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Introduction

You are resting your eyes on something very special. On one level, it is perhaps the first scholarly journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences composed entirely by students in the history of the City Colleges of Chicago. The focus of *Symposium* is to publish annually student inquiry into the authors who collectively compose the canon, the Great Books. Although student newspapers and journals of poetry and fiction abound in community and four-year colleges, this journal may well be the *only* scholarly journal published by any community college in the country.

But the much more significant meaning of this document exists on several other levels. It is the embodiment of a profound truth whose lonely existence I have known of for many years of teaching, a truth whose establishment within and beyond the scholarly community is essential. That is, that community college students write about the best that has been thought and said in Western Culture with proficiency, insight, intellectual excitement and with frequent originality. The papers herein were written under the guidance of several professors in different classes. Almost all also received public recognition in the form of two academic awards for scholarly work established by the Great Books Curriculum—the Matthew Arnold Prize and the Socrates Prize for which they were nominiated by various Great Books curriculum faculty. The quality of scholarly work com studemmmattedees produce work h beyond all possible doubt to any reader who takes the trouble to read them.

Why is this so significant? What immediately comes to mind is that this magazine lays forever to rest all the objections raised by faculty and students themselves that real enduring works of the mind are either beyond the abilities of community college students or inconsequential to their interests or intellectual and personal needs. Herein are scholarly papers produced, in some cases by people who have always been indifferent to writing and were unaware of the canon or who had avoided it phobically. With the guidance of their professors, however, all of them were intellectually transformed, broadened and stimulated by what they read and who in the end gained a pride in their own capacity for intellectual and compositional mastery that will be of use to them in their other classes and which will enable them to cultivate a richer mental life than they otherwise would have had at their disposal for the rest of their lives. And in the process, their insights often opened up new perceptions to the faculty who were to that degree taught by their own students. And why not? The Great Books are nothing but people like you and me who are concerned about the same things we

all are---human nature, how to live, the meaning of life. It may come as a surprise, therefore, only to those who have not encountered the Great Books that the the papers in *Symposium* were edited far less than those of many if not most magazines.

In the future the Great Books Curriculum plans to publish student scholarly work that centers around the semester long theme around which we are now organizing our reading lists.

Bruce Gans

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A Politically Incorrect Defense of the Athenian Empire

William Wojtas

Webster's Dictionary defines imperialism as "the policy and practice of forming and maintaining an empire: ...the subjugation and control of territories, the establishment of colonies" (913). Today, of course, imperialism is almost universally considered an obscenity and is employed to morally anathematize another.

Nevertheless, this paper will argue that the Athenian empire of 450 B.C. was an acceptable and necessary form of government in the context of that era. Conquest was a dominant feature of the first millennia B.C and it was a common practice that was accepted by the people of that epoch.

Moreover, the Athenian empire was necessary at that time to provide security against the possibility of a future Persian attack and to protect against the possibility of war against Sparta. Had the Athenians, in fact, taken our modern view and refrained from imperialism on the grounds that it was immoral, it would almost certainly have resulted in their town being sacked and they themselves enslaved by the Persians. And had Athens fallen it is conceivable that the rest of Greece would have too.

Although the vassal states were exploited to a degree by the Athenians, it was generally not a complete catastrophe. The empire arguably opened up new economic possibilities for trade that increased the standard of living for many. Finally, it was considered human nature at the time for the stronger to dominate the weak. The Athenians, like all the other people of the ancient world, and for that matter, people throughout most of history, accepted imperialism as inevitable and in the nature of the "community" nations.

Since the arguments below will be drawn from the analysis of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, some background concerning the Athenian Empire and Thucydides should be mentioned.

Thucydides was an Athenian general and historian who lived in Greece from 460 B. C. to 400 B.C. After a military failure at Amphipolis during the Peloponnesian War, he was stripped of his command and exiled from Athens. During his exile, he visited the city-states in the Peloponnese, including Athens' archenemy, Sparta. He used these travels to gather material for his *History*, a work that details events during the Peloponnesian War. (Crawley 345). The Athenians did not originally seek to build an empire. Donald Kagan indicates that it only came into being because Sparta defaulted in heading the Delian League, a confederation of states created to protect against the possibility of a Persian attack (Pericles 92). Later the allies would take their instructions from Athens, gradually moving from independent allies to subject states with Athens fearing to relinquish their empire due to fear and pride (Meiggs 376, 379).

Contrary to the modern article of faith that all imperialists are by definition conniving, avaricious and evilly unscrupulous, Donald Kagan shows how the Athenians came to be the imperialist leader. Thucydides tells us plainly Athens assumed the leadership by the will of the allies(Outbreak 37). The Greek behavior of that era was shaped by the desire for glory and honor which came from their success (Bowra 132). This gave the Athenian leader Pericles a notion that the Athenian Empire would

have renown comparable to that of the great heroes of the past (Bowra 132). That desire for honor and glory was one of the factors that led to the creation of the Athenian Empire.

Conquest was a dominant feature during the first millennia B.C. The destruction of cities and their populations was so common as to be almost the rule. Empires rose and fell with considerable expense of life and property (Bowra 106). The Encyclopaedia Britannica indicates "Imperialism in ancient times is clear in the history of China and in the history of western Asia and the Mediterranean--an unending succession of empires" (272). For example, the Assyrian empire of the 6th century B.C. was replaced by the Persian Empire of the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. which was eventually defeated by the imperialism of the Greeks during the 4th century B.C. (272). Historically, this region was unstable and conquest was a common practice.

Importantly, Donald Kagan points out that the Greeks, along with most people of the ancient world, viewed the world as a place of intense competition where victory and domination, which brought fame and glory, were the highest goals. (Pericles 96). It was necessary to create a strong empire to protect against conquest by other nations. Some may argue that the creation of an empire would not always ensure victory over a foreign conqueror. However, if properly ruled and maintained, it could increase the odds of victory. In the case of the Athenian empire, Athens not only should have won the Peloponnesian War, but until the very end, they could have won. "It was only after the cumulative and joint effect of a large number of repeated mistakes that her power was destroyed" (DeRomilly 317).

As Donald Kagan observes, the Spartans went on after they won the Peloponnesian War to create an empire of their own which is exactly what they told everyone in the Greek world they were fighting against during the Peloponnesian War. The Spartan Empire soon found itself fighting a combination of former allies and enemies and within thirty years, they were defeated by the Thebans and were destroyed forever (Fall 414). These points show that conquest was a practice that was common in the region during the era of the Peloponnesian War. The practice may not have been agreeable to those being conquered, but it was a necessary practice that created strength and power.

Critics agree that the empire was the key to the defense of Athens and its allies. Donald Kagan points out that it provided security against another Persian invasion and it warded off the possibility of a conflict with Sparta (Pericles 91). Athens had saved the Greeks from Oriental conquest and they urged other states to join their defensive alliance against the possibility of another Persian invasion. Every state paid its share for the common defense and in time allowed Athens to assume command (Robinson 18-19). The allies needed a strong leader and accepted Athens as their leader. The empire was necessary to protect the allies since they could not do it on their own and they accepted the Athenian role as their protector. Donald Kagan goes on the show that the Persians had attacked them three times in twenty years and they aspired to do it again. Greece was still vulnerable because they were weakened by the previous Persian attack and were still in the process of rebuilding (Pericles 92).

True, "Empire was tyranny ... at no point is it suggested that the Athenian empire is maintained for any other purpose than the interests of Athens" (Meiggs 384). However, although Athens pursued its empire for its own interests and glory, the subject states did benefit from the security that the empire provided. As Euphemus, an Athenian, said at an assembly in Sicily "...it is fear that brings us to Sicily to build up our security with the help of our friends; not to reduce them to subjection, but to save them from subjection" (Meiggs 380).

It is also true that Athenians forced some states to be loyal to Athens, but this was because of a belief that if they were not subjects of Athens, they would either be subjects of the enemy, Sparta, or conquered by forces from outside Greece. The Spartan general, Brasidas, told the Acanthians, for example, that the

goal of his army was to force them to become allies of Sparta to keep them from subjugation by Athens (Woodruff 98). This points out that weaker states were going to be forced to take one side or the other. These points show that the Athenian Empire was necessary primarily for the security of Athens, but also provided security for its subject states.

An empire was necessary to Athenian citizens since it opened up new economic possibilities for Athens, giving them access to new markets for trade. However, this strong economy also increased the standard of living of the empire's citizens. This arose because the Athenians had domination of the seas due to their powerful navy. "With command of the sea the Athenians could send their goods to distant markets and pay for food imported from abroad. Athenian commerce flourished, and her fine wares ... found a market in many distant places" (Bowra 137). Donald Kagan indicates that Athens had access to the markets of Sicily, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Lydia, Pontus, the Peloponnese and any of the other ports that Athens could travel to because of their control of the seas. The Athenians also had access to the goods of those nations as well and this brought the wares of other lands into Athens (Pericles 98-99). Empires were a means for wealth and higher standards of living for the citizens. A flourishing economy was necessary to the survival of Athens and its citizens as a strong economy was necessary to maintain the strength of Athens. The strength of the empire gave Athens the ability to keep its naval superiority. The mastery of the seas allowed Athenians to travel abroad and this ability created the strong economy which was desired by the citizens of Athens. Since the empire was responsible for this strong economy, it was widely accepted by those that inhabited it.

True, the subject states' economies may not have flourished as greatly as the Athenians since these states were required to pay tribute and their resources were exploited by the empire. They did however benefit much more with the security provided by the empire that without it. Loyal allies were allowed to travel the seas to conduct trade on their own. The Athenians also worked to keep piracy under control as well. This opened up the same markets to Athens' allies as well as the mother city.

The empire was also accepted by the Athenians since it provided tribute money and natural resources needed to maintain their own survival against violent enemies. One example of this is the city of Amphipolis, necessary to the Athenian Empire because it was a major source of timber. This timber was a vital resource necessary to build and maintain Athens' navy, the key element in Athenian survival for they were the dominant sea power at that time (Strassler 282). Many of the vassal states were necessary for reasons such as tribute, resources or strategic importance. A few years after the creation of the Athenian empire, it became clear to everyone including the states of the former Delian League that there was no longer any threat of another Persian invasion. These vassals therefore no longer saw any reason to continue tribute payments to a common treasury (Robinson 31). Beyond sheer greed, however, the continuation of tribute was a practical necessity to Athens, as Kagan notes, for the maintenance of the naval fleet and to insure that the old ships would be kept in good repair and ten new ships would be added annually (Pericles 106).

During this era it was also considered human nature for the stronger to dominate the weak. Jacqueline DeRomilly points out that "Athens behave[d] exactly as everyone else [did], by acting in accordance with her strength; ...this ambition [to build an empire was] part of human nature"(339-340). As de. St Croix points out, nations can only achieve what their strength allows. It is human nature to continue to expand as long as they are capable of expanding and maintaining their holdings. "That empire is a fact of nature, impervious to moral considerations: not that might is right, but that might is an inescapable fact however little we like it or approve of it" (15).

Strength is a fact of nature that cannot be changed because some do not like it or approve of it. The world is incredibly fortunate that the United States is the most militarily and economically powerful

country in the world. For it cannot be doubted that without its deterrent, were certain other nations to have the opportunity to overwhelm other nations, they would not hesitate to do so.

Tellingly, Hermocrates, a bitter enemy of Athens, said that Athens had every excuse for its behavior and he blamed not those who wanted to rule, but those who were too ready to become subjects. It is just as much a part of the nature of man to rule those who submit as to resist those who attack (de Ste. Croix 16). As shown by these two critics, the subject states felt that it was necessary to give Athens greater power and subsequently submit to their rule. Athenian envoys addressing the Spartan assembly in 432 said, "it is a law of nature that the weaker should be controlled by the stronger" (Meiggs 378). Russell Meiggs goes on to point out in his book, *The Athenian Empire*, that the weak will always be subject to the stronger. He indicates that sophists of that era wrote that it was a law of nature that the strong should rule the weak (379, 390).

These points show that the empire was acceptable to the Athenian citizens because they believed themselves the strongest of the Greeks and they felt compelled by human nature to exercise the use of their strength to create and control an empire. A good example of this school of thought is presented by Herodotus in his *Histories* when he provided a proposal to the Persians by Artembares:

> O Cyrus! come now, let us quit this land wherein we dwell - for it is a scant land and a rugged - and let us choose ourselves some other better country. Many such lie around us, some nearer, some further off: if we take one of these, men will admire us far more than they do now. Who that had the power would not so act? And when shall we have a fairer time than now, when we are lords of so many nations, and rule all Asia? (Rawlinson 314).

In the twentieth century, the ambition to create an empire is viewed as economically unnecessary and morally unacceptable, although as Germany, Japan and Italy demonstrated in the 1940's and as the Syrian presence in Lebanon and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait shows, it is a policy of state that has not become extinct.

