

*Playing God in Science Fiction and Eugenics*

Presenter Natalie Hobbs, Biology major

Mentored by Amy Ellison

Genetic engineering has been arguably one of the most impactful breakthroughs in the scientific community. Scientists are given the power to simply alter strands of DNA to get rid of major disorders and ailments such as Huntington's and hemophilia. However, how much power is too much? This research explores how genetic engineering came to be, what sort of projects it is famous for, and how we could use it in the future. It also uses two literary sources to show what not to do when presented with opportunities like the characters Dr. Victor Frankenstein and Dr. Moreau did in their respective novels. While both novels are in the science fiction genre, science in the real world is not far off from what these two scientists went on to do in their experiments. Many believe that both characters were problematic in their actions which are addressed in this paper as well as some projects that were viewed as controversial such as the "designer baby" concept and the sterilization era. Outside sources used for this research include Harvard University's genetics department and the History channel website. This paper is meant to warn the audience about how dangerous genetic engineering can be if used incorrectly rather than argue for whether it should be used altogether.