

Famous thinkers



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Throughout history we have people that stand out from the rest of us because of a product they invented or maybe because of their willingness to educate others about a cause. I choose two different famous thinkers that have made an impact in their own special areas of expertise. One is Bill Gates and the other is Peter Singer. Bill Gates has become somewhat of a household name because of his affiliation with Microsoft. Peter Singer is not known to be as well-known compared to Bill Gates, but that doesn't mean that he does not have a rather huge amount of followers because of his fight for animal rights. In this paper we will take a closer look at both of their contributions to society, each of their personal and social environments, and the problems or ideas they looked to solve.

Bill Gates is known for not only turning Microsoft into a billion dollar company, but he is also known as the wealthiest man in the world. How did that happen? Well, with a lot of hard work and dedication along with him having a special talent to stay ahead of his competitors. At the same time you can see that by using his software companies have been able to have a top of the line operating system throughout the years. At least those that chose to use it from the beginning. It has also benefitted society as a whole by allowing those that could afford to have a computer learn new skills that will need to be applied in the future job market. The sooner people had jumped aboard the computer train, the sooner they were able to adapt to the new wave of our future.

So by allowing him to make it easier for businesses to operate more efficiently, his action could be considered a contribution to society. Also, he has his Gates Foundation that has been established for some time now and

is dedicating a lot of his time currently towards that. It is helpful towards education, world health, and low-income communities (Bill Gates biography, 2013)! This is another contribution to society. Peter Singer's major contribution is to educate others about animal liberation. He says that all 'beings with interests' are entitled to equal consideration (Animal Ethics, 2008)! Peter Singer social environments consist mainly of being surrounded by thousands of people that support animal equality. He insists that he does not like to use the term "rights" but rather equality or liberation. He says that his arguments are based on the principal of equality, rather than rights (Guldberg, 2005).

Well however people decide to look at it, he is considered the driving force behind the modern animal rights movements. This is his social environment that he created himself. He has been writing about and supporting the subject matter for more than 30 years. Bill Gates has decided to put most of his current time into his family life and his foundation (Bill Gates biography, 2013). This is his current social environment. Years ago when he founded Microsoft, his social environment consisted of mainly his company employees and executives from large companies that he had decided to do business with. If you go back even further into Bill's life you will notice that since the very day that he was introduced to a computer that ever since then he would go to a computer room to learn more about it. It was like any computer was like a magnet that kept pulling him towards it to learn more.

He was obsessed with them. Every opportunity he had he would go to some type of computer lab. This seemed to be his second home and his Personal and social environment for years. He became somewhat of a human

computer as he gained more and more knowledge of how to write programs for these non-humans (computers). He was taking classes at Harvard and got bored so instead decided to spend most of his time there in their computer lab (Investing Value, 2013). It makes you wonder if his parents were upset when he should have actually been in the class more. I suppose that looking back now that they are probably glad that things played out the way they did since their kid is the wealthiest man in the world. I'm willing to bet that most parents would expect their kid to not goof around especially if attending Harvard. It was actually there at Harvard that he teamed up with a friend of his to write a new version of Basic Programming language for the first personal computer.

It was called 'The Altair 8800' (Bill Gates biography, 2013). It was after that that they formed Microsoft. They came up with the word Microsoft by combining micro computers and software. They eventually came up with MS-DOS as an operating system for IBM and then this was followed by the popular Windows systems in the years to come (Investing Value, 2013). The rest is history! He became a multi-billionaire and then decided to take his mothers' old position as a civic leader by helping charities! Peter Singer looked to help solve animal abuse by bringing attention to the issue through his writings.

The interesting thing that sort of doesn't make sense is his position on 'human life'. He is flawed in the way of dividing humans as beings of interest and some that are not. He sparked a great amount of controversy for advocating euthanasia for severely disabled infants. He views them as not being persons or 'beings of interest', and therefore considering them to

have lesser moral values than many animals (Guldberg, 2005). Whatever his stance is regarding the value of human life is not the main problem that he tries to solve. It is to educate the masses on animal equality. The good that he brings by educating others about animals doesn't necessarily make up for his lack of respect for all humans, but I suppose that might be his next problem to solve once he's done defending animals. Bill gates looked to bring more advanced computers into the market by introducing new operating systems for businesses and personal computers around the globe.

This helped solve many problems for businesses in the way of communication and organization. He also continues to try and solve problems through his charities. These are two great thinkers that have contributed a large amount for the greater good of society. We were able to look at their contributions, their personal and social environments, and the problems or ideas they looked to solve. They are not perfect human beings by any means and they have their flaws like anyone else, but through their efforts they have gained a great deal of recognition that is well-deserved and I hope they continue to use their power for the greater good of society in the future!