

Abstract

Idea or Theme and the Issue Concerning It

The main idea of my paper will be human nature. This paper will take extreme views on the importance of Darwinian selection. The main issue concerning this topic is the conflicting effects that human nature has us as a species. My thesis is going to be along the lines of, "human nature is currently having an adverse and impeding effect on the development and advancement of humans as a species."

Arguments on Each Side of the Issue [Human nature is a...]

...*Long term issue for the human race*: Natural selection has allowed us to develop to the species we are today, but our human nature aims to stop this natural selection from happening. This is effectively curtailing the evolution of our species. Nature has many ways in which it regulates itself, and things like antibiotics and genetically modified plants and animals for our consumption [*Omnivore's Dilemma*] are effectively canceling the regulating effect that nature forces upon us. Natural selection can be seen at work in forests where wildfire's run rampant and destroy the landscape. This fire is actually a part of the life cycle of the forest. By letting our human nature stop things which could have the same renewing effect on our species as the fires have on forests, we are dooming the human race to genetic de-evolution and regression as a species.

Our human nature can also be seen in our emotions. Our moral obligation to protect our own is hurting the human race. The emotion which tells us that every single person should be protected from nature overrides the logical argument which tells us that natural selection is a good thing for our race. If we don't take all possible steps to negate natural selection, we have emotional reactions to that. An example to illustrate this point is modern medicine. Misuse of antibiotics is slowly creating drug resistant germs which could eventually wipe out our entire race. If a wild animal, whose species has been around much longer than humans, gets sick, they don't have modern medicines to protect them. The animals with weaker immune systems die off, and only the stronger ones are able to reproduce. Human emotion has hindered the genetic advancement of our species because our fundamental nature tells us to use every tool at our disposal to protect others.

May also talk about: War, Crime, Greed, Adolescence

...*Short term protector of the human race*: These emotions described above actually have many benefits in the short run. We are protected from a lot of dangers each day because of this aspect of human nature. We all benefit from the instinctual drive to protect loved ones. Our social customs and our care for other's opinions help us to make smarter decisions each day. Things like the development of modern medicine is something we all benefit greatly from, and the passion to develop this medicine is only present because of our human nature.

The "Way" described in the *Daodejing* aims to solve many of the problems stated above, while still keeping many of the positive benefits of human nature. It is truly the best of both sides because it allows us to keep many of our beneficial tendencies, but it still weaves natural selection into our attitudes. This equilibrium stance is the best solution for the human race. The idea of contentment introduced by the *Daodejing* best represents a mindset which would allow humans to begin following the "Way". In chapter 33, the *Daodejing* states that "Those who know contentment are rich" (33). I would say that Dr. Manhattan from *The Watchman* follows the "Way" very well and is a beacon of contentment. Dr. Manhattan is an extreme case of this idea, but we are just as extreme on the other side of the same spectrum. We should aim, as a global community, to move our mindsets closer the how Dr. Manhattan thinks, because that will vastly benefit our quality of life and the longevity of the human race.

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Abstract: Only You Can Judge Yourself

Paper 4 Abstract

From time again and again, we are all witnesses to criticism and hypocrisy. We are victims to society's interpretation of who we should be and how we should act. We are so overwhelmed by the vast ocean, that we forget that it's the marine life that matters most. Society today pays more attention to what the majority has to say than an individual. Do we not hold the responsibility to be open minded? Often, the world challenges us to go above and beyond, but what does that mean in terms of our backstage or front stage? Do we do it because we want to, or simply because we as humans seek recognition from one another?

I will focus my theme on who has the right to judge and who has the right to forgive. I will also incorporate ideas of what makes us, us, and what shapes our identity. Another aspect I will add, are my personal interpretations of how society works today. I feel these are themes relevant to today generations, because society is the way it is due to past generations and we are the ones that will have to live in it.

The biggest lie told to us by society is that we cannot be happy without one another that happiness can only come about with a partner. The media is the biggest weapon society can use, it targets as young as 1 year olds and builds images into our heads of what we should aspire to be, even if that's not what we really want to be. The media serves as an outlet to education; we spend more time watching television than reading a book.

We need to reevaluate our priorities and really pay attention to what truly matter in life, and the most important of course is to find happiness.

