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Professor Miller

English 110- H5

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### The Troubling Middle

Let me ask you this: Just because you can eat something does that mean you should?

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While this question could be easier to answer for some, most people would push this question aside. "Consider The Lobster" by David Foster Wallace, presents a gray area of the thought process when it comes to what we eat. A troubling middle of what's hard to think about and what's not. Wallace uses the lobster as an example throughout this reading but is he really talking about the lobster or the value? Wallace presents the hard thinking of how much pain the animal feels. He goes on to explain how animal-cruelty is not just complex but uncomfortable. While it's easy to eat the animal do we think about the process the animal goes through to get in front of us as a meal? This concept is one we don't think about often. Personally, I don't sit down at a meal and think about the animal in front of me. Until, now. When I first began thinking about this, I felt bad. I felt bad for the animal and the pain it went through. A number of sources made me develop more of an understanding. "What The Crow Knows" by Ross Anderson and "Against Meat" by Jonathan Foer, has built on the idea of a troubling middle and the views other people have on eating animals. In this paper i want to.....

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Commented [4]: not thinking about hard questions= push aside

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Wallace goes deeply into depth about the pain lobster or any animal goes through when being cooked or killed. This was something that I never thought about. Why would I care about the process any animal goes through if I wasn't there first hand. Wallace has an interesting comparison of a human being put into a boiling pot. He states, "the lobster...behaves very much

as you and I would behave if we were plunged into boiling water (with the obvious exception of screaming)” (506). Wallace is trying to explain that while we have feelings and we only think of us, lobsters and animals also have some kind of feeling. This creates a terrible middle. do most people actually agree with lobster having feelings or why would we care?

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In some cases different cultures care more about the animals around them than oneself. Andersen states, “...Jainism, an ancient religion whose highest commandment forbids violence not only against humans, but also against animals” (1). People under this religion go out of there way to not hurt the animals around them. Honestly, to me it seemed ridiculous on the precaution this people took to not hurt living organisms. Andersen explains, “The monks refuse to eat root vegetables, lest their removal from the earth disturb delicate subterranean ecosystems. Their white robes are cotton, not silk, which would require the destruction of silkworms. During monsoon season, they forgo travel, to avoid splashing through puddles filled with microbes, whose existence Jains posited well before they appeared under Western microscopes” (2). While, this seems unbelievable to me this is apart of their culture and how they were brought up. Jains believe that animals are conscious just like us. Others would disagree to this concept or push it aside. This creates a troubling middle on how people are brought up and how they think about different things in the world.

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Sometimes, it not always about being brought up. Foer discusses how we was in the trouble middle throughout most of his life. As a young child he enjoyed eating meat because of this grandmother and the tradition they once had. When the babysitter asked him a simple question “You know that chicken is chicken, right?” (2). He changed his view on what he was eating because he was raised to not hurt animals. A question I asked myself is what is the difference is you are flushing the fish down the toilet or eating it for dinner? It is one I still can

not answer. The fish being a pet and a family member but the fish I'm eating wasn't. It just doesn't make logical sense. Foer states, "I never thought of a response to our baby sitter's code but found ways to smudge, diminish and ignore it" (3). Him pushing aside his thoughts he soon began eating meat, he missed the taste. Not soon later, he was a vegetarian again, he thought logically about the topic after becoming a philosophy major. Foer's logic was hard to follow, he stated, "...And back in our new home, we occasionally eat burgers and chicken coup and smoked salmon and tuna steaks. But only whenever we felt like it" (4). Foer's life is centered around a troubling middle and having little logic behind it.

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**Commented [16]:** This is a good start for your paper, I would try to introduce your authors you are quoting more. Also try and add some more transitional sentences between your paragraphs that help sum up what you think. Try to add more of "what you think" to help balance out all the quotes, but its a good start!!

#### Work Cited

Andersen, Ross. "What The Crow Knows."

Foer, Jonathan. "Against Meat."

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