It is true that Thucydides pointed out the subject states of Athens were not free (Meiggs 384). The Athenians also committed atrocities such as their extirpation of the people of Melos. Generally, however, the subject states, unlike those who came under imperial rule in the modern instances cited above, were encouraged to pursue democracy, development, harmony, tranquility and political change (Bowra 109). On the whole, Athens did a lot of good even though it was done largely by force (Bowra 132). Moreover, as the perennial source of inspiration and fascination Athens has been for thousands of years now, Pericles has a point when he says in his Funeral Oration, of imperialistic Athens, "Such is the city for which these men fought and valiantly died, in the firm belief that it should never be destroyed."

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Moral and Practical Analysis of Athens' Military Empire

Michael Fortunato

Thomas Hobbes once observed, "If there is no power erected, or not great enough for our security, every man will and may lawfully rely on his own strength for caution against all other men" (99). His intention was to impress upon his readers the rationale for the enlargement of a dominion for their own security. Hobbes believed it was in the nature of man to seek dominion over others and therefore there must be some restraint put upon him. He considered this to be a universal law, true in all times and places and so it would have been no surprise to Hobbes to find this condition in fifth century Greece. A discussion of the reasons, therefore, that led to the creation of the Athenian empire at that time, and which made it practical and necessary can begin here.

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica imperialism results in varying degrees from a complex of causes which include economic pressures, human aggressiveness and greed, the search for security and drive for power among others. (273).

In the remotest antiquity, Greece was loosely populated and politically fragmented and unstable. The development of a stable settlement or community was highly tenuous because there was too much fear of being overrun to promote any unity among the settlements. As a natural consequence, wealth was very difficult to accumulate.

The most famous early forerunner of Athenian imperialism was the legendary Minos of Crete. He used his navy to rule the islands and wipe out piracy. This made sea travel more safe and encouraged people living on the coast to build communities. Safer seas also created more trade and made it possible to acquire capital wealth. The security of naval power caused the development of more permanent settlements (Connor 24).

The truth is that imperialism brought benefits, not only for the imperialists but even for the subjects. What made it all possible was naval power. As Thucydides observed about his own fifth century B.C. era, "The ones who acquired naval strength were not least those who applied themselves to naval power, thanks to the income in money and the domination of others" (353). Here, Thucydides observes the right of the stronger to rule.

The absence of an aggressive imperialist empire in the eastern Mediterranean allowed the Greek city-states to flourish. The city-states that had become richer threw up walls around their towns. For their own gain and protection, the weaker cities let themselves become ruled by the more powerful ones, while the more powerful cities used their wealth and power to subjugate others. This was the accepted practice of the time both by the ruler and the ruled. The fortifications of the city-states made it possible for the Greeks to combine and offer serious resistance to the threat posed by the Persians.

The Persian Wars, however, made clear the need for an organization more solid than the Peloponnesian League. The inability of Sparta to extend her power *and protect the Aegean* after the Persian wars resulted in the formation of the Delian League, which evolved into the Athenian Empire. It was the weakness of Sparta and the fear of Persia that caused Athens to strengthen her empire. This resulted in Sparta developing a growing fear of Athens' might. There were now two factions of power in the Greek coalition, Sparta and the Peloponnesian League, and Athens and the Delian League. Power and

fear created these empires and the fear of each other is what eventually brought them to fight each other (Kagan 31).

Let's now examine the benefits that came from an empire beginning with economic increases. Security from outside oppressions often results in stability and economic gain. In the case of Athens, trade by sea was a great advantage. Not only was there trade between the Greek Islands but also from other lands. Athens having a large navy could transport goods to other Aegean cities and profit from the enterprise. This ability, in fact, foreshadowed that of England, who became wealthy through similar naval supremacy.

In classical Greece, however, the increase in trade brought greater wealth, which gave rise to fortified cities. The security that the city offered resulted in an increase in population. This created the need to build more housing creating jobs for its citizens. Economic stability invariably motivates a city to improve and increase its resources.

Colonization, a word which today has only very negative connotations, had a far different and usually very positive meaning in the ancient world. It was an effective way to remove the burden of overpopulation and depletion of resources. Colonization also enlarged the size of the empire and generated wealth in the form of tribute, as was the case of Syracuse and Agrigentum in Sicily as well as Ephesus and Miletus in Lesser Asia. These were colonies of larger cities who seemed to have rivaled and even surpassed their mother cities.

The progress of many of the ancient Greek colonies towards wealth and greatness seems accordingly to have been very rapid (Smith 273). The idea of mercantilism was well received in Greek philosophy. Hesiod observed that, "Work was a shame to none." Unlike the aristocratic ethos of subsequent centuries, the ancient Greeks did not look down upon trade or merchants who were appreciated for bringing home the good things the nations enjoyed (Plutarch 65).

Economic power made it possible for Athens to increase the size of its navy, subjugate weaker states by controlling trade, and in time of war hire mercenaries.

It cannot be said, of course, that imperialism was a totally benevolent thing. It seems to be only human nature that people who get more and more power find it easier and easier to disregard the rights of others and the Athenians were no exceptions. The policies of the imperial state are almost always self-serving, and any act or grievance brought before the state will be acted upon in the interest of the state.

The numerous atrocities committed in the Peloponnesian War are good examples of this. When the Athenians made war against the island of Melos, they sent ambassadors to negotiate. It was the intent of the Athenians to convince the Melians to rebel against Sparta and abandon their neutrality. Athens used the argument that Melos could not withstand the power of the Athenian force and should submit to them. The refusal of Melos to submit to Athens was based on their hope that Sparta would come to their aid. Unfavorable conditions resulted in the unwillingness of Sparta to aid Melos. Athens then killed all the male population and enslaved the women and children forcingMelos into submission. This was done to serve as a lesson to any other rebellious states (Thucydides 91).

Injustices like these typically are neither regretted or repudiated by military empires and have in fact been employed often. Moral accusations of behaving without virtue are usually disregarded when the immoral behavior serves the interests of state. Machiavelli has observed, "if everything is considered carefully, it will be found that something that looks like virtue, if followed will be his ruin; Whilst

something else, which looks like vice, yet followed brings him security and prosperity" (22). It is in strength not weakness that an empire survives, for weakness breeds rebellions and weakens an empire.

Nevertheless, despite the serious negative aspects a military empire has, there is much to be said for the positive results it brings. The imperial state brings security and the accumulation of wealth, but there are other advantages. Imperialism brings peace to the empire. The people, enjoying a sense of security, can turn to a vocation profitable to themselves and their society.

The artisan class typically flourishes and gives rise to a diversified and prosperous working class. The greater production of goods then adds to the increase and power of the merchant class. This in turn creates greater wealth for the state and its people. The state then can use its resources to improve the culture of the people. There is great evidence of this in Athens during the time of Pericles. Pericles more than any other democratic leader made Athens a great city. During his rule public funds were used to build great architectural structures. Examples of these are the Parthenon and the Erechtheum. Pericles initiated the development of the agora, which displayed imports from all over the world. Athens, being the imperial power, tried court cases from all over the Aegean. The culture of the city was magnificent. Great tragedies and comedies were produced in the theater of Dionysus. The city with its democratic constitution and brilliant way of life became the "school of Hellas" (Encarta 97).

Pericles praised the greatness of Athens in his funeral oration. Pericles observes, "we have provided many ways to give our minds recreation from labor, the greatness of our city has caused all things from all parts of the earth to be imported here, so that we enjoy the products of other nations as we do our own" (Thucydides 41). The nature of imperialism made Athens the power in the Aegean as it did Sparta in the Peloponnese.

As for the moral aspects of imperialism, it is often the subject of debate. Plato has observed, "Every man surely likes his own laws best, and the laws of others not so well" (665). This is certainly proven to be true in the ancient and the modern world. The ruling state always considers its policies and way of life the correct one. Actually, imperial empires often present themselves as liberators. It was these ideas that were the core of the arguments used by Athens and Sparta to justify their acts of war. It was in his speech to the Acanthians that the Spartan Brasidas claimed that the arrival of his army was to liberate the Acanthians from the tyranny of Athens. The Acanthians were than forced into an alliance with Sparta.

In his funeral oration Pericles told his Athenian audience that the might and majesty of Athens was so great that it would live forever that her conquered subjects had enriched their lives as a result (Thucydides 43). If Athens' policy of empire is judged on a moral basis there can be many things found immoral in it. If these acts are judged on a practical level, however, then the necessity of the situation justifies it.

It must always be remembered that on the highest-level war is always immoral because it involves killing fellow human beings. Moreover, many situations that always come up in war lead to immoral deeds. The destruction of Melos and its people was a result of their refusal to submit to Athens. The decision of Athens to slaughter the male population was certainly not moral. It was however, necessary to serve as a lesson to other rebellious states and may have even saved more lives than it cost by preventing even bloodier uprisings and reprisals. (Thucydides 109).

The truth is these have been the practices of empires since their earliest creation. There always have been debates over the right and wrong of empire since the strong feel in the right and the weak feel they have been wronged.

The strongest are never really strong enough to always be the master unless they transform strength into right, and obedience into duty. Since force is a physical power, the moral effects are questionable. To yield to force is act of necessity, not of choice; therefore, in what sense can it be a duty? If force creates right, then every force that is greater than the first succeeds to its right. As soon as it becomes possible to disobey with impunity, disobedience becomes legitimate. The strongest will always be “in the right”; the only thing that matters then is to take action to remain always the strongest.

In reality, the necessity of a situation often overrules any moral rules. Cicero observes, "In the midst of arms the laws are silent" (Plutarch 714). This reality can be observed in the acts committed by both Athens and Sparta. The old conventional ways of behaving were mostly disregarded. Skillful oration justified immorality. Both Sparta and Athens believed that they had the right to use offensive and defensive measures of almost any kind because they saw themselves as states forced into war and were compelled to seek the advantage.

Viewed as a state of nature, the right of nations to go to war is the legitimate way to protect their own power when they see themselves threatened by active preparation of hostile intentions. In such cases the right of preemptive strikes is claimed by both sides. This was the reason Sparta attacked Athens.

In the final analysis, perhaps, imperialism must be judged according to conditions of the time. To judge past empires by our own maxims would not be fair. Some empires brought economic gain for themselves and their dependent states. Any moral evaluation of colonialism must be sensitive to changing historical circumstances.

The effects of colonization can best be described as mixed both for the colonizers and the colonized. Clearly the empire brought many benefits such as emigration, opportunities, better trade and profits, and strategic resources. At the same time colonization was very costly, colonizers were required to provide for colonial administration and defense. There is no doubt that colonization had harmful effects on the peoples of colonized areas. Lives and cultures were disrupted, destroyed, subjugated or exterminated.

Military subjugation to gain land or to balance power was thought to be practical and just to any head of state. The strong dictated the rights to the weak and so it remained until the power was usurped. History has innumerable examples to show that it is the nature of any superior state to seek dominion over weaker ones to secure their security and possessions.

Today, fortunately, technology has made it possible to abandon military conquest because economic superiority creates a country’s might. With the development of atomic weapons the fear of their usage has forced man to fight economic not military battles. The ruthlessness of economic competition has bought the same questions to mind however. Are our economic methods moral? The stronger economic country can control the market price forcing weaker nations to submit to them. Economic imperialism often has no more morals than military imperialism of the past.

There has always been a cause or need for an empire whether in ancient times or now. It is necessary for the development of mankind. Many empires brought a higher level of technology and culture to the people they conquered.

An interesting similarity can be seen in the motives of ancient empires and modern ones. It was the claim of Sparta that they were the "liberators of Greece" and it was Athens claim to be the "protectors of democracy." In modern times is the United States who has the desire to "protect the free world" and the former Soviet Union to "liberate the peoples of Eastern Europe".

As to whether it is ultimately moral or necessary to establish an empire, as long as human groups are determined to dominate each other there is a need for protective coalition. The morality of it can only be judged when the need for it is removed.

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Just Win, Baby: Nicias, Alcibiades and the Sicilian Expedition

Joseph Spisak

The Sicilian Expedition was a catastrophe for the Athenians that all but made certain that they would lose the Peloponnesian War. It was a defeat not only for Athens, but also for the high point in civilization, intellectual originality and genius which Athens had produced. Two Athenian generals deeply involved in the decision to mount the Sicilian Expedition and to execute it were Alcibiades and Nicias. Conventionally, Alcibiades is considered in large part responsible for the disaster because he was a vainglorious rascal who unnecessarily created many enemies at home and because of his scandalously impious views and behavior. Both of these factors led to Alcibiades being dismissed from joint command of the expedition while it was en route to Sicily. Likewise, Nicias is conventionally viewed as a tragic figure because he was considered one of the most pious men of his society and advocated making peace with the Spartans.

The truth is, though, as we shall see, that the Athenians would have been wise to have left Alcibiades in charge of the Sicilian expedition, instead of Nicias. Focusing on actions taken by the two men leading up to this expedition will hopefully show both the faults and the virtues of Alcibiades and Nicias. We can then we can see how their characters in action either made the individual a desirable or undesirable leader for this campaign.

Two events in Nicias' career will be analyzed at length: his relinquishing his generalship of the Athenian army at Pylos to the Athenian demagogue Cleon and secondly the role he played in the debacle of the Sicilian expedition.

Events in Alcibiades' life that will be analyzed at length are his plan and actions to insure Athenian endorsement of the Sicilian expedition. Secondly, I will evaluate Alcibiades' character in terms of his switching allegiance from the Athenians to the Spartans, to the Persians, and back to the Athenians.