The purpose of this abstract is to inform the readers what the topic of my paper will be about. While being at Wabash, we get sort of conditioned to think and act in a certain way. That way is to usually act as gentlemen. I believe the way that Wabash attempts to convince us as students to be a "Wabash Gentleman" is to have us read works of different literature that display actions of men that they would like for "Wabash Men" to be replicas of. Basically, Wabash wants us to share the same ideas as the people who wrote and drew the various books, articles, plays, movies because they all express and address a problem that is an issue in the world and that is what "Wabash Men" do best. In my two years here at Wabash, I have not met a student or alumnus from Wabash that does not care about an issue that plagues the world. In these literatures, these men are usually thinkers, leaders, innovators, and men who create their own path. I believe that the class of "Enduring Questions" is meant for the college to start trying to condition the students into what they want to become. On the one hand, these literatures portray the acts of good men (which are the men Wabash would for their students to be replicas of), but on the other hand, the same literatures portray the men that Wabash does not want to be replicas of. But just the "Gentlemen's Rule" that is left up to us to interpret what the college wants us to think about.

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4/18/13

EQ

Abstract Paper

In my paper I will discuss why ambition and desire can be a bad thing especially when one does not have the wisdom to direct their selves onto a good path. In "The Power and the Glory", "Meno", and "The Daodjing of Laozi" one is given examples of exactly how things can take a turn for the worst. Anyone can go too far and become harmful, either to others or even themselves, when they for their desires, which is why it is crucial to have wisdom to keep oneself from being a harmful person. There are character in these stories that show wisdom is extremely important to help guide one along through life.

Throughout the first third of my paper, I would like to discuss the way the Lieutenant in "The Power and the Glory" has a misguided mentality in trying to better people's lives by killing off every single priest in Mexico. After elaborating on what kind of misguided ambition the Lieutenant has I will discuss the parallels between the Lieutenant and a character that had the same mindset but on a more extreme scale, Adolf Hitler. The main comparison of these two people would be how their ambition drives them to do incredible things, awful and inhumane, but they are big accomplishments. After discussing "The Power and the Glory" I would begin to talk about the way, the character Meno in "Meno" the dialogue, who also has a misguided mentality of doing what is right and what is best for the people. Then I would begin discussing how Meno lacks wisdom and for that same reason he leads himself to thinking that Socrates is a bad person and eventually sentences him to be executed, which isn't the right thing to do at all. Then I would parallel Meno all the judges in contemporary times that sentence people to jail or worse for unjustified reasons. Last I would like to include some of chapters from "The Daodejing of Laozi" to support that desires and ambition are bad things, but I would also like to argue the fact that two things are only bad iff wisdom is not present.

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4/17/13

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Enduring Questions

Abstract: More Human than Human: Exploring the ideas of moral/ethical obligation to human-like entities

The main idea of the proposed paper is that of the responsibility of the creator to the created. The issue concerning said idea is whether or not the creator does indeed have certain obligations to that which he or she has, whether intentionally or not, created. The three works to be used for the exploration this issue are to be Watchmen, Frankenstein, and "Blade Runner".

These three works were selected because each contains at least one character who is decidedly not human, but is not so different as to be completely and utterly unrelatable. Dr. Manhattan (Watchmen) was once a man, but after an accident only made possible by mankind, he became a god-like being. Frankenstein's monster, who for ease of righting will be referred to as Frank, was created by Frankenstein in a fit of obsession only to be abandoned. Rachel (Blade Runner) was a replicant who looks, acts, and even believed she was a human until Deckard tells her she's not. All three are beings who are strictly in-human, but have enough human qualities to raise concerns of what is ethical or moral regarding their treatment.

For the argument for creators having certain responsibilities, the humanness of the characters will be examined in greater detail. For example, Frank may be stitched together from the parts of how many dead bodies, but he still feels sadness, loneliness, and anger. How does one who experiences these emotions not warrant care from the man who created him. In addition, an examination of the each characters unique situation will attempt to show how mankind forces the characters into states of emotional distress and force them to do terrible things. For example, Dr. Manhattan is used by the US to deter Soviet aggression while simultaneously ending American wars. He is treated more as a weapon than a person. Yet, when he decides to go to Mars, no one can quite understand why he does it. The idea is that more ethical/moral treatment could have led to more agreeable outcomes for the human characters involved.

The counter-argument will argue people like Dr. Manhattan or Frank, if they can be called people, have gone beyond human moral/ethical concerns. Dr. Manhattan could turn the Earth into a giant spinning bowl of pudding; how does one punish a being like that? How does one appease that which needs no food, no shelter, no materials of any sort, who does not have need of anything a normal human would have need for in order to survive? What about Rachel? She isn't even organic, just synthetic flesh over a machine body. She has bits of code dictating her responses and emotions. How can one treat her humanely if she isn't human? This question can be addressed to any of the characters already mentioned. Another argument is that the treatment they are receiving is already consistent with how humans treat other humans, so they actually deserve no further care/consideration than what they already are receiving. For example, Frank never hesitates to mention he's hideous and nobody loves him. Plenty of naturally born humans are hideous and go unloved, yet we would still prosecute them if they killed people. Why should he be excused of his actions when if he was a just a hideously deformed man he would be treated the same way?