

AN UNKNOWN FUTURE

THE BODY, BIOTECHNOLOGY, AND HUMAN NATURE

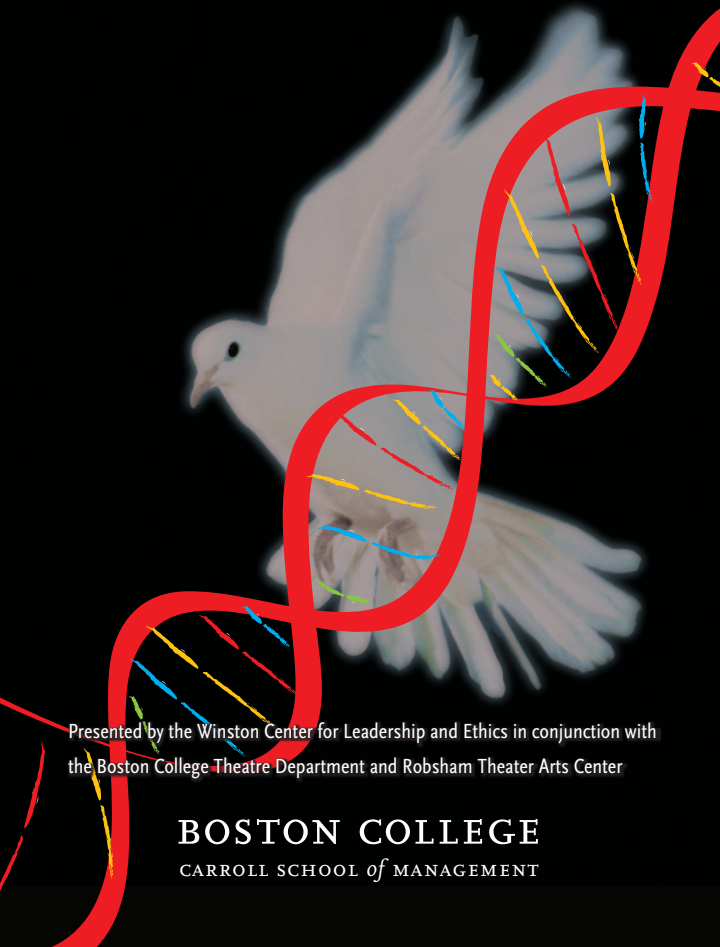
A SERIES OF PROGRAMS

EXAMINING THE BIOETHICAL ISSUES
EVOKED BY THE PLAY

AN EXPERIMENT WITH AN AIR PUMP

BY SHELAGH STEPHENSON

OCTOBER 5–15, 2006



Presented by the Winston Center for Leadership and Ethics in conjunction with
the Boston College Theatre Department and Robsham Theater Arts Center

BOSTON COLLEGE
CARROLL SCHOOL *of* MANAGEMENT

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Inspired by Boston College's Theatre Department's commitment to scholarship and art, the Winston Center for Leadership and Ethics, the Robsham Theater Arts Center, and the Theatre Department have collaborated to present "**An Unknown Future: The Body, Biotechnology, and Human Nature.**" Composed of panels, discussions, and film screenings, this interdisciplinary inquiry will examine the bioethical issues discussed in the Theatre Department's production of Shelagh Stephenson's provocative play, *An Experiment with an Air Pump*.

These varied programs will illuminate the intersection of theatre, science, and ethics and encourage students, faculty, and the public to confront the moral dilemmas posed by the production. By acknowledging the connection between theatre and the external forces that shape it, we also hope to enhance the emotional and intellectual satisfaction of the audience.

We encourage you to take advantage of the unique intersection of theatre and science by attending a performance of *An Experiment with an Air Pump* and joining us for one of the programs.

JOHN HOUCHIN

Chair, Boston College Theatre Department

RICHARD KEELEY

Director of Programs, the Winston Center for Leadership and Ethics

Associate Dean, Carroll School of Management

HOWARD ENOCH

Director, Robsham Theater Arts Center

ABOUT THE PLAY

AN EXPERIMENT WITH AN AIR PUMP

by Shelagh Stephenson

An Experiment with an Air Pump spins magically between the ends of the 18th and 20th centuries while exploring provocative issues facing two households who live 200 years apart. At the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in 1799, the Fenwick family grapples with the morality of stealing cadavers for scientific research while riots induced by the massive changes to society explode outside their windows. In the same home in northern England, the story of Ellen, a geneticist, and her husband Tom, an unemployed English professor, unfolds in 1999. At the dawn of the new millennium, they struggle with the issues of genetic engineering, stem cell research, and their differing views on the commercial and moral implications of biotechnology.