However, for us to better understand the character of Nicias and Alcibiades, some background concerning their lives leading up to the Sicilian expedition should be mentioned.

Nicias lived from 470-413 B.C. He was a rich and devoutly religious individual who came from a distinguished Athenian family that made its fortune leasing slaves to silver mining operations. Upon the death of Pericles, the general Nicias became heir to the conservatively defensive war strategy left him. Nicias was the political head of the conservative party, which was composed of the upper class. His main opponent was the pro-war radical Cleon, a demagogue, to whom Nicias resigned his generalship during the siege of Pylos. After Cleon took Pylos, both the Athenians and the Spartans wanted peace and Nicias played so integral a part in the swearing of this peace between Sparta and Athens that it was known as the Peace of Nicias.

After a period of approximately seven years, however, the Athenians grew restless, and out of avarice decided upon, contrary to the strategy Pericles had pursued prior to his death, the conquest of Sicily. The Athenians felt that by taking Sicily they would simultaneously cut off Sparta economically, surround her militarily and insure victory for themselves while enriching themselves enormously by this enlargement of their empire.

Nicias was appointed, against his will, to command this expeditionary force to Sicily. He believed the Athenians were acting impetuously, but in spite of this, he was still assigned as a co-general with Lamachus, and for a brief time, Alcibiades.

However, as Orwin points out, "Alcibiades' . . . presumed impiety made it necessary for the Athenian demos to entrust the expedition to Nicias' . . . whom they could perfectly trust because he surpassed every one of them in piety" (197). Even so, it was Alcibiades who was the driving force for this mission, and after he was ordered back to Athens, Nicias proved to be an indecisively self interested man, who was also morbidly superstitious to the point of paralyzing incompetence. It was this mixture of Nicias' character, combined with a deteriorating military situation on the Sicilian mainland, that led to the final defeat and slaughter of Athenian forces.

Afterwards, Nicias surrendered himself to Gyllppus, the Spartan general, in vain hopes of mercy. The Syracausans, whose city was the main focus of the Sicilian operation, executed him.

Alcibiades lived circa 450-404 BC and was born into a rich and powerful Athenian family, the Alcmaeonids. "[This family had a long history] of plotting to seize supreme power and were considered to be living under a hereditary curse from the days when an Alcmaeonid commander had impiously slaughtered the conspirators of Cylon" (Sacks 12). Alcibiades, in other words, came from a family that was not trusted by the Athenian people for this and many other reasons such as treasonous actions connected with the Battle of Marathon and their closeness to the ex-tyrant, Hippias. After Alcibiades' father was killed, Alcibiades was raised by his mother's kinsman, Pericles, who was the supreme Athenian statesman. Later, as a teen, Alcibiades became a follower of Socrates but did not emulate the philosopher's values at all. For example, Alcibiades flamboyantly sponsored seven chariots at the Olympic Games of 416 BC, which were the most ever entered by an individual in an Olympic contest. This act alarmed many right-wing conservative Athenians, as this was reminiscent of the gaudy displays put on by tyrants in the past (Sacks 12).

Nevertheless Alcibiades reached manhood near the start of the Peloponnesian War and became one of Athens' ten generals by the age of thirty (Sacks 12). While he was a general, however, he pursued fame and glory through extravagance. As Peter J. Fleiss writes, "Pericles would not have condoned Alcibiades' consuming ambition in fixing his sights upon the far corners of the world well beyond Sicily" (156). Also, out of self-promotion and self-interest, Alcibiades was responsible for sabotaging the Peace of Nicias. After many battles and sworn allegiances to different countries, Alcibiades settled in the European coast of Hellespont. Eventually he moved to Asia Minor where he was ultimately tracked down and murdered by the Spartans.

In brief, Alcibiades was not a virtuous man as was Nicias. But since in questions of who should lead forces in battle, the highest priority is for one who can produce victories and avoid defeats, the question still remains: should the Athenians have left Alcibiades in charge of the Sicilian expedition instead of Nicias? This can only be answered by looking at specific actions decided upon and courses taken by each individual in his own respective life.

A good example of Nicias' character is revealed to us through the relinquishing of his generalship of the Athenian army at Pylos to the Athenian demagogue, Cleon. Nicias was the general in charge of the siege of Pylos. He was a general with the record of never having been defeated, but was in the midst of a siege that was faltering. Cleon, Nicias' political enemy, in an attempt to save face after urging the Athenians to reject the latest Spartan peace offering, stated that he would have already taken this island by force if he were in charge of Nicias' army. Nicias quickly became tired of Cleon's boasts and was well aware of the public's sentiment concerning this siege. So to *preserve and increase his own self-interest*

and reputation, he decided to resign his commission in Cleon's favor (Johnson 174-175). Through a course of fortunate turns, however, Cleon succeeded in fulfilling his incredible promise by taking Pylos.

However the incident may appear at first sight, the so-called pious Nicias in this incident shows himself to be a man driven by self-interests at the expense of his beloved Athens. Although the results of Nicias' abdicating his responsibility were favorable for Athens, the motive was not intended as such. It appears that Nicias' motivation was self interest. He wanted to keep his reputation intact and deliver himself from public scrutiny by letting Cleon take responsibility for his mission. Nicias did this, knowing that Cleon was a politician without any military experience. In doing this, Nicias put Athens' fate and the lives of soliders who would be going into battle under the command of the untrained civilian Cleon; that is, in the hands of chance. In this action, he shows himself to be an egotistical individual, instead of a well- intending leader whose self-interests still serve the interests of his country. As Laurie Johnson points out, "Nicias' decision to [relinquish full] responsibility was irresponsible and selfserving" (175-176).

The next and best example for us to judge the character of Nicias comes from the debacle of the Sicilian expedition. Originally, Nicias tried to dissuade the Athenians from undertaking the Sicilian project, but his efforts failed and in fact only encouraged them to desire this course of action more. So, instead of resigning his commission again, what Nicias then did was to suggest an expedition that was much greater and more costly than that which Alcibiades suggested. It seems Nicias did this for two reasons.

To understand this, we must recall Nicias' trouble with Pylos and how he resigned his position to Cleon. After he had done that, Cleon had astonishing success which stopped Nicias' political ascendancy because it showed Nicias to be a somewhat ineffective leader (Johnson 176). Keeping this in mind, we can see Nicias' motive. Do we think he would resign his commission here, so as to allow Alcibiades a chance similar to Cleon, to prove either his ineffectiveness or indecisive ineptitude? No, it would be illogical for him to do so. He would not make the same mistake again.

This leads to Nicias' real motivation: self-preservation. By getting the Athenian populace to greatly enlarge the expeditionary force (only to later attempt relinquishing his command), Nicias bettered his chances for political and bodily survival. During the debate about whether to approve the Sicilian expedition, Nicias says, to Cleon, "If anyone is of a contrary opinion I offer to resign my command to him" (Thucydides 122). Here, he seemed to be afraid of such a large undertaking. When suggesting such a large force, he said: "...it would be a disgrace to be forced to withdraw, or to send afterwards for help ... so we should leave here with sufficient forces... " (Thucydides 12 1). It appears odd that a general in his position would even expose a thought of this nature. He states, "That is what I am afraid of, and I know that this business requires a great deal of planning and even more good luck - a difficult matter, since we are only human" (Thucydides 122).

In fact, during the Sicilian Expedition itself, his fear and piety were exemplified when he kept his men from carrying out a vital retreat because of his superstitious fears due to a lunar eclipse. Nicias desired a way out, just as he had at the formation of this expedition. Also, when Nicias offered to resign his command, it appears that he was making a habit of this willingness to act in such a way. He did it at Pylos, and he offered to do so here, and would do the same again when he asked to be relieved in the middle of this war. This seems to be inappropriate behavior of an Athenian leader.

Also, it is here where I feel Nicias starts to show more apprehension for the mission as well as a compulsion for divination. This especially happens when he and his army finally decide to retreat, and then a full moon goes into eclipse. The army defers to Nicias' "piety" and stays. As Thucydides

stated, “Nicias who put too much faith in divination and such practices - said he would not even consider moving now until they had waited the twenty-seven days . . . "(Thucydides 137). Faith in superstition caused this great disaster to the Athenian empire.

This shows that if Nicias had been rational and commanded his army to retreat in spite of his religious beliefs, they still would have lost this war, but would have returned home and supplied Athens with naval superiority against her then current enemies. It is not just this faith in things divine which I feel caused Nicias to delay. Again, he was a man who took his own interests into account, albeit, in a practical way. An example of this practical manner of thinking had come from his seeing what would happen to him had he returned to Athens a defeated general. Nicias wanted no part of returning to Athens, where he would unjustly be judged by those who were not in Sicily and did not experience the things that he did. This, one could argue, is understandable. But Nicias, in thinking practically about his own desires not to return and be judged, condemned the Athenian empire to suffer a Melian fate (Orwin 122), and so proved himself an undesirable leader for this expedition.

One might perhaps object that Nicias wasn't just thinking of himself, but in his conservatively moderate way, he was truly trying to save the Athenians from a loss to the Spartans as well as to preserve the main advantage they brought to the Peoloponneisan conflict, naval superiority. After all, in both of his speeches, Nicias tells how Athens' security would be violated and tries to show them that it would take much more effort than what they might be prepared for. As critic Finley writes, "One reason for [Nicias'] views, so far at least as Athens is concerned, is several times expressed [in his speeches]: it was of course ... [Athenian avariciousness] “which led to this downfall "(130). Also, Nicias does show great concern for his city of Athens, as he wants it to rebuild itself in troops, money, and power, before going out and attempting to assimilate Sicily into her empire.

However, I must point out that Finley states that Nicias was, simply a rich, respected, conscientious man who was primarily interested in keeping his good reputation" (216). Nicias’ resignation of his command at Pylos disregarded Athenian interests to serve his own need of an unscathed reputation. Also, if Nicias felt strongly enough as a leader who intensely cared for his city, even when his own interests did not mesh with hers, he should have opposed the expedition at all costs. Instead, he realized that he could not dissuade the populous and tried to stop them in other previously mentioned ways, eventually giving in and going along with the plan.

The point is that, if Nicias believed this to be the wrong thing to do, then why go along with it? He went along so as not to seem like an Athenian who lacked love for Athens. And in doing so, he promoted his self-interest by keeping his reputation as a good general who was a lover of Athens intact. It was in this halfhearted support of the expedition and his indecisiveness in battle that Nicias did a mortal disservice to Athens.

Let us now examine Alcibiades, a man unlike the ineffectual Nicias who ultimately seemed to tailor his actions to the public consensus. Alcibiades was able to create the consensus himself. Later, as an exile in Sparta, Alcibiades told the Spartans defiantly that he is a true lover of Athens because he does not go along with what is wrong in his city, but " . . . will attempt to recover it by any means" (Thucydides 128).

Also, in contrast to Nicias' conservative attitude and character, Alcibiades was the flamboyant, persuasive, and manipulative Athenian general, albeit one also concerned with his own needs, who could manipulate the emotions of his fellow statesmen by appealing to their love for glory. In a speech given in

front of the general assembly, for example, he assures them that they will be ready for battle and thus will secure their place in history, meanwhile securing his own glory. In this speech he says “if we do not rule others we run the risk of being ruled by them ourselves" (Thucydides 119). It was this speech at the general assembly that eventually convinced the statesmen to break the Peace of Nicias by accepting Argos as an ally.

Alcibiades' success in breaking the Peace of Nicias came at a time when Athens was getting militarily restless. It had been seven years since they had engaged in all-out war. So, when the Spartans came to speak before the assembly of Athens to discuss their alliance with Boeotia, Alcibiades went behind Athens' back and struck a secret deal with the Spartans that had the subsequent effect of making the Spartans look untrustworthy to the Athenians (Johnson 176). When the Athenian assembly discovered the deceit of Sparta, they rejected them and pursued an alliance with Argos.

A short while later, Nicias advised the assembly to seek friendship with the Spartans. The assembly agreed to this advice and sent an envoy to Sparta in an effort to get Sparta to drop its alliance with Boeotia, with the warning that if they did not rescind this alliance, the Athenians would make Argos her ally. The Spartans refused, much to the surprise of the Athenians, who were expecting a peace to come of all this which would leave them in a favorable position compared to Sparta. When the envoy returned, therefore, Alcibiades fought in the Argives, with their allies, to make an alliance with Athens. Thus, Alcibiades was known as the author of the new alliance (Johnson 177).

This example shows Alcibiades' quest for leadership and hunger for glory. It demonstrates his knowledge of strategy, and skill of negotiation: all things associated with being a good leader. By plotting against the Peace of Nicias, yet pretending to be on the Spartans' side, Alcibiades shows insight into human nature by tempting the Spartans' greed. In doing this, he strategically places them in a position in which they cannot win, thereby himself becoming the victor and gaining the chance for glory he so desperately seeks.

