

What it means to be human



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Final Essay “ The purpose of human life is to love and serve others and to be loved and served by them. ” Dr. Dallas Willard, Ohio State University Of the many mysteries that surprise and delight us, surely the process by which a human being is created is the most common and compelling. But what do we, as human beings, consider a human being to be? Some say a human is “ made in the image and likeness of God,” while others defend the concept that humans came from the soil and will return to the soil when they die. Dignity, a conscience, and free will all seem to play a major role in what creates a human being, as well. This notion is argued back and forth between Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein and H.

G Wells’ The Time Machine. Shelly intertwines the roles of God and humans, while Wells dehumanizes the way we act in the future. Though we cannot pinpoint an exact definition of what a human being is, we may conclude that the meaning of a human being is constantly changing. The meaning of being human is often questioned and argued over by philosophers and scientists. Some say that humans, in comparison to nonhumans, are self-aware, possess feelings, both mental and physical, and contain flaws that make them imperfect. They are “ made in the image and likeness of God,” (Genesis) to be what God wants to see. In Mary Shelley’s novel, Frankenstein, Victor’s monster, a human-like being with his own mind and flaws, is often the center of attention when this “ what is human” argument emerges.

This monster, born by the hands of his creator Victor Frankenstein, holds all, if not, most of the characteristics a human being would have. “ I know not; despair had not yet taken possession of me; my feelings were those of rage

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and revenge. I could with pleasure have destroyed the cottage and its inhabitants, and have glutted myself with their shrieks and misery” (97). This nameless monster is rational, possesses feelings, self-awareness, the ability to communicate out to others, as well as his imperfections. So why not just say that he is human? Because he has one flaw that completely isolates his being from the human race: his birth. Though created with human tissues and having human thoughts, the monster was not conceived by a natural birth. “ CURSED, CURSED creator! Why did I live? Why, in that instant, did I not extinguish the spark of existence which you had so wantonly bestowed? ” (97).

He was not created from an embryo and pushed out of a woman’s womb. Rather, like Adam and Eve, he was created in the image of his god, Victor Frankenstein. With this, Victor takes over the role of God, and defies God’s rule. He puts life into a being unnaturally, breaking the cycle of life. Abiding this idea, what would we consider Jesus Christ? He was “ born of the Virgin Mary and became man. ” But God is the one that gave him to Mary to be born. He was not a creation of sperm and egg, and has no human father.

So is his birth considered a natural birth since he came out of a womb?

Alongside this, the term “ natural birth ” seems to change meanings.

Continuing with this concept, what makes of Adam and Eve? Both were not conceived the way every other human is, though they are considered to be the first two humans on the planet. Adam, Eve, and the nameless monster were all created in the image of God. Neither of them were born through a womb, so they mustn’t be considered human without a natural birth. But we

see them as starting points to new species. After all, what came first? The <https://assignbuster.com/what-it-means-to-be-human-research-paper-samples/>

chicken or the egg? Looking up the term “ human” in the dictionary doesn’t bring you too far away from the root word. You’ll find meanings like “ a human being,” or “ of pertaining to people,” or “ humane.

” So what is humane? Whatever is considered humane seems to depend on what time period someone lives in. For example, before the 1950s, it was humane for a white man to claim superiority over a black man. But now, after the Civil Rights Movement and the precedents established in *Brown v. Board of Education*, everyone, regardless of race, is guaranteed equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment. As we go deeper into the future, humans seem to be progressing rapidly. However, in his novel, *The Time Machine*, H. G.

Wells dehumanizes society, 800, 000 years into the future. He creates these human-like figures, known as Eloi, and an ape-like group, Morlocks, that represent the society of the future. In Wells’ imagination, people in the future “ dumb-down,” become cannibalistic, and don’t think clearly. People nowadays are too caught up in the technology around them. They are letting technology take over and run their lives. Is it humane to have a machine plugged into your ears, forcing rhythm and beat into your head? Is it humane to be able to control nature and make it beneficial to ourselves and at the same time, harm the earth? The definition of humane cannot quite be settled to one definition. It is constantly changing as we progress into the future.

The exact definition of a human being may be one of the most difficult concepts to understand. Every factor, such as the way one thinks or the type of birth, must be considered. As time progresses, the way we see what a

human is, is constantly changing. We may not be able to directly define what a human is, but we can see that the meaning cannot be settled.