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| Reflective Essay |
| HNS- 376WX |
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| A reflective essay detailing my research and examining several artifacts I used to challenge and defend my viewpoints. |

Participating in the Bioethics class has been very rewarding as it has challenged me to support my beliefs and expand my horizons. For my case study, I was assigned patients research and human rights, something I had little initial interest in. However, once my research partner and I began investigating the issue, it opened up a whole new array of topics concerning human research and patient rights. Two topics that caught my interest were eugenics and abortion as both have ethical implications. My research on eugenics made me look at its implications from an entirely different perspective as I saw its lasting implications on world history. I found the issue of abortion however to be even more interesting as it is an issue fiercely debated today. Indeed, my interest in the issue sparked from a hotly contested in class debate which made me examine the issue in greater detail. Thus, the questions of eugenics and abortion provided excellent areas for me to explore further and solidify my own beliefs.

The first case study I looked into was eugenics. I examined the use of eugenics and forced sterilization for the mentally instable and used for our case study, the case of Carrie Buck. The DNA Learning Center Website had a couple of really interesting facts that made me reflect on the importance eugenics had on world history. Although this project was more my case partner’s area of research, it made me compare our culture to that of the German culture during the middle of the 20th century. Comparing this to Nazi Germany, I discovered Hitler based his own eugenics program off the United States. Hitler’s program was based on singling out a group of people based on their race, yet he declared it was for the benefit of society. Even though it is outlawed today, it made me wonder about the slippery slope America was following when it pursued this course of action as America was also saying its laws were for the benefit of society.

After examining the eugenics issue, I moved on to the subject of abortion. This issue became the central theme for my research as I investigated the question of abortion for my main research paper. I looked at several artifacts for this topic, including the website of Planned Parenthood, a national pro-choice abortion agency. While certainly biased, this website allowed me to look at the modern controversy surrounding abortion. The central question to abortion is whose rights do we protect? According to the Planned Parenthood website, the mother has the choice to have an abortion, as the baby is not yet a living individual. This argument made me consider my own beliefs and turn to another website to get the other side of the story.

One of the other artifacts I looked into was the National Right to Life website. While the website certainly has a bias, it presented a large amount of information that enabled me to gain facts on the rights of the unborn. While researching this case and discussing it in class, I noticed that most people always mention the mother’s “rights” but never mention those of the baby, the father or doctor. As the website helped me realize, the unborn should be afforded the same rights as the mother. I also wondered why the mother gets to make the final decision as what if the father wants an abortion and the mother does not? Since the father will have to pay some form of child support, I questioned why he should not have more of a say. I also looked at the rights of the child. Even though unborn, at a certain age, the child is able to laugh, feel pain, move etc. Thus made me question, if abortion is legal, when should the cutoff age be? Even those in favor of abortion have many different ideas on this issue. I pondered that since it is impossible to tell, should we not err on the side of caution instead of risking murder? Thus, my views on the immorality of abortion were given additional support as I delved deeper into this issue.

Another artifact I discovered was a book entitled *The Abortion Rights Controversy in America: A Legal Reader* which is a collection of legal documents edited by N.E Hull and Peter Hoffer. This artifact was quite instructive, as it provided me with important sources for my paper. Many of the primary documents from this book were selections from actual court cases dealing with abortion with the opinions of Supreme Court Justices and lower courts. As I examined the question of abortion, I discovered that it was not just a scientific or ethical issue, but an important political issue used to gain political power.   
 The last artifact that I feel aided me in my research on abortion is an article provided in class entitled, *The Islamic View on Stem Cell Research* by Michele Weckerly. Although this issue seems to be completely different from the topic of abortion, much of the abortion debate pertains to stem cell research as harvesting stem cells is considered a form of murder by those against abortion. This artifact was extremely useful to developing my thought process as it made me look at the issue from the perspective of another culture. The view that stem cell research and abortion is permissible so long as it occurs before the “ensoulment” of the child is interesting, as Islam also teaches that scientific advancements for the good of man should be encouraged. Thus, this artifact made me consider the issue from a different perspective.

Examining these case studies was very interesting as the artifacts made me examine my own beliefs. I had to question my own ethical standards as well as defend them with scientific reasoning. Researching these topics also taught me that every action America takes will be scrutinized by the world as in the case of eugenics. We must therefore act with caution or end up inspiring such men as Adolf Hitler. I learned that ethical decisions such as these, even with the best intentions could lead to dire consequences and thus must be scrutinized to prevent unintended costs. Hence, I realized through this research that I may one day have to defend my own decisions and therefore must be able to defend my beliefs from both an ethical and scientific standard.