In the Sicilian expedition, Alcibiades was assigned a split leadership alongside Nicias and Lamachus. Alcibiades wanted sole leadership, but as previously stated, the Athenian people did not trust him. Upon arrival at Sicily, Athenian envoys caught up and beckoned Alcibiades back to Athens for criminal prosecution. Knowing that his demagogue enemies were behind this, and that he would receive an unfair trial, and probably be put to death on false accusations, Alcibiades accompanied the envoys by ship, but eventually escaped. He wound up defecting to Sparta where he betrayed Athenian war plans to the Spartans.

It was due to Alcibiades’ counsel, that the Spartans sent the general Gyllppus to Sicily. This tactic was a major factor in the Athenian loss as well as Alcibiades' direction that the Spartans occupy Decelea as a permanent base near Athens. A few years after he defected to Sparta, the Spartans sent Alcibiades to the eastern Aegean to stop Sparta's allies from revolting, and to help bring Persia into the war on their side. While he was there, he was condemned to death for having seduced King Agis's wife. While a great general, Alcibiades was capable of amazing blunders in other areas.

With both Athens and Sparta against him, he fled to Persia and became a close acquaintance with the Persian satrap Tissaphernes. A year later, he became the general of Athenian Samos, and a few months after that, he was reinstated as a citizen and general of Athens. In this generalship, he guarded Athenian food supplies in the Hellespont seaway, where he was quite successful until he was voted out of his office due to a major loss in battle by one of his subordinates.

Alcibiades switched allegiances to different countries but as can be plainly seen, it was not done for money or on a whim, but out of self-preservation. While it may seem odd that a general, in search of glory, keeps switching allegiances, he is in fact acting skillfully by making strategic decisions, although it is true that he planned in all these things to prosper personally. As critic David Grene points out [it is sometimes necessary to have] the extraordinary tricks, tergiversations, and popular coups . . . of an Alcibiades, that brilliant personage who played the [democratic game] when he had to" (39).

Admittedly, Alcibiades' motives were self-serving, but they had to be, for it was this self-interest that often led him to triumph as well as trouble. Yet, to be a successful general, who obtains glory, Alcibiades needed to "play the game" as he showed he could easily do. Although Alcibiades' skill did hurt Athens, if the Athenian assembly had ignored the plots and accusations against him by his domestic enemies and kept him in charge of the Sicilian Expedition, his skill would have been used and directed properly and likely would have proven extremely beneficial to Athens. For wasn't it Alcibiades' motive to bring Athens and himself glory?

So if we were to compare Alcibiades in this sense to Nicias, then we would have to claim that Nicias' conservatively indecisive attitude, as well as his religious divinations, proved him an inadequate leader for this task. He didn't have the drive to succeed like Alcibiades, and only negated the possibility of victory for Athens. As previously discussed, Alcibiades' strategy of going behind Athens' back to discuss a "deal" with Sparta demonstrated his desire for glory and a chance to prove his mettle in battle. And due to his wily planning along with careful negotiations, he was responsible for singlehandedly demolishing the Peace of Nicias, which resulted in the restart of the war. He states this in his speech to the general assembly: "we brought together the greatest powers of the Peloponnesus and made the Lacedaemonians stake everything they had on one day's battle ... and though they won the battle, they have not yet recovered their confidence" (Thucydides 118). Alcibiades shows himself to be an intelligent and greatly talented speaker with skills that are desirable in a leader and which would have proven extremely useful in the Sicilian expedition.

However, an objection may be made that Alcibiades was too self serving and disloyal to have really served Athens well for any length of time. As in every war, there would be rough times, and as he had shown, he had the propensity to "jump ship" when the going got tough. This is a solid point, for it is based on concrete evidence. Alcibiades did have the urge to move from loyalty to loyalty when it suited him.

But it also should be pointed out that he wanted to bring great glory both to himself and Athens. He wanted this until the Athenians called him back to Athens to stand trial. Up until then, he had shown no signs of ever leaving Athens. Very arguably, then, Alcibiades would have remained an Athenian, and would have used his intelligence and perhaps his oratorical skills to manipulate Athenian enemies to gain victory and glory for Athens and himself.

Lastly, one might object that Nicias was the better general because after all he followed Pericles' advice to conduct a strictly defensive war. As Pericles said to the Athenians, "Many other things give me hope that we shall win through, unless you intend to enlarge your empire while still engaged in the war, or choose to take new risks. I am more afraid of our own mistakes, you see, than I am of our opponents' schemes" (Thucydides 35). Had the Athenian assembly followed Pericles' and Nicais' advice, the Sicilian Expedition, which Alcibiades argued successfully for, which resulted in a total catastrophe however, would have happened.

However, Pericles gave evidence that he would have been in favor of Alcibiades' plan and his course of action. For Pericles also said, "Of the sea, you rule as much as you use now, and more if you want" and "...remember that it is more shameful to lose what you have than to fail in an attempt to get more" (Thucydides 54). Hence it seems clear that Pericles would have supported Alcibiades' drive to push the empire to grow and he would have supported Alcibiades even though he himself proposed a defensive policy at the outset of the war. But to this point, we must consider that times and consequences had changed from when Pericles suggested his plan for Athens and when Alcibiades gave his diatribe.

In conclusion, we might ask who then was the more Periclean leader? Nicias, in his cautious, conservative actions or Alcibiades in his similar "Periclean" outlook towards expansionistic policy? It appears to be Alcibiades. And as Pericles was the best leader Athens ever had, so too Alcibiades would have been, at least in the Sicilian campaign. For "where Alcibiades... failed, Nicias succeeded: his cautious and dilatory conduct of the Sicilian campaign kept him from losing his command, [but more importantly] it led in the end to total defeat" (Woodruff xxix).

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The Failure of Utopia in Aristophanes' Assembly of Women

Catherine Rodriguez

Women took over Athens in Aristophanes' *Assembly of Women* to set up a society that would make everyone happy and solve all social problems. The result was a disaster. The reason why is relevant today because it tells us important things about human nature and the limits of the government and any set of laws produce a perfect society.

The society created in the play is communal. Its principles include the sharing of all land, worldly goods, wealth, and sexual access to all men and women. A major problem with the plan, however, as Aristophanes shows, is that humans have a wide variety of needs while the utopia of this play only addresses the physical needs of the people. As a result the society fails.

Aristophanes, in *Assembly of Women*, makes three criticisms of the utopia. First, he says the concept of communism is flawed because it does not consider the individuality of people. People are individuals, each with his or her own ideas, lifestyle, and taste. To share equally in everything destroys this individuality. People require incentives and goals to work towards. When everything is shared equally, there is no desire to work because you will get your share whether you participate or not. Secondly, the concept that everyone will share everything is based on some people giving up everything while others receive everything. Humans are generous to a point, but when the generosity is totally one-way, problems develop. A person would never give up all his life's work for society without getting something better in return. Thirdly, the concept that people can be sexually shared by legal requirement is flawed because people are not property. The sexual sharing of men and women is intrinsically immoral. In real life the overwhelming majority of people want, sexual relations that are intimate, private, mutually agreeable acts shared by two people with some feeling for each other. Sexual relations are not typically random acts taken with little or no concern for anyone involved. Forced sex is rape; this should never be present in a utopian society. The proposed communal sharing of children, in *Assembly of Women* is also flawed because children are the products of two individuals' love for each other. To have children raised by society instead of parents is to destroy the family unit. With no one personally responsible for raising the children many problems develop.

To fully understand this play, however, some background is needed. Aristophanes is well known for comedies that use preposterous ideas to reflect his views on how the government is being mismanaged.

This play reflects the problems in the Athens of Aristophanes. The desire to create a utopia is prevalent because of the problems the Athenian people faced since the Peloponnesian War ended. The changes that occurred in Athens during this time period were great: the Peloponnesian War lost, the city under terror, democracy in serious trouble, and the wealth of the city gone. To watch the city you love

being destroyed is heartbreaking. These crises contribute to the subject and style of writing we find in *Assembly of Women.*

At the time the play is produced, the Athenian people have taken control of their city again, but there are many problems. The apathy and poverty of the people is evident when "Agyrrhios [institutes] payment for attendance at Athens' popular assembly, the ecclesia" (Parker 1). The payment of a living wage to participate in what should be a civic obligation marks what Aristophanes considers the end of democracy. As Spatz writes, "Agyrrhios [is] clearly [purchasing] the votes of the citizens who depend on [the] fee for their livelihood . . . The salary [increases] the gulf between the rich, who can remain unbought and the compromised poor" (136). The desire to change from a democracy to a communist approach is evident when Parker writes, "Why not loot some current utopian thinking and produce, full blown, a totalitarian communistic welfare state?" (1).

Assembly of Women is criticized by many as being written by "an ebullient spirit grown weary" (Hadas 108). However, as Moses Hadas adds, the play really reflects the changes that have occurred in Athens (108). Indeed, *Assembly of Women* is cited as being written between 393-391 B. C. and is classified as a middle comedy work. David Barrett writes, "it is clear that in an impoverished city the lavishly costumed and expensively trained choruses of earlier days [have] ceased to be a practical proposition" (219).

In *Assembly of Women* the power is taken away from the current government officials and is given to the people least likely to have any power, the women. The play includes many of the same ideas as in previous works by Aristophanes. Spatz recognizes that "comedies pit the rich against the poor [and] the powerful against the oppressed. In the comic world the underdog realizes his wildest fantasies, often by establishing a utopian society where he can satisfy his desires with impunity" (17). "[T]he gentle tone, with the resulting universality of character . . . makes one feel [that *Assembly of Women*] could take place almost anywhere, not just in fifth century Athens" (140).

This technique of using everyday problems is why Aristophanes is still popular in the twentieth century. But technique is not the only reason why Aristophanes speaks to us today, especially in *Assembly of Women*. For although it will probably come as a surprise to most people the concept of a communist society did not originate with Karl Marx, but with the Classical Greece of Aristophanes. Communism was present in Aristophanes lifetime (Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia 213). The ideals of a communistic society are outlined in Plato's *Republic*. This play, however, appears at least five years after *Assembly of Women* is written; however most critics believe the ideas from the book were discussed for years before its actual printing (Barrett 217-218). The change is great from a democratic society where everyone has some say in what happens to a communistic society where everything is shared equally but decisions are made by a select few. Athens is having great difficulty getting the citizens to agree on what is best for the government. Each individual is only

concerned with what is best for him. The play's female protagonist Praxagora discusses the problems of the current government:

> The concerns of this land are the same for me as they are for you and I grieve and endure the gravity of all the affairs of the city. For I see the city forever using statesmen who are worthless. And if someone is worthy for a single day, he is worthless for ten. . . . You fear those who want to love you, and always supplicate those who do not. . . . You were annoyed with the Corinthians, and they with you; now they are useful, you make yourselves useful too. . . . You, people, are cause of this. For receiving your wages from the public fund, each of you individually seeks to gain something (56-58).

To change this way of thinking is the goal of the utopian society described in *Assembly of Women*; however as we will see, the proposed new society fails.

The utopian society fails because communism is a fatally erroneous concept. For one, it does not consider the individuality of people. For example, Praxagora's idea for the new society is to "make one way of life common to all" (Aristophanes 80). This idea is flawed because what one person may considers heaven, a second person may consider hell. When there is only one way of life, people become bored and unhappy. This concept eliminates the individuality of the person. To have everyone share the same life is to make everyone think the same, work the same, play the same, and even eat the same.

As Suzanne Said writes, Praxagora's communism is "a community regime that would be a remedy for the individualism which threatens the civil spirit and the very existence of the city" (301). This may be the aim of the communist approach, but a society where individualism is ignored fails. A society must take advantage of the strengths and weaknesses of the people in order to succeed. Working together, one person complementing another, is what makes a great society. In this new society all the farming of the land will be done by slaves. The women will run the government as well as continue with their previous obligations of taking care of the household. This policy ignores the men, giving them no responsibilities and nothing to do but enjoy life (Strauss 271). Spatz also recognizes this commenting "Praxagora persuades her listeners by appealing not to the needs of their souls, but to the needs of their bodies for idleness, luxury, and sex, sex, sex" (132). Although this may sound like heaven to the men at first, eventually they will grow tired of doing nothing. The new society addresses the physical needs of men, but the psychological needs are forgotten.

The ability to think, dream, and set goals is what makes a person want to improve his life. People need incentives and goals to work towards. Taking this away leaves the person stagnant. A society that is based on communist utopia considers itself to have reached the end of history and so never changes or progresses. Ancient Greece is the basis for current western civilizations. Philosophy developed and flourished in this country. By showing only physical needs addressed Aristophanes is attempting to tell the Athenian people how silly communism really is. For while thinking may not be particularly important

in Praxagora's governmental scheme, as Mayhew notes Aristophanes wants "his audience (or parts of it, anyway) to think" (16).

Many might argue of course that a communistic approach to government is good. Having everything in common, they contend, means there are no rich or poor, no jealousy, and no hunger. This may be true in a small setting where the citizens have common beliefs and common goals, but on a large scale it fails. Everywhere in the twentieth century where communism has come to power, it has failed—China, the Soviet Union, North Korea, Cuba and the Eastern European countries where the Soviet Union imposed communist governments. The lack of incentives and goals for the people were part of the reason for the failure of communism. When you get the same share whether you work hard or not, the desire to do a good job is gone. The lack of freedom to speak out against the government added to the problems. The Soviets did tap the strengths of the greatest minds and talents in the country; but they ignored the average citizens never developing their talents to the highest potential. These issues all played a role in the downfall of communism. The concept of communism clearly fails when the needs of the individual are ignored.

