

What does it mean to be a person?

What does it mean to truly be a person? There are many aspects that factor into what makes a person a person. It could be said that the only organisms that can possibly be referred to as persons are human beings. This is not necessarily true, as there are many qualities that human beings possess that other organisms also possess. There are many examples of this dilemma brought up in a number of readings that have been discussed throughout class. It is a debate that leads to multiple angles of discussion, but I personally do believe that human beings are the only organisms that should be considered persons.

People who would argue that the only organisms that can be persons are human beings, would argue that the qualities required to be considered a person are only possessed by humans. These qualities could be: the ability to be responsible for one's own actions, respond to their environments, be able to learn and use language, have social skills, and be able to interact with members of its species. Examples of readings that may support these claims are *Frankenstein* and *Are Apes Persons*. They portray these qualities by showing that the monster is not truly a person, and that apes also do not possess all of the identifying qualities that human beings possess.

People also could argue that there are other organisms that can be considered persons. Other organisms could possibly have the characteristics necessary to be persons, even though they are not human beings. Apes are an example of one of these organisms because they are able to interact with one another, and they can also use tools to better their lives. They would also say that in the case of the monster, because he took on the human form and could interact with other people, than he was a person.

Both arguments of what makes a person a person have very valid ideas. These ideas center around an organism ability to learn, react, and be social in their environment. The arguments that people make who believe that only human beings are persons, would say that other organisms do not possess these characteristics. On the contrary, people would say that other organisms do have the proper characteristics to be defined as persons. However, I believe that the stronger argument is that only human beings can be considered persons.

Ryan Gross

The Habit of Copping Out

A common theme I have noticed over the semester is a habit that the American culture has picked up, that being copping out. Copping out is where an individual knows and understands his or her duties in order to be a citizen but chooses an alternative method either to hardly obtain their duties or not obtain his or her duties at all. I will use examples from *The Other Wes Moore*, our discussions over *Food Inc.* and *How Junk Food can end Obesity* to demonstrate the effects of individuals copping out.

In *The Other Wes Moore*, there are a variety of characters that cop out of their duties towards their community. I will compare and contrast the mothers of the two Wes' specifically to magnify how copping out of parental duties effects the entirety of a community. *The Other Wes Moore* is a great example to use in order to compare a citizen who copped out verses a citizen who fulfilled her duties. In this example, the other Wes Moore's mother didn't fulfill her duties, which can be seen through a widespread of American communities. Everything starts with the fulfillment of individual duties because when individual don't fulfill their duties, then neighborhoods don't fulfill their duties, then small governments and large governments can't fulfill their duties. I will go in depth how the individual is responsible for large-scale desired change.

A specific situation regarding large-scale change I will talk about comes from the two discussions regarding *Food Inc.* and *How Junk Food can end Obesity*. In this example, I will argue it's not the responsibility of the large food processing companies to provide "healthy" food to Americans but it's the duty of American to demand "healthy" foods. I will talk about how American's copped out of their responsibilities of making healthy eating habits a priority and now more of a flavor seeking obsession. Individuals copped out of their responsibilities which big companies took advantage of. I will go on to argue that it's the responsibility of individuals to take back the habit of eating healthy and how they must make it a priority in order for big processing companies to change. Again, change comes from individuals doing their civil duties and not copping out.

Abstract for final paper

The basis for this paper is rather simple. I want to make it a paper revolving around the political and social constructions that lie around the monopolization of the food industry and in the way that I see it; a control of the people to the point where the people are themselves icons of profit and of a patent.

The three works that I'd like to use with this paper are the following:

- The film, "Food Inc." This will be one of the primary subjects that I will use, since I will be using quotes, data and the opinions that are expressed in the film. It has a very strong output as to what monopolization of big enterprises has done to the consequences of cheap and overproduced items.
- "The Omnivore's Conundrum" is my second work that I'd like to work with. This was a very mind-opening book since it raised some initial questions as to what it truly was that we were consuming, but even more importantly, how we got to the level of "sophisticated tastes" and the adaptation to different poisons. It is also worthwhile to mention that it discusses some primitive inhibitions to consume certain nutrients whether they be fat, protein or carbs.
- I'd also like to use the latest reading, "How Junk Food Can End Obesity". This goes hand in hand with both of the previous works that I stated. I like this one quite a bit since it tends to focus a lot on what exactly people mislabel as "healthy foods". I feel like this article has a lot of potency as to what exactly is the epidemic that plagues the nation which "Food Inc." really tends to be one-sided about.

In conclusion, the paper is really going to revolve around a political stance unveiling what the problem really is; that the poluli is causing on themselves and how the big enterprises are responding with. People demand "healthier", more "organic" foods but "healthier" isn't always cheap. "Healthier" isn't always what the people demand nor need.

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Abstract

Morality is something that each and every human being shares on one level or another, even a thief has his own line that he wouldn't cross. However, this begs the question if it's possible for us to be too moral, where our morality affects a decision that would be better for either us or others. One real world example we can see this in people who believe taking medicine when they are sick is wrong, immoral, some even refusing treatment to the point of death. We see choices like this in many of the readings we've done, but I will be focusing on the examples on *Watchmen*, written by Alan Moore and published by DC Comics in 1987, and *The Power and Glory*, written in 1940 by Graham Greene. Additionally, I will also be referencing *Food Inc.*, produced by Robert Kerner in 2008, both because of the moral choices featured in the documentary, and the moral choices that viewers, after having seen the movie, decide to make.

For the *Watchmen*, a good example is Rorschach going to tell the world what really happened even though attempting to do so costs his life, and going through with it would've made the lives lost already in vain. Alternatively, there is also Ozymandius choosing to go through with his plan in the first place, taking the lives of millions to prevent the possibility of losing millions more.

For *Power and Glory* I will be referencing how the Priest turns himself in, invalidating his own life and those of the hostages that were already implied to have been killed, to justify the worship of his religion and beliefs. An opposite example inside of the same work is the Lieutenant, going to those lengths to try and catch the priest, what he believes to be a necessary evil.

For *Food Inc* I'll be talking about the generally viewed "negative" morality of how the animals are treated and kept for the sake of producing food, as well as the morality of people who have seen the documentary and decide to continue eating their food, or go out of their way to eat healthy, each decision possibly being a detriment to themselves.