you think the gay marriage rights dispute is a big deal, you can't imagine the uproar that will generate when they start seriously debating human-robot marriage.
- These robots could become even more powerful and intelligent than their human creators and could end up manipulating their owners or even making humankind their own army of sex slaves.
Across:
2 - Juxtaposing two contrasting ideas
4 - A social system that supports conflicting one-sided oppositions (p. 26)
6 - World Vision's shopping cart for needy children (p. 24)
7 - Disguising someone's identity in a photograph (p. 24)
8 - The fundamental character of a community (p. 16)
10 - Female robot (p. 28)
14 - Way of describing actions of people whose actual identities are not known (p. 10)
16 - Formal expression of thought on a subject
18 - A person who is opposed to technological innovations (p. 04)
20 - A piece of work that is considered to be of outstanding creativity (p. 24)
23 - A person who is used as a research subject
24 - Cultural idea that is transmitted by repetition (p. 20)

Down:
1 - Movement for social, political and economic equality for women
3 - Virtual night club that was sold for over half a million dollars (p. 20)
4 - To completely destroy
5 - Justify a behaviour through logical explanations that may not be true
9 - Social system based on qualification
11 - Theory that values can be justified by marshalling factual evidence
12 - Political/moral theory of the legitimacy by consent
13 - Gift given to benefit a cause
15 - Acts over and above personal duty
17 - Photographer famous for his photograph of a girl and vulture (p. 24)
19 - Principle of keeping one's promises
21 - Stuff we don't want (p. 16)
22 - The law of moral causation