Secondly, the concept that everyone will share everything is based on some people giving up everything while others receive everything. For example, Praxagora's proposal for the new society states:

That it is necessary for everyone to share and have everything in common and to live the same, and not for one to be rich while another is miserable, nor one to farm much land while to another there isn't enough to bury himself, nor to possess many slaves while another doesn't even possess an attendant. . . [making] the land common to all and the silver and anything else that is held individually. Then, from these common things [the women] will maintain you, dispensing and saving and attending you (80-81).

This indicates that everyone will have an equal share of everything. The women are basing their idea of sharing on the family structure they are familiar with (Spatz 134). The sharing of all the property and wealth of the individual with the family works because the family is considered one. There is a bond of loyalty, love, and respect that exists between the members of the family. However, even in a family the sharing is not totally equal; some get more, some less. The bond that exists between a city and its people is based on loyalty and love for the city and its ideals and not for every individual member of it. A person will go to war to defend the ideals of his city, but he will not help every individual who lives there who has problems.

It is also important to remember that loyalty and love of the city do not stop an individual from disagreeing with the way the government is run. The utopia of Praxagora assumes that all legislation will

be infallible. Even more serious a flaw, however, is that the utopia also assumes everyone will obey the laws and those who do not can be easily controlled.

This problem is apparent in the scene between Chremes and the man. When Chremes hears about the new society he immediately prepares to turn all his goods over to the government. As Spatz writes, Chremes "will obey authority automatically, without reflection. The success of the new system depends on men with such strong loyalty and trust" (138). Now before we condemn Chremes as a fool, we must consider that Chremes "believes that it is a citizen's duty to carry out the policies on which the assembly [decides]" (Webster 12). This loyalty is a must for any government to survive. The people must support the laws. The character in the play referred to as The Man, however, is not as loyal. He is suspicious of the government. His experiences with previous laws makes him move cautiously. He states, "I know these men vote quickly, but what they resolve to do they disavow in turn" (Aristophanes 96). The man's reaction is the more realistic reaction to this new law. How many people will blindly turn over what they have worked to get? There must be some guarantee that the new society will improve the lifestyles of the people before they turn over their goods. There also needs to be some control over who gets what. Are all the people worthy of getting the common share?

Aristophanes indicates no when he writes that the women will "provide everything, ungrudgingly, to everyone" (89). To provide *ungrudgingly* indicates that Aristophanes believes that some people do not deserve the common share of things. The community meal, the first benefit of the new society, is announced while Chremes and The Man are speaking. The Man departs "hinting that he [knows] a way of circumventing the rules. He is determined to enjoy the public banquet without surrendering his property" (Barrett 218). This scene also "dramatizes the selfish and assertive side of human nature . . . [the man] abuses his opponents, rejects restraints, holds on to what is his, and like most of us tries to get something for nothing" (Spatz 138). Chremes is giving up all his possessions, while the man is retaining all of his; yet both are enjoying the common dinner.

Aristophanes does not suggest how this problem will be handled in the new society. This deception, at the beginning of the new society without any plan of how to handle it, suggests that the society will fail. One may argue that helping the poor is a worthy cause and that taking from the rich to give to the poor is necessary to maintain a society. Our current welfare system is an example of this theory. The system is meant to help the poor till they are able to help themselves. The system is paid for by tax dollars. However, there is fraud within the welfare system and it causes resentment of the system among the employed class.

Indeed, an even greater vindication of Aristophanes' rejection of Communism in *Assembly of Women* is the recent national legislation to place limits on welfare benefits. The system was originally planned to be a temporary supplement for people; however, it has become a way of life for many. The government never developed a plan to get people off welfare. This lack of insight is the cause of the problems we are experiencing today. The same is true for the new society in *Assembly of Women*. The point here is that the concept of sharing everything among everyone brings out the selfishness of humans. The desire to get something for nothing will cause the society to fail.

Thirdly, the concept that people can be shared in sexual situations is flawed because people are not property. The sexual sharing of men and women is morally wrong. In Ancient Greece the women held the position of handmaiden to the men. This new proposal will make both men and women property. They will be obligated to obey the law regarding sex without consideration for the emotional aspect of the sexual experience. The idea of common sharing of men and women will bring some freedom to the women. They will now be able to have sex with men other than their husbands. However, the young women will be forced to have sex with the old and ugly men before they are allowed to have sex with the young and beautiful. This system rewards only the old and ugly.

The reward for the older women is obvious in the scene between the three hags and the young man. The three hags are free to seduce and be sexually pleased by the young man. However, the young man is the loser, for the "seduction . . . ends in a gang rape" (Spatz 139). Aristophanes utilizes a male as the victim of rape as part of the comedy in the play. It reflects one of the serious problems with the sexual sharing of people. To portray this scene in reverse, three old men attacking a young girl, would drastically change the comic tone of the play; instead of comedy we would have a tragedy. But the point still stands; no one should be forced to have sex with anyone. Once you mandate sex, you eliminate the emotional as well as some of the physical joys of sex. According to Said the proposal "turns a source of pleasure into a source of misery" (313). There is no justification for this proposal. A utopia must never regulate the feeling of the people. Sex must remain an intimate, private, mutually agreeable act shared by two people with some feeling for each other. To do otherwise reduces the people to property. In this play, the young and beautiful become the property of the old and ugly.

The proposal for sharing of people includes the children of Athens. All people will live in a common household. The family unit is dissolved. There will be no fathers or mothers; all the children will consider all the older people their parents. One of the problems with this is stated by Strauss, "since in the new order children and parents . . . are compelled by law to cohabit . . . incest between parents and children becomes undetectable and lawful" (271). This is morally wrong and would never exist in a utopia. The proposal of having children raised by the society does not consider the differences among children. All children are not pretty or well behaved. Who will be responsible for the undesirable children? What about the sickly or physically deformed? A child should be the product of the love between two people not the result of forced sex between the old and young. The new society eliminates the love between a man and a woman. There is no consideration of people's feelings. The only important thing is that everything be equal. The love that a parent has for his or her child is also eliminated. Part of that love is the responsibility to discipline the child as needed so that the child grows, develops, and remains safe. Without discipline, a child will attempt things that will cause harm. The child will never learn proper behavior. However, discipline without love is cruelty. Cruelty would never exist in a utopia. Children are the future of all societies. To leave the upbringing and care of the children up in the air, with no one taking responsibility for them is to assure that the Society will fail.

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It’s All About Respect: Social Codes in *Beowulf*

Neil A. Lumbowski

In reading *Beowulf,* one cannot help noticing the abundance of references to weapons and armor throughout the text. Many passages involving weapons and armor contain important messages that the author is trying to convey. These passages involve the choice to use or refrain from using arms, the practice of disarming oneself upon entering another's home, and the idea of a man's worth being measured by his weapons.

First, the theme of choosing to use, or not to use, weapons against an adversary seems to be a major issue in the work. On three different occasions, when Beowulf fights Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon, the choice of whether or not to use weapons against a foe is brought to the reader's attention. In the events leading up to the fight with Grendel, Beowulf says:

> The monster in his recklessness cares not for weapons. Therefore, so that my liege lord Hygelac may be glad of me in his heart, I scorn to bear sword but with my grasp I shall grapple with the enemy ... foe against foe. I claim myself no poorer in war-strength ... than Grendel claims himself. Therefore I will not put him to sleep with a sword . . . though surely I might. (32, 35)

Beowulf knows he is evenly matched with Grendel, and that using a sword would make it an unfair contest because he would surely defeat Grendel. By making the fight fair, Beowulf maintains his honor, which is the main idea of each of the other confrontations as well.

In Beowulf's fight with Grendel's mother, he engages her with Hrunting, Unferth's sword, since she attacks him with a knife. When Beowulf decides to fight the dragon, he comments: "I would not bear sword ... if I knew how else . . . I might grapple with the monster, as I did of old with Grendel. But I expect here hot battle-fire, steam, and poison. Therefore, I have on me shield and mail shirt" (59). A modern way of communicating the same idea would be, "Don't bring a knife to a gun fight"; again, the basic idea is that no one would speak ill of Beowulf because he kept the fight honorable.

Another important way that weapons are connected to a display of honor in *Beowulf* is the idea of disarming oneself upon entering another's home. Near the beginning of the poem in "The Coming of Beowulf to Heorot," a guard tells Beowulf's troops, "You may come in your wardress . . . to see Hrothgar. Let your war shields, your wooden-spears, await here the outcome of the talk. " (32). It is a sign of respect to disarm oneself in another person's home, in this case, Heorot, Hrothgar's mead hall. To take advantage of this moral code makes the violator that much more evil as we see when, because there are no weapons present, Grendel is able to kill and eat one of Beowulf's thanes in a surprise attack.

Finally, the idea of a man's having to be worthy of his weapons appears numerous times throughout *Beowulf.* This is perhaps the most intricate of the ideas because interwoven in this idea are the related ideas of weapons as heirlooms, weapons as indications of a man's stature, and the surrendering of one's weapon to another for use in battle. When the poem’s author observes, "The armed band was worthy of its weapons," he clearly illustrates the first idea (31). When he writes "From their war-gear they seem worthy of earls' esteem," he conveys the idea of weapons as a measure of stature (32). The concept of a man's receiving an heirloom weapon only when he has earned it is made clear after Beowulf

defeats Grendel's mother: "The protector of earls bade fetch in the heirloom . . . There was not then among the Geats a better treasure in sword's kind" (55).

Probably the most complicated of these ideas is the surrendering of one's weapon to another for use in battle. Although it is a noble thing to know and admit when another is more worthy of a weapon than oneself, there is a certain loss of pride involved in actually giving one's weapon to another for battle. This is best illustrated when Unferth lends his sword, Hrunting, to Beowulf for his battle with Grendel's mother. We are told "He lent that weapon to a better sword fighter. He did not himself dare to risk his life ... to engage his courage: there he lost his glory, his name for valor" (46).

The idea of having to be worthy of one's weapons is best represented by the passage in which Wiglaf, thane of Beowulf, makes the bold statement: "It does not seem right to me for us to bear our shields home again unless we can first fell the foe, defend the life of the prince of the Weather-Geats" (61).

All three of the ideas involving arms are recurring images throughout *Beowulf*: the choice to use or refrain from using arms, disarming oneself upon entering another's home, and the worth of a man being measured by his weapons,. They all deal with various layers of respect, obviously a very important issue to the person of the early Middle Ages and afford the reader an opportunity to understand an aspect of the medieval mind.

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The Great Chain of Being in Pope's Essay on Man

Diane Tirado

There are three main issues that Pope talks about in his long poem "Essay on Man." First, the poet evokes a timeless vision of humanity in which the universe is connected to a great chain that extends from God to the tiniest form of life. Secondly, Pope discusses God's plan in which evil must exist for the sake of the greater good, a paradox not fully understandable by human reason. Thirdly, the poem accuses human beings of being proud and impious. Pope feels that man claims more insight into the nature of existence then he possesses.

In "An Essay on Man" Pope is trying to make clear the relationship of humanity to the universe, himself, society and also to happiness. He states "For me health gushes from a thousand springs; seas roll to waft me suns to light- me rise; My footstool earth my canopy the skies" (330). Pope implies that the universe is created for man's pleasures and needs and so therefore we are all connected to the chain of universal order. Through this connection man realizes that all are part of one stupendous whole. He then suggests that this order extends further then we know; any interference with it could destroy the whole. Pope asks in the poem, "Is the greater chain, that draws all to agree, upheld by God or thee?" (327).

Here he explains that by conforming to the order of the universe we can all agree on and connect to one goal. Through this connection, we would then reach the purest form of humanity. The belief in this poem is that although things do not turn out well for some individuals, everything falls into place in the great chain of the universe. In the long run everything works out for the best, Pope argues. Because humanity is ignorant of the events of the future, the hope of eternal life gives man the possibility of happiness.

Pope also touches on evil and how God allows evil to exist whether or not humanity can understand it. Man knows that he possesses free will. In order for him to make the right choices, man must know that there is a choice to make between good and evil, and that he has to accept responsibility for his choices. Pope discuses the presence of evil throughout the universal chain: "If the great end be human happiness then nature deviates; and can man do less?" (330). This implies that there is beauty in nature, but there is also evil when nature destroys towns, homes and human life. If nature can be evil, how can man be expected never to be evil? Man has the power of good to help feed the hungry, care for the sick, and comfort the dying. Yet, man chooses to exercise his evil side: destroying, killing and bringing down those that are weaker.

In addition to discussing evil, Pope also suggests that human beings are full of pride and impiety. "All this dread order break-for whom? For thee? Vile worm!" laments Pope, "Oh madness! Pride! impiety!" (332). He is saying that man sees himself as the center of the universe around which all things revolve. Humanity cares about nothing but itself. Pope draws us into the poem by reminding us that we too have tendencies to make assumptions and that we all have our own desire to see the universe revolving around us. Pope discusses humanity's downfall, writing: "In pride in reasoning pride, our error lies" (329). Here, Pope puts forth the ideas that our pride is our own destruction.