At the heart of Shelagh Stephenson's play is a fierce exploration of medical ethics, the parameters of scientific inquiry, the evolving role of women in society, literature vs. science, and the complexities of love and passion. As the New Year 1800 arrives, Joseph Fenwick toasts: "Here's to whatever lies ahead...here's to unchartered lands...here's to a future we dream about and cannot know." Ms. Stephenson hauntingly reminds us that while the specific issues facing mankind change over time, they are remarkably intertwined.

"Ms. Stephenson uses the turns of two centuries—one heralding the birth of the Industrial Age, the other the age of biotechnology—to juxtapose ethical quandaries, suggesting that while the machinery has evolved, human impulses have changed not one whit..."

The New York Times

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5

4:30 PM

FILM SCREENING OF *IN THE SHADOW OF THE REICH: NAZI MEDICINE*, WITH DIRECTOR JOHN MICHALCZYK

McGuinn 121

In the Shadow of the Reich: Nazi Medicine studies the step-by-step process that led the medical profession in the Third Reich down an unethical road to genocide.

JOHN MICHALCZYK is a professor of fine arts at Boston College. His courses primarily deal with literature, art, and film in a socio-political context. Since 1992, he has produced nine documentary films for PBS television and national and international distribution. These deal with historical events such as World War II and the Holocaust, as well as situations of conflict resolution, be it in Northern Ireland or Israel.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10

4:30 PM

FILM SCREENING OF *GATTACA*

Fulton 130

Gattaca, starring Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman, and Jude Law, takes place in the near future where genetic engineering makes possible the creation of biologically superior human beings who then assume positions of power and prestige.

PROFESSOR JOHN MICHALCZYK will host the program and lead discussion.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11

4:30 PM

STUDENT PANEL ON BIOETHICS

Robsham Theater

PANELISTS

LISA CAHILL is the J. Donald Monan, SJ Chair and professor of theology at Boston College. A prolific author, fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, Professor Cahill's current writing project is titled *Genetics, Theology, Ethics: An Interdisciplinary Conversation*.

CLARE O'CONNOR is an associate professor and assistant chairperson in biology at Boston College. Her research focuses on enzymes that repair proteins damaged during the aging process.

PATRICIA RIGGIN is the director of *An Experiment with an Air Pump* and an assistant professor of theatre at Boston College.

MODERATOR

JOHN PARIS, SJ, The Rev. Michael P. Walsh, SJ, Chair in Bioethics, theology Department has served as consultant to the President's Commission for the Study of Ethics in Medicine, the United States Senate Committee on Aging, and the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment. He has published over 100 articles on the areas of law, medicine, and ethics and has served as a consultant and expert witness in many of the landmark biomedical cases, including *Quinlan*, *Brophy*, *Jobes*, *Baby K*, and *Gilgunn*.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14
APPROXIMATELY 4:30 PM¹⁴

GENERAL PANEL ON BIOETHICS

Robsham Theater

PANELISTS

GARETH COOK is a Pulitzer prize-winning science journalist, currently at the *Boston Globe*. He was awarded the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in Explanatory Reporting for his writing about the scientific, ethical, and human dimensions of stem cell research.

MICHELE GOODWIN is the Wicklander Chair in Ethics (2004–2006) and a professor of law at DePaul College of Law. She currently directs the top-ranked Health Law Institute as well as the Center for the Study of Race & Bioethics.

MICHAEL MORELAND is the former associate director for domestic policy, The White House and advisor to President Bush on bioethics. He is currently a professor at the Villanova School of Law.

MODERATOR

JOHN PARIS, SJ, Rev. Michael P. Walsh, SJ, Chair in Bioethics and professor of theology at Boston College.

* The panel takes place after the final curtain of the matinee performance of *An Experiment with an Air Pump*.

OCTOBER 13 & 14
8:00 PM

OCTOBER 14 & 15
2:00 PM

AN EXPERIMENT WITH AN AIR PUMP

BY SHELAGH STEPHENSON

Robsham Theater

Directed by Patricia Riggan

Department of Theatre and Robsham Theater Arts Center

Robsham Theater, Boston College

Box Office: 617-552-4002



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