



2014 PSBR High School Essay Contest
Creative Category Winner

Jacob I.
Norwin High School
North Huntingdon, PA

I am filled with rage! I am of a dying species. What is left of us will not survive for long. I am but a lowly poliovirus. Nigeria is where I make my home. We are but another endemic in this vast world of infections. In prior years, the poliovirus was unstoppable. We, the poliovirus army, paralyzed many. Even the President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was affected by us. We stood undefeated! According to a human statistics website, "Over 350,000 victims had polio in 1988. In 2002 only 480" humans encountered our infectious kind in combat. How did our glory days of undefeatable force dwindle as if we were nothing more than a pebble tossed carelessly into a pond?

The answer was Biomedical Research!

Humans didn't even fathom the possibility that we were infections until 1908. Oh, I remember this year like a bad headache! This was the year those two outlandish doctors, Erwin Popper and Karl Landsteiner managed to transfer polio to monkeys. That day was the beginning of the end for our kind! These crazed doctors could now study us in a controlled environment while under minimal surprise attacks of infection. The research began! Those creeps studied every nanometer of us. It was terrifying knowing each day could be your last. Even the strong among us were disheartened to know that the harder they fought the more the humans learned how to beat us. As viruses, we fought together as well as we could but, we were contained in bodies of the animals in which we resided. Yet, the grubby humans; our true adversary, remained free of our control. This cruel experimentation [on us viruses] continued through the 1950's. It was then that a true vaccine was developed. One by one, legions of our troops were drawn out of our hosts and neutralized to limit our destructive capabilities. Our weakened troops were then squeezed down sharp needles into humans. The war was ending, casualties stacked to ghastly heights on both sides of the battlefield. Unfortunately rats, mice, and monkeys had fallen victim, not the scientists who remained shielded from our control. Poliovirus, as a plague, started to disappear from the world as sand trickles from an hourglass, so were the "Days of Our Lives."

Some humans are actually on our side as they fight against the continued research. They claim that humans and animals have different DNA. When actually, 70% - 90% of human genes are also found in the majority of mammals. This allows our enemies to investigate specific traits in both humans and viruses, giving scientists a horrifyingly close look into how we work and how they humans will react to us.

These misinformed humans also seem to think that the animals are treated horribly. Yet, the "Animal Welfare Act" passed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture clearly monitors and protects the rights of the animals to prevent inhumane treatment, in part eliminating abuse and ethical misconduct with these animals. All research facilities are subject to rigorous annual checks by licensed individuals with the animals' best interests in mind. If an experiment would

cause the subject pain, the animals are required to be administered regulated doses of anesthesia.

It would seem to me like the humans have lost their last screw. As I understand it, groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals rage about the horrors that the very research that delivered them from the hands of what was our glorious poliovirus empire! They back up their reports with blown out of proportion facts and statistics. They rant about dogs, cats, and primates when birds, rats, and mice encompass more than 90% of animal research.

As previously mentioned, our once victorious kingdom crumbled because of biomedical research. Biomedical research compromised us and others soon fell weak before it. They included: malaria, allergies, chickenpox, and smallpox. When the situation couldn't get worse, it became appalling. The testing on the animals became instrumental in developing methods for safe and effective x-rays, and heart transplants. The humans could now use humane research to cure themselves and destroy our lives.

Biomedical Research - the words shall remain infamous among the many viruses and bacteria around the world. The days of merciless pillaging of the immune system are long gone. Due to advances in research, people can humanely and respectfully use animals to benefit their species. Humans have won the battle and will almost certainly win the war.

Works Cited

Ferdowsian, Hope R., Nancy Beck, and Catriona J. Maccallum. "Ethical and Scientific Considerations Regarding Animal Testing and Research." *PLoS ONE* 6.9 (2011): e24059. Print.

"The Animal Welfare Act - Office of Research Development." *The Animal Welfare Act - Office of Research Development*. APHIS, 7 Mar. 2012. Web. 18 Feb. 2014.

"Welcome to ANZCCART." *ANZCCART*. Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research & Teaching, 18 Feb. 2014. Web. 18 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART/>>.

"Nigeria." *Global Polio Eradication Initiative > Infected countries >*. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, n.d. Web. 18 Feb. 2014.

"Understanding Animal Research." *Understanding Animal Research*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/why/human-health/polio-vaccine/>>.