In order to combat this pride, Pope suggests that the true course that man should take is absolute submission to Providence. However is total submission the true answer to happiness? If that were the case why give man the ability to reason? Why have individuality when each man must submit, each man transcending his individual qualities in order to make the connection? Man, Pope says, should use pride

positively in realizing he can make a difference or a contribution to the universal order and not to draw attention to himself.

Although I disagree with Pope's view about pride, I agree with his idea of the universal chain. A wonderful line in this poem is "Know thy own point" (Pope 333). This means that man needs to know exactly what his role on earth is. Man needs to find his place in the chain and work to make it stronger rather than weaker. He cannot live his life pretending that the whole universe is something foreign to him, and that he has no effect on the rest of the world. Life is like a chess game in which every move affects the other.

Pope ends the poem with these words: "Whatever is, is right" (333). This implies that things are done or happen for a reason. When humanity tries to change things for individual gain rather than the improvement of the whole it weakens the chain, which in turn affect the rest of the universe. I believe we are all individuals who are connected to a higher power, whatever that power may be. The beauty of humanity is exactly that individuality. I agree with Pope in the sense that we are all connected somehow, but I do not agree with total submission in order to achieve total unity. Rather than total submission, I believe our mission is to connect with the universe by using the special gifts given to us by the power that unites us.

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ueling Aesthetics: The Poetics of Wordsworth and Coleridge

Jack Wilson

The early collaboration of the poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge marked the beginning of the Romantic period of poetry. Together, these two poets laid the groundwork for this new style in the Preface to their work*Lyrical Ballads*. Later, though, Coleridge expressed his disagreement with some of the ideals Wordsworth had professed in their early work. In this paper, I will explore the discrepancies in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's ideas on poetry.

Lyrical Ballads marked a departure from mainstream poetry when it first appeared in 1798. Although both Coleridge and Wordsworth had contributed poems to the work and had conceived of the foundations of their new style together, it was Wordsworth alone who wrote the formal testament to these ideas, the Preface to the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. This work outlined several distinctions between this new Romantic style of poetry and its forerunners. Among these differences were an emphasis on portraying common life, a preference for the use of common language, and a distinct effort to reproduce emotional states and influence the feelings of the reader. Wordsworth explained that scenes from common life were well suited to be poetic subjects for several reasons. First, he believed that common or rustic scenes would be understandable to all readers. Second, he thought that since rustic life had a closeness with nature, images from rustic life would be well suited for illustrating nature's fundamental substance. As Wordsworth explained in the Preface, "Low and rustic life was generally chosen . . . because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated" (1343).

Along with his use of common scenes in poetry, Wordsworth preferred to use common language in his verses. The language of common or rural people, Wordsworth believed, was by necessity well suited to portraying nature in poetry. Since common people had regular first-hand interaction with nature, and since nature played such an important role in their lives, their language appealed to Wordsworth as being constructed to convey the emotions associated with nature. As stated in the Preface, "The language, too, of these men is adopted ... because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived" (1343).

The final innovation Wordsworth introduced in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* was the concept that the goal of poetry was to influence the emotions of the reader. This idea was related to the Romantic notion that feeling was as much an integral part of consciousness as reason, and that feeling, rather than reason, was the dominant language of the soul. Thus, by distilling an emotion into verse and creating an impression of that feeling in the reader, a poet was communicating with the reader's soul rather than just his or her rational mind. This important revelation was the basis for all of the three other conventions adapted by the Romantic poets. Since this emotional communication was the goal of their poetry, the Romantics used unconventional devices to further this pursuit.

Although it is incontrovertible that Wordsworth's ideas were important in laying the foundations of the Romantic style, not all of his ideas went uncontested by the other Romantic poets. Coleridge, who had been Wordsworth's friend and collaborator, later summarized his personal differences with Wordsworth in his Biographia Literaria. Coleridge's main dispute with Wordsworth was about what constituted proper poetic language. While Coleridge agreed with Wordsworth on the purpose of poetry and the idea that

nature and scenes of common life close to nature were fitting subjects of poetry, Coleridge did not agree with certain sentiments Wordsworth held about common language.

Firstly, Coleridge asserted that common language was not the best language for poetry, and that the best parts of language resulted from educated reflection rather than a familiarity with simple and natural things. Coleridge confirms this in Biographia Literaria, stating: "The best part of human language, properly so called, is derived from reflection on the acts of the mind itself' (1548). Next, Coleridge argued that there is no true common language, but that language varies from person to person, even within classes. The universal concepts of language, however, were common to all classes and not exclusive to the lower and rural classes. As Coleridge explains: "Every man's language has, first, its individualities; secondly the common properties of the class to which he belongs; and thirdly, words and phrases of universal use" (1548).

Finally, Coleridge pointed out that good poetry could not be wholly written in natural, everyday language. Since the goal of poetry was to strongly affect the emotions of the reader, a poet had to use words more artfully than an everyday person would, and therefore poetic language could never be identical to common language. These differences between Coleridge and Wordsworth demonstrate that the Romantic style was not concrete and rigid, but was adaptable to many different approaches.

In conclusion, Wordsworth and Coleridge, though they were two of the founders of Romantic poetry, disagreed about the particulars of the style. While Wordsworth considered common life and language to be in tune with nature, Coleridge believed that more refined and artistic language best fitted poetry. Although they disagreed, both pursued the Romantic goal of capturing and manipulating emotions, and their differences showed that it was this goal, rather than the particulars of poetic theory, which defined the Romantic style.

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he Search for Peace in “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place"

Charles Brown

While Hemingway’s short story “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” is usually interpreted as an intensely poetic description of despair, it can with equal validity be seen instead as mankind's never ending yearning to find spiritual peace. Hemingway's short story displayed this emotional journey in many different ways. First, the title itself is a symbol for man's desire to find a state of tranquillity, safety, and comfort. Hemingway also showed this in the story’s setting, which was used as a symbol for a sense of order, for it was late, the cafe was empty, and the men there were at ease. Finally, Hemingway showed this desire in the contrasting actions between the young and the old to show the effects that time plays in man's search for peace.

An added appreciation for this short story, however, can be gained through some background concerning its origins and its relationship to the author's preoccupations. Hemingway was married four times, won the Nobel Prize in 1954, and in 1960, when he became ill, killed himself following in his father's footsteps. Hemingway had to deal with despair, depression, and desperation for most of his life, and these feelings could be felt in most of his writings.

One of the major elements in defining man's true desire for peace in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" is the central role that is played by despair. Despair is commonly defined as a sense of hopelessness, and it is displayed in the actions of the older waiter, and in the behavior of the deaf man. The older waiter makes an astonishing revelation or epiphany with regards to the idea of despair, when he makes the statement that "I am of those who like to stay late at the cafe. With all those who do not want to go to bed. With all those who need a light for the night" (382). Here he was showing that in one's lowest level of despair, man's one and only desire is to find a safe haven, and to acquire a sense of security.

Finding a sense of security and meaning to life was very important to Hemingway who was known to feel that the individual quest for meaningful values was a universal one, probably because Hemingway himself struggled to find the true meaning of his life, or the true sense of his purpose.

The despair that Hemingway himself felt is best shown in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" when the older waiter was intertwined in a conversation with himself. He said that: "It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it was nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada" (383).

Nothing and then nothing. When one is in a state of despair, the only thing that one is looking for is a way out of one's situation, or a road that will lead to a peaceful end to one's feelings of hopelessness.

Hemingway, however, presented a remarkable example of man's search for an end to his state of hopelessness. When one waiter commented on the deaf man's attempt at taking his own life, he said "Last week he tried to commit suicide." The other waiter replied "Why?" Then he said, "He was in despair"

(379). This summed up man's desire, at his lowest level of depression, to find peace, safety, and a sense of serenity. Hemingway showed man at his lowest level searching for escape.

Throughout the entire story the deaf man was struggling to find an end to his feelings of hopelessness, and Hemingway portrayed this in many different ways. The first was that the deaf man enjoyed the cafe the most when it was empty, because it gave him a sense of peacefulness. The second was sitting in the shadow the leaves of the tree made, which gave the idea that he was almost hiding from the world that was surrounding him. The third was his drinking, which he used as a crutch, or as a means of escape, and this was shown in the conversation between the two waiters. One waiter said, "He's drunk now." To which the other waiter replied, "He's drunk every night" (380). This showed the deaf man's inner most desires to find peace from this troubling road.

Hemingway also used the technique of understatement to fully enhance his ideas of man's search for peace. This could be seen in a number of situations throughout this story, but one could not begin to fully expound upon the ideas of understatement without first examining the title. The title "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" is a masterful work of understatement in itself, because it fully describes or characterizes man's search for peace. Man has an inner emotional yearning to find a state of order. Man also has an innate aspiration to find a state of security, or symbolically speaking, a well-lighted environment. Along with these other attributions man also yearns to find a place where he belongs or a position of certainty. Therefore, Hemingway's title, through the use of understatement, suggests that man's innermost hungers are to find a place where there will be order, security, and certainty.

In "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" Hemingway said, "In the day time the street was dusty, but at night the dew settled the dust." Here he was referring to the hustle and the bustle of city life. During the day the streets are busy and full of people hurrying here and there, but at night sleep falls, and over most of the city feelings of tranquillity and peace are felt.

At one point in the story the deaf man had gotten drunk and left the cafe, but although he was intoxicated he still walked with dignity. Here Hemingway was showing that even at a person's lowest depths or times of despair, there should always remain a sense of self-respect. When the older waiter was at the bar, he recited the Lord's Prayer, but he replaced many of the key words, with "nada." Here with the use of understatement, Hemingway was showing the extent of despair felt by the waiter, because the Lord's prayer is meant to give one hope, purpose, and a sense that everything is not all in vain. But by removing words, and replacing them with others the waiter was reaffirming his feelings of hopelessness.

One of the biggest examples of understatement that Hemingway used is when the waiter said, "After all ... it is probably only insomnia. Many must have it" (383). Here Hemingway was referring to fear. Man has an inner fear or a feeling of anxiety that he may never find the peace that he is searching for. Many of us wander through life searching, longing, and seeking for a place or state of being where we will feel comfortable. Many of us long for a safe haven or "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place."

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Happiness is an Inside Job: *The Old Man and the Sea*

Jeffrey Glenn

Hemingway's view of human nature was that happiness was rare and was found within a man and not in his outside circumstances or surroundings. Hemingway illustrates this in three ways. First, he portrays the human nature of Santiago, the main character, as being one of humility and compassion, full of strength and pride. He is shown not as a gleefully happy man, but one who meets life with a serene, quiet resilience. Second, Santiago's fellow villagers are shown as shallow and materialistic, with a narrow view of life compared to his. Their focus on appearances is in sharp contrast to Santiago's focus on intrinsic values. Third, it will be shown that his rare brand of happiness comes from within.

Poignant circumstances surrounded the composition of this novel, which bring out many of the above points. It is widely recognized that Hemingway was possessed of a turbulent personality and suffered from emotional depression. This was despite the fact that he enjoyed much critical acclaim. *The Old Man and the Sea* was written after a ten-year hiatus of public and critical approval. This period saw much of his work receive negative criticism in literary and journalistic circles. This affected Hemingway adversely and very deeply (Carey 9). Therefore, Hemingway's personal battle with seeming failure in his life's work and society's attendant criticism parallel Santiago's stoic resolve in the face of his neighbors' disdain. The author's struggles symbolically match those of Santiago and set the stage for the writing of this novel.

The acclaim generated by this book was due largely to the author's " complex knotting of spiritual and physical concerns." (Waggoner 5). Many critics refer to the Christian symbolism in the book, and rightfully so. The mast Santiago carries resembles a cross and his apparent suffering is likened to Jesus'. However, the deep attunement with nature and what are, in effect, Taoist principles of balance of opposites illustrated by Santiago's character are quite different from the obvious Christian metaphors used by Hemingway (Waggonner 5). The acute awareness that Santiago brings to his everyday life is much more in tune with Buddhist rather than Christian ideology (Waggonner 5). He says, "I'll say a hundred Our Fathers and a hundred Hail Marys. But I cannot say them now" (Hemingway 87). These are definitely not the thoughts of a devout Christian. His "religious" thoughts and prayers are a mere augmentation of his subconscious resolve and determination to choose a positive outlook at every turn. Clearly, his inner dialogue illustrates these qualities.

In defining happiness, I agree with Schopenhauer that the process is an inexhaustible one and that in pursuing this end I, like him, would also be repeating ad nauseum the words of those from past centuries (Wisdom 9). Some supporting words and concepts regarding Santiago's happiness, however, will be briefly touched on here. Santiago possesses the "noble nature" and "bright spirits" which are the "first and most important elements of happiness," according to Schopenhauer's *The Wisdom of Life* (21). Epictetus, through Rufus, speaks of happiness as having to do with a God-given ability to use external impressions and that when this ability is at its best, " . . . it is freedom, serenity, cheerfulness, steadfastness; it is . . . justice, and law, and self-control, and the sum and substance of virtue (445)." Santiago certainly possesses this ability. Kant also refers to happiness in union with virtue (On the Basis 56). Mill and Aristotle are in concurrence when they describe happiness as the state of having all desires met (Hutchins 687). Santiago is a virtuous man, and his quiet satisfaction is proof that his needs are indeed met. I disagree with the somewhat bleak view of St. Augustine, however, which sees happiness as "rather the solace of misery than the positive enjoyment of felicity" (Hutchins 692). This view has Christian theological merits, but this attitude is not congruent with daily secular experience.

