

Cameron Dennis  
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Professor Helman  
Enduring Questions-Abstract for Final Paper

### **Abstract: The Common Good: Is This Worthy of Pursuit?**

My proposed paper will concern the idea of a common good. The big issue that surrounds this topic is whether or not one should strive to work toward what he perceives as the common good. This topic is divided into five sections. To help defend both sides of this argument, I will take into account the following works: The Power and the Glory, Watchmen, The Other Wes Moore, and "Rabbit-Proof Fence." In each of these works, there is at least one character that looks to benefit the common good. The first portion of the paper will be an introduction to the topic which will include a very broad definition of the common good, the works that are in consideration, and the methodology for answering the presented question (which will also serve as an outline for the paper).

The second portion will be defining the common good. This portion will be vital to both sides of the argument. Here I will begin by conveying the goal of Veidt in Watchmen and then call into question his authority and motivation for making the decision that he made. The goal here is not to demonstrate that his decision was wrong, but to show the difficulty in defining what is good. To drive this point home, this will be followed by a discussion of the Priest and the Lieutenant in The Power and the Glory. I will argue that both characters worked toward what they perceive to be the common good, but had opposing perceptions. The conclusion of the second portion of the paper is that not everyone shares the same perception of the common good or can accurately predict what will be of most benefit to the greatest number of people. It will also be made clear that one's idea of the common good balances "relative levels of happiness" with "greatest number of people benefited." Consider a situation in which an action causes considerable detriment to one group and minor benefit to another group. If the group of benefit is only slightly larger than the group of detriment, some may not consider the action to be toward the common good. The point that I will try to make is that this issue is not black and white.

The third (and largest) section will be an argument toward and against pursuing the common good. This will revisit the characters that were previously mentioned and demonstrate the benefits and drawbacks of their actions and then attempt to answer whether or not they were justified. This section will also consider the actions of Mr. Neville in "Rabbit-Proof Fence."

The fourth section of the paper will make an argument for and against the idea of individualism. Here, an argument will be made from the characters: Molly from "Rabbit-Proof Fence," the other Wes Moore, the gringo, and Rorschach will be used to show the positive and negative effects of pursuing individual freedoms in spite of what is perceived to be the common good.

The fifth and final section will be my assessment of which argument is strongest and my concluding thoughts on the subject. I choose to argue that the idea of the common good does not exist and that it is not worth pursuing.