`Kun Yang

5/2/2017

ENG 104-01

Final Paper

In this paper, the comic book *Watchmen* by Gibbons and Moore, two scholarly articles *The Human Stain: Chaos and the Rage for Order in Watchmen* by Bryan D. Dietrich and Moore and *Gibbons’s Watchmen: Exact Personifications of Science* by Brent Fishbraugh, and *Abraham’s Enchanted Forest* by Straub. According to the resources it can make the claim, the mighty God Dr. Manhattan is the product of social selection, which can be demonstrated with his career transition from a watchman into a nuclear physicist, his relationship with United States, and his recognition of unchangeable history and future.

At first, the definition of social selection according to Merriam-Webster dictionary is “the differential action of social conditions or agencies on the longevity and reproductive rates of individuals and strains in the population.” Which can interoperate as the society defines the characteristic traits of individuals.

Dr. Watchman, familiarly known as Jon developed his social selection at an early age. At first, Jon’s passion was to be a watchmaker just like his father, but due to his father’s discovery of Einstein’s works, Jon had to give up his early passion into the nuclear physicist industry under his father’s influence.“My father was a watchmaker; he abandoned it when Einstein discovered time is relative. I would only agree that a symbolic clock is as nourishing to the intellect as photograph of oxygen to a drowning man.”(Gibbon Moore)”. Jon began his life wanting to be a watchmaker like his father; however, while Jon was in his late teen years, the first atomic bomb was dropped, and Jon’s father did not see a future in watchmaking”(Fishbraugh 194). With both quotes, we concluded that during the late 1940s and early 1950s, being a nuclear physicist was a highly praised job, with the increased demand for nuclear physicists, Jon was urged to be a nuclear physicist under his father’s influence; Jon’s career change had led hims into the victim of social selection.

Jon’s career change can interoperate as going from normal into abnormal, due to his social condition. We can compare Jon’s situation to the main character from *Abraham’s Enchanted Forest* Greta, who had to dress in a fairy suit inside of her father’s forest theme park while being able to live inside the theme park. Essentially, Greta was living the life of the princess inside the Disney’s world, but because of this abnormal life style; it often left Greta wondering the possibilities of living a normal life like her classmates. It was stated that “Her favorite movies were the ones where people just did normal stuff: go to school dances, eat dinner with their parents, take walks and talk to each other about their problems. The point was, no one in the movies ever seemed to realize how good they had it. (Straub 14)”, this passage reveals the story that Greta desperately wanted a normal life; it acknowledged the similarities of the real life differences between Dr. Manhattan and Greta, one was forced into the scientific world based on a highly praised career of nuclear physicist, and the other one was born into the fairy ltale environment and was forced to live the lifestyle other people dreamed of. These two characters’ similarities are their societal roles were defined by their societal conditions. Both characters’ conditions relate to our daily life, where human were forced to become something the society demands, personal freedom is limited. For instance, the movie “moonlight” repeatedly asked the audience the main character “Chiron” to find life’s purpose, however throughout the movie, “Chiron” was forced into a lifestyle that he disliked. These are relatable examples that sometime we are forced to made a decision, not because we want to, but rather because we have to.

Jon’s life spiraled out of control based on other’s influences, when he decided to be a nuclear physicist as we mentioned earlier. During one accidental incident, Jon trapped himself inside the laboratory tube, where his body got disintegrated. “Jon becomes a nuclear physicist and, one day in the laboratory, is caught on the wrong side of an experiment that removes the intrinsic field from objects. Months later, Jon manages to reintegrate his body, but he now has great control over matter and energy. The government immediately capitalize on this and names him ‘Dr. Manhattan’”(Fishbraugh 194) based on this passage, Jon’s life went from being forced into a career field to United States’ profit, which “Watchmen” once again showed that Jon did not have freedom to be his desired social role. With such connections, Gibbon and Moore tried to demonstrate that life choices are made by incidents or the society, human cannot always be free to express his or her opinions. Gibbon and Moore also tried to instill the concept of ddetermination onto the audience,where the future outcome is determined based on the actions humans made, however the outcome is unique, hence the authors are hinting that free will does not exist, which ultimately relate it back to the fact that society dictates our decisions.

“Dr. ManHattan(a.k.a. Jon Osterman), on the other hand, breaks all the other laws, those of the universe. He sees space-time synchronically, across the layers of events, all things and places simultaneously. And he is able to do pretty much anything he wills with matter. Yet, even with all this power, he at first chooses only to act according to one government’s whims and, later only according to his own.”(Dietrich 122), the history was, Dr. Manhattan regarded as the unstoppable weapon during cold-war; the United States won the Vietnam War because Dr. Manhattan could single handedly disintegrate the enemies on the battlefield. It is ironic that at first Jon was forced to study nuclear physics because his dad discovered the atomic bomb destroyed Hiroshima, then later he was forced to be an ammunition again his enemy. Dietrich described him to be the unstoppable monster, whose will was to help his country. Due to his services for the country, Jon was viewed as a benevolent, along with the comedian, who also served during Vietnam War with the motivation that he enjoyed killing. However the other heroes in the story were regarded as the villains of the country, and eventually they were forced to be banned from “heroic” activities. It is an irony that immersive killing was regarded as the morally well-standing action according to Gibbon and Moore, but crime fighting or any inner city heroic activities were viewed as destructive; the ending of “Watchmen” had also point out such irony, where evil actions is categorized as socially acceptable, which gives the impression that society sculpts the morality of any behaviors.

As the story “Watchmen” progress halfway through, Dr. Manhattan was accused of “spreading cancer” to anyone who he had contacted with, because the media assumed him being highly radio-active; under the high influence of the pressed, Dr. Manhattan snapped, and transported a full room of press reporters outside of the interview stadium, during the process he accidentally killed several people, due to a heart attack. Eventually Dr. Manhattan left for Mars because he saw minimal connection with humanity. During his exile, flash backs of the past and the future were simultaneously connected. “After his transformation, Jon, like God, experiences every minute of time simultaneously. In 1959, he knows what will happen in 1969 because he is already there; he knows about JFK’s assassination at his rebirth because he was already experiencing it, unable to change the course of history.” This passage had proven the deterministic view Gibbon and Moore were trying to point out, it was terrified that such Godly character would not change the course of future or history because he recognized the principle of determinism. In a way it’s ironic that he recognized, it was his purpose to drop the career of being a watch maker into the field of nuclear physics, and the experiment accident was also pre-destiny. Every single actions or decisions that were made were predetermined where he had no freedom to change or manipulate it.

Jon is the ultimate victim of social selection, because society sculpted him into the character Dr. Manhattan, ever since the atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima. Society forced decisions onto Jon again and again to ensure that he would eventually take on the Dr. Manhattan’s role. The Dr. Manhattan’s character relates to human’s daily life, where decisions are made, not because we want to, but because our society has already paved a predetermined path for us.

Articles and book titles should be italiczed rather than put in quote. Make sure watch man stays consistent, either use watchman or watch man.