My own view, and the one largely adopted in the following analysis, is that happiness results from a core belief system, and hence I disagree when Freud speaks of the episodic nature of happiness. (22). In short, Santiago's happiness can be summed up by Santayana, who said that, "man can achieve lasting happiness . . . by developing and maintaining between himself and his environment as well as within himself a harmony that renders his activities delightful and rewarding" (Santayana and the Sense 3).

Santiago is introduced to us at a point in his life where everyone in his village feels either pity or disdain for him. He is a fisherman who hasn't caught anything for almost three months. Appearances would have it that he is finished as a fisherman, but he is not. He faces the attitudes of his fellow villagers, the challenges of his aging body, and his bad luck fishing with such nobility, grace, and wisdom, that it is apparent that he is in possession of a deep inner strength, peace, happiness, and pride. He is essentially emotionally unaffected by any influences over which he has no control. He is also such an innocent and humble being, that Hemingway describes him as being " too simple to wonder when he had attained humility" (Hemingway 13). By the same token, Santiago "knew he had attained it and knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride" (14). This humility is partly the basis for the inner happiness described herein, as is self-respect; " a firm, unshakable conviction of pre-eminent worth and special value which makes a man proud in the true sense of the word" (Wisdom 59). Santiago truly embodies these attributes.

Santiago has a profoundly meaningful relationship with a young village boy named Manolin. He taught the boy how to fish. It is clear that they love and respect each other deeply. The author shows this not through great sweeping emotional scenes, but in tender and matter-of-fact conversations between the two. They talk about baseball heroes and everyday trivia without ever condescending to each other in any way. They are equals. The old man cajoles the boy gently with the warning that Manolin may be exaggerating Santiago's virtues because of his love for the man. He asks Manolin if he is sure of the details of their first time fishing together when the boy describes the event exaggeratedly (12,13). By the same token, the boy reverently maintains a charade with the old man regarding his lack of food. Santiago describes the meal he has recently eaten while Manolin knows that he has no food (16). They have a simple yet deep love and respect for each other, and the boy mirrors the old man in his humility. We see true empathy and compassion on the part of both here, and, as Schopenhauer says, "compassion . . . is the real basis of all voluntary justice and genuine loving-kindness" (On the Basis 144). These are two more principal ingredients for happiness.

More is learned about Santiago's inner workings when he departs alone, ever diligent, for another day of plying his trade. He is a fisherman in the purest sense. He truly loves what he has chosen as his life's work. He is acutely aware of everything in his environment as a result of living a long and full life. He has a deep understanding of the sea and its inhabitants, the weather, his body, and his boat; the sea is his life and its inhabitants are his family. He embodies the concept of having made what Schopenhauer calls "the most advantageous use possible of the personal qualities [he] possess[es] . . ." and " . . . [chosen] the . . . occupation . . . most suitable for [his] development" (Wisdom 16,17). Accompanied by his wisdom, confidence, and determination, he takes the risk of sailing out further than anyone usually does to catch fish. He ends up hooking the largest marlin, ever seen in his locale. The big fish puts up such a big fight that the old man battles it for three days and nights. Santiago vows to fight the fish until he himself dies (52). After finally overpowering the huge and beautiful marlin he heads for home. He had figured that the battle was over only to meet up with sharks who he has to combat to protect his catch, and who inflict great physical and mental punishment on Santiago in the process. Still, he struggles long and hard to defeat the sharks and loses his meager weapons and even parts of his humble vessel in the process. He ends up sailing into port with only the skeletal remains of his trophy, yet his spirit is undefeated.

During this odyssey, we accompany Santiago and witness his inner dialogue through which we gain insight into his character. We are with him as he constantly talks to himself, the sea, the birds, the sky and weather, the ocean's creatures, and mainly, his big fish. He is constantly, almost reverently, loving in his thoughts toward these things. For the first part of the struggle, he seems to enjoy the challenge. He is very strong, but as the long and brutal battle ensues, his resolve and physical stamina wax and wane. He slips in and out of the present. He prays. He thinks of having the boy by his side. He curses his age and physical shortcomings. Amazingly, he always pulls his thinking back into the moment and the task at hand. He repeatedly returns to a positive outlook and determination. Santiago never shows any self-pity. He refuses to give up. It is reminiscent of Schopenhauer's motto and comment, " . . . No Surrender . . . let us take fresh courage from misfortune . . ." (Counsels 93). Santiago exhibits acute awareness of his physical, mental, and environmental handicaps, but he does so in a purely compassionate and objective way. This resiliency, stamina, confidence, and determination are the result of a life of living in keen awareness of his surroundings and learning from the daily changes therein. The result of his awareness is what Schopenhauer describes as a "peace of mind that ensues– a great element of happiness, and, in fact, the condition and essence of it" (Counsels 115).

Secondly, although the people of Santiago's village are outwardly polite toward him, they see him as an object of either pity or disdain. They see him as being, in their native language, *salao*, or being possessed of extremely bad luck, and washed up as a fisherman. They seem to view him almost as a commodity in their evaluation. After all, to them, if one is a fisherman living in a fishing village, and one is not catching fish, then one is worthless. Santiago is also a very old man, and in this light probably seen as worthless, too. They have no idea of his true worth. This is ironic, because in his reaction to their shunning him, he shows only kind tolerance and consideration.

Similarities may be drawn to the way people in the United States seem to have no respect for their elders. Many older citizens are simply thought of as a burden or inconvenience and are ignored or placed in retirement homes. This is particularly true in situations like Santiago's, where an individual may be unable to financially "pull his or her own weight." The valuable wisdom and knowledge elders like Santiago gain from living long and rich lives are therefore lost. Schopenhauer frames the concept of wisdom gained with age well in saying that, "the first forty years of life furnish the text, . . . the remaining thirty years supply the commentary" (Counsels 113). This commentary is the great loss suffered by ignoring Santiago and those like him.

The appearance of Santiago's failure is all the villagers see. They seem to ignore the fact that he is kind, gentle and expert in his chosen profession. It is apparent that much could be learned from him, not only about fishing, but about nature, both human and universal. I see their narrow view as being lovelessly rooted only in the outer trappings of his ill fortune, and not who he is or what he has to offer. He has reached his age and gained a vast amount of knowledge, only to be shunned by the people of his own town.

Santiago's happiness is indeed unique compared to his neighbors. They find happiness in immediate ways, like their daily successes in fishing. He, quite simply, is happy. He has a much bigger picture. He is content and happy with whatever life has to offer. An extreme and gruesome example illustrates this. Imagine Santiago and one of his neighbors both losing their legs. Given what we know of Santiago, he would, I am sure, adjust to this situation readily, whereas it would probably be the undoing of his neighbor's entire existence. This illustration points up the contrast between him and the villagers. It shows us his unique ability to adjust to anything placed in his way. This point also illustrates Epictetus' concept, mentioned earlier, regarding the use of outside impressions to maintain one's well being (445). Santiago uses this God-given ability well and his neighbors do not.

Lastly, let us turn to the qualities of happiness mentioned here which have been nobility, possession of bright spirits, freedom, serenity, steadfastness, virtue, humility, pride, ability for harmony and compassion. Santiago's nobility is evident in his treatment of the people around him. He treats the boy and the villagers equally and fairly. His bright spirits show that nothing gets him down. At one point, Hemingway describes him by describing his eyes; they are "cheerful and undefeated" (10). His freedom is evident in the way he is unaffected by what happens around him or by what others think. He does not give up fishing because of his bad luck or what the villagers say about him. His decisions are wholly his own. This is also the basis for his serenity. His steadfastness is illustrated in his self-reliance and trustworthiness. He wakes himself and Manolin up without the use of a clock (Hemingway 25). The story implies that he has done so for years. Virtue is a watchword of Santiago's existence. The way he thinks and acts are obviously within a framework of right decision-making that he has built over time. He refuses to take a loan, saying wisely " I try not to borrow. First you borrow. Then you beg" (Hemingway 18). This also illustrates his humility and pride. He is in harmony with nature and the people around him. He talks to the sea and the creatures of the sea and sky as if they were his family. He seems to be in tune with the cycles of the universe through his knowledge of nature. He gets along well with the townspeople in spite of their opinion of him. Santiago is compassionate with Manolin; he plays along with him when the boy talks dreamily about the way their first fishing trip went. He gently asks him if he "really remember(s) that or did I just tell you?" (Hemingway 13). His compassion shows too when "he [begins] to pity the poor fish he had hooked" (Hemingway 49).

Santiago is the embodiment of all of these qualities, and they quite obviously describe the nature of his character and not his possessions. These inner qualities also affect his relationship to the outside world positively. These qualities are what give Santiago his unique ability to rise peacefully to any challenge life has to offer. They are the basis for his satisfying and inwardly happy life. He embodies the important concept that, as Schopenhauer points out, "Men are not influenced by things, but by their thoughts about things" (Wisdom 23). These thoughts are the basis for the inward happiness described here. Indeed, Santiago provides a perfect example of happiness being an inside job.

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Racism in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

Carol Fosse

Critics generally agree that Ralph Ellison's award winning novel, *Invisible Man*, is a work of genius, broad in its appeal and universal in its meaning. Its various themes have been stated as: "the geography of hell . . . the real brotherhood of man" (Morris 5), the emergence of Negro personality from the "fixed boundaries of southern life" (Bone 46), and "the search for human and national identity" (Major 17). Rich in symbolism and cleverly interwoven, the product of seven years work, *Invisible Man's* linear plot structure, told from the first-person, limited point of view, and framed by the Everyman protagonist from his subterranean home, follows the narrator in his search for identity in a color-conscious society whose constricting social and cultural bigotry produces an accelerated pattern of violence and oppression which attempts to efface the narrator of his individuality, thus assigning him an "invisible" non-identity within America.

The underlying force in *Invisible Man* is the atmosphere of America that begins in the early 1900's of the segregated deep south, and ends in the North's predominately black neighborhood of Harlem during the 1930's. As critic Marcus Klein states, "Everything in the novel has clarified this point: that the bizarre accident that has led [the Invisible Man] to take up residence in an abandoned coal cellar is no accident at all, that the underworld is his inevitable home, that given the social facts of America, both invisibility and what he calls his 'hibernation' are his permanent condition" (109).

Ellison's protagonist, the effaced narrator, is a young African-American male from the segregated deep south, who believes himself to be an "invisible man," a black man whose identity is, was and always will remain unseen and, therefore, unappreciated in American society unless something is done (3). Critic Todd Libber points out that invisibility results from a perception each society holds to be true. What does not fit into that idea of "reality" is therefore assigned to "chaos" and is invisible (90).

The rising action takes root at the time when, on his death bed, the narrator's grandfather reveals to the family that the life of a black person living in a foreign "white" America has always been and still is a life of war and opposition, and to keep up the fight. This puzzles the young impressionable narrator, for his grandfather has been "the meekest of men" who, as is further revealed, believes himself to have been "a traitor and a spy" all these years, and that his meekness has, in actuality, been "a dangerous activity." The tactics of "agree 'em to death" and "undermine 'em with grins" (15,16) are the tools that enable the Negro to survive, in essence agreeing to invisibility, until blindness strikes down white society (Margolies 135). Thus, Grandfather's words establish and foreshadow the cultural beliefs, such as racism and bigotry that the young narrator will encounter in a prejudicial society as he navigates his way through the social mine fields of America.

Further, the surreal circus-like atmosphere that envelopes race relations in our country is no laughing matter. Indeed, as the narrator tucks away enough experiences for a gradual dawning to unfold within himself, he sees the atrocities that have been committed, based upon race as a very serious matter. It is this circus clown act that strives to keep people of color oppressed and running, stripping all who fall under its big-tent canopy of their dignity, humanity, and their rights to be free individuals of a

multi-faceted society. All the participants, including the audience members, contribute or in some way are inter-connected to the act. The narrator's indoctrination into the social facts of the time begins upon his high school graduation when he is invited by the school superintendent to give his valedictorian speech at a gathering of the "town's leading white citizens" (17). The circus act continues as the thrill of attending the event gives way to the terror of demoralization when the group of drunken, buffoons that the town leaders have become immediately cage and pit the narrator against his fellow man in a sadistic boxing match, the battle royal: the evening's star entertainment.

The battle royal reinforces "the caste system of a Southern town" (Klein 113). He eventually gives the speech, but at a price. The narrator loses some of his naivete when the feather on the intellectual cap he wears into the occasion becomes frayed in the process of "moral insight gained" (Langman 122). The society is overt in its aim to maintain the caste system so the narrator is rewarded with a scholarship, courtesy of the town's leaders, to the state college for Negroes. "Overjoyed," he is filled with gratitude (32), although the true significance of this action is, at first, lost on the naive narrator. Thus, the circus-like atmosphere provides the surreal background from which the characters emerge, and whose catalytic properties accelerate the pattern of racial violence.

Social prejudice and injury follow the narrator as he attends the southern state college for Negroes. His new home is like "Eden" (109), and scholastically he excels. However, the education he thought he would receive is much different than the education he ultimately receives after chauffeuring Mr. Norton, one of the college's white founding fathers, for a day. During the day's drive, they meet Jim Trueblood, a poor Negro tenant farmer, whose story of incest and poverty serves as a reminder of the African-American experience, while simultaneously resulting in a state of shock to Mr. Norton's system. This suggests that the Northern white liberal philanthropist insists on the invisibility of the Negro as much as his Southern racist counterpart, so that his ancestors' complicity in slavery is concealed from himself (Margolies 136).

When Dr. Bledsoe, the college president, finds out about the day's activities, it also results in a confrontation between black president and black student. The narrator's life lesson is a contortionist's act of adherence to the southern realities of life. His mask of power threatened, Bledsoe reasons that the narrator has shirked his responsibility of showing a white man "only what [the black man wants him] to see" (100). Further, he should have lied to Mr. Norton for "to please a white man is to tell him a lie" (137). Because he has endangered the school, the narrator is expelled. Bledsoe also gives him twisted letters of recommendation for white employers, an act foreshadowed in his grandfather's "Keep This Nigger Boy Running" dream (33).

Violence and oppression continue as the narrator moves north to New York and secures a factory job at Liberty Paints. He works in a boiler-type room alongside Lucius, an old black man, in the heart of the factory mixing the chemicals that make up the fundamental bases of the paints produced, symbolic of the underlying unseen fabric of American society (Klein 119). Threatened by the younger person's presence, and unable to see eye to eye, they get into a fistfight. While their attention is diverted, the boilers explode, and the narrator regains consciousness in the factory's hospital. A bizarre series of experiments are performed on the young man's body, aimed at determining what kind of animal a black person is. The "doctors" hope to replace his essence with something more subdued, more fitting, and less threatening to society. Satisfactorily altered, he is released, given severance pay, and sent home.

Wandering the streets of Harlem, the narrator is taken in by Mary Rambo, a maternal figure, who strengthens and nourishes him. His new career is launched when the narrator witnesses the eviction of an elderly couple (Holland, 64). Reminded of his

past, he is moved, and gives an impromptu speech, inciting those gathered in the crowd to take demonstrative action. A red-headed man, Brother Jack, witnesses this phenomenon, and offers the narrator a job as speaker for and leader of the people of Harlem with his organization, The Brotherhood. The narrator accepts his offer, but in the process is given a new identity, new home, and indoctrination into the organization's secret agenda for equality. The narrator is taken under Brother Jack's wing, and slowly but methodically instructed in the ways of the Brotherhood. The narrator's job is to hear the grievances of his people and then to articulate them according to the ideals of the underground Brotherhood. But little is made known to him of the true forces behind The Brotherhood, and of the true nature in which the movement is heading. In time, philosophical differences arise as well as the clash of egos, and the hopes of suppressed African-Americans living in Harlem take a back seat, as do the narrator's, when he discovers that he, too, has been duped by the fundamental white forces whose brainchild of equality the organization has feigned to champion.

The climax of *Invisible Man* occurs when the microcosmic world of Harlem erupts in a shower of fire, gunshots, looting and terror; the narrator barely escapes with his life, but not before he silences his alter-ego, the black nationalist Ras the Destroyer. Beneath the city's streets in an underground coal shoot, "dimensionless" and without time (559), the denouement occurs when the narrator loses himself upon the realization that Brother Jack has set him up only to knock him down; he becomes lost in a sea of angry darkness. In a dream-like state, the narrator recognizes the same transgressions committed by others of the past, including the school superintendent, Dr. Bledsoe, Mr. Norton, Ras and Jack. Each has tried "to run him"; all have oppressed him (559-560).

The narrator frees himself of illusions, which results in his belief of being "invisible." He no longer idealizes the people from his past. His identity and uniqueness have been claimed by others and what they dictated it to be, for "[they do] not see a person, as you or I are persons; [they see] a member of a race" (Brennan 170). Additionally, his fate and the fate of all Americans are intertwined. Until this is recognized, he remains an "invisible man."

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Ellison's Influences and Inspirations for *Invisible Man*

Barbara Sherman

All authors draw upon past experiences, people they have known, places they have been, as well as their own philosophy of life to write. Ralph Ellison, in his *book Shadow and Act* refers to this process when he writes, "The act of writing requires a constant plunging back into the shadow of the past where time hovers ghostlike" (xix). In preparing to write his novel he notes that, "[d]etails of old photographs and rhymes and riddles and children's games, church services and college ceremonies, practical jokes and political activities observed during my prewar days in Harlem-all fell into place" (xxvii). While the novel *Invisible Man* is not autobiographical, the plot, settings, characters, themes, and point of view show the influence of people, places, and stories from his childhood.

A case in point is the plot of *Invisible Man*. The plot is divided into three main divisions: Invisible Man's school days, his involvement with the Brotherhood, and what happens to him during the Harlem race riot. Ellison draws heavily on his years spent at the Tuskeegee Institute for the first part of the novel. Jack Bishop, in his book Ralph Ellison maintains that all of Invisible Man's college days are based on Ellison's own days at Tuskeegee (45).

Most critics agree that the Brotherhood is a euphemism for the Communist Party which was active in the US from the beginning of the 1920s. In an article entitled "Communist Party of the United States" in the *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, Robin D. G. Kelly reports that the popularity of the party among Blacks was due to its work to end racism and its support of Blacks in the courts (626). Ellison was not immune to this; he writes in the introduction to his novel that his brief involvement with the Communist Party was in reaction to white society's classification of him and all Negroes as inferior (xxi). He no doubt used his own reaction to the party as a basis for the Invisible Man's attraction to the Brotherhood. Robert G. O'Meally in an article for the *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History* entitled "Ellison, Ralph" notes that his introduction to the party was by way of the writer Richard Wright who was editing *New Challenge*, a leftist magazine, and who asked Ellison to write for the magazine (885). Ellison's eventual disillusionment with the party is reflected in the Invisible Man's rejection of the Brotherhood as self-serving and not actually interested in the rights of Black Americans.

The last section of the novel concerns the race riot that ends with the Invisible Man escaping into his hole in the ground to think about what has happened to him and what he is going to do about it. This episode was based on the Harlem race riots of 1943. In an article entitled "Harlem Riots of 1935 and 1943" in the *Encyclopedia of African- American Culture and History*, Gayle T. Tate relates that the Harlem riots of August 1943 started as a result of built up tensions between the people of Harlem and the police. The riots were touched off by an incident between a woman and the management of the Bradock Hotel. When the police arrested this person, another woman and her son attempted to defend her, and the police shot the son. The rumor quickly spread that the son was shot for defending his mother (1217-1218). Ellison used a similar incident to start the riot in the novel.

Another example of Ellison's use of real life experiences is in the novel's setting. The settings for his book came directly from his experiences in Alabama at the Tuskeegee Institute and in Harlem. Bishop confirms that the Tuskeegee Institute was Ellison's model for the Invisible Man's

college (46). In *Shadow and Act* Ellison discusses graduation week at Tuskeegee. He relates how dignitaries would come to give speeches in the gym or in the chapel, while the "Negro farm people" would come to picnic, play baseball, and square dance on the athletic field of the school (20). This is most likely where he got his inspiration for Reverend Barbee's speech in the chapel on the day Dr. Bledsoe kicks Invisible Man out of the college.

The inspiration for Invisible Man's life in Harlem also comes from Ellison's own life. When he came to Harlem in 1936, he lived at the YMCA for the first few months, because the rent was cheap (Bishop 19). Most of the jobs he had during this time did not last long, and were low paying. He worked in several factories where the pay was so low that he could not afford to pay rent and often had to sleep on park benches (Bishop 20). In the introduction to *Invisible Man,*Ellison relates that "...most of the novel still managed to get itself written in Harlem, where it drew much of its substance from the voices, idioms, folklore, traditions and political concerns of those whose racial and cultural origins I share" (xxi).

Political activism was something Ralph Ellison knew about first hand. In the introduction of the novel, he reports: "I had reported the riot of 1943 for the *New York Post* and had agitated for the release of Angelo Herndon and the Scottsboro Boys, had marched behind Adam Clayton Powell Jr. in his effort to desegregate the stores along 125th Street.... Everything and anything appeared as grist for my fictional mill. Some speaking up clearly saying, 'use me right here' while others were disturbingly mysterious" (xxvii).

These episodes correspond with Invisible Man's experiences when he comes to live in Harlem to earn enough money to return to school. He lives at the Men's House which is modeled after the YMCA. After his letters from Dr. Bledsoe fail to secure him employment, he takes a job at a paint factory where he is injured in an accident. If Invisible Man had not run into Mary Rambo, he too would probably have had to sleep on park benches.

He too gets involved in political activism, which starts with his speech to the people who are standing around watching as an elderly couple is being evicted, and continues with his membership in the Brotherhood. The Epilogue suggests that that might not be the end of his activism; 'Even hibernations can be overdone come to think of it. Perhaps that's my greatest social crime, I've overstayed my hibernation, since there's a possibility that even an Invisible Man has a socially responsible role to play" (Ellison 572).

Just as the plot and setting of *Invisible Man* show influences from Ellison's life, so do the themes. Some of the themes of Ellison's novel can be traced to his struggle to answer questions relating to his true identity as a Black American, and the tradition of oral story telling and folklore of his people. In *Shadow and Act*, Ellison reveals that writing became his way of asking and working out the question of his own identity. He said,"...Fiction became the agency of my efforts to answer the questions: Who am I, what am I, how did I come to be? What shall I make of the life around me, what celebrate, what reject, how confront the snarl of good and evil which is inevitable"(xxii)?

This is the main conflict for Invisible Man, and at first he is so sure that he knows who he is because, everyone has told him who he is, and what he should become. According to the whites and his teachers, he is supposed to be like Booker T. Washington who knew how to stay in his place, but his grandfather's words start him on a journey to find who he really is, and slowly layer after layer of false identities come off as he progresses from school boy to a man freed of all false illusions, and ready to find his real

identity. Ellison formed the basis for this theme from reading Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* in which the author finds it difficult to know what he really felt rather than what he was supposed to feel, or what he had been taught to feel. Ellison related this statement to his own difficulty in distinguishing his true feelings from those which his experience told him "Negroes were supposed to feel" or were "encouraged to feel" (Ellison-xxii).

Another major influence on theme in Ellison's writing is the Negro tradition of story telling and folklore. B. A. Botkin in his book *A Treasury of American Folklore* maintains that Negro folktales such as Brer Rabbit were used by the slaves as parables to show how their native intelligence gave them the ability to stay alive, and outwit their masters (408). These tales evoked secret laughter in the slaves which was a small way for them to defy their masters, and helped them endure slavery (Botkin 408). This secret laughter symbolized an inner resistance to domination by whites. Ellison was aware of this secret way of resisting this domination, because it was part of his heritage that has been handed down from generation to generation. He recalls, "having worked in barbershops where that form of oral art flourished, I knew that I could draw upon the rich culture of the folk tale as well as that of the novel..." (Ellison xxxiii).

In the novel, these sayings, songs, and riddles keep popping up to remind Invisible Man of his heritage, as when he meets the man with the cart of blueprints. At first he does not understand what the man is talking about and is put off, but as his memory is jarred he becomes homesick, and by the end of the exchange Invisible Man is impressed with the man's ability; "...God damn, I thought, they're a hell of a people! And I didn't know whether it was pride or disgust that suddenly flashed over me" (Ellison 174).

The influence of the Brer Rabbit tales show up in the grandfather's last words which are used as a unifying element of the novel. Like Brer Rabbit, who by use of his natural intelligence over superior strength always manages to escape Brer Fox and Brer Bear, the grandfather wants his family to resist being dominated even while acting as if they are going along and staying in their place. Ellison makes Dr. Bledsoe a master of this subterfuge in his dealings with not only the Whites but also with his own people.

While Ellison turned to folklore and internal questions to formulate his theme, he finds the inspiration for many of his characters in actual historical figures and his personal experience. His model for Invisible Man is not himself, but he uses his experiences as a young man as a foundation for Invisible Man's character. In an interview with Richard G. Stern, Ellison relates that he left Tuskeegee Institute in his junior year and went to New York to study sculpture. He intended to work for the summer and return to finish his education in the fall, but he could not find a job which would pay enough to support himself and allow him to save for school (Shadow 14).

Ellison also uses his experience with people as a source of inspiration for Invisible Man's character. In the introduction of *Invisible Man* Ellison notes, " Afro-Americans were usually defeated in their bouts with circumstance, there was no reason why they, like Brer Rabbit and his more literary cousins, the great heroes of tragedy and comedy, shouldn't be allowed to snatch the victory of conscious perception from the forces that overwhelmed them" (xxxi). Invisible Man is a symbol of a Black Everyman in his struggle against the circumstances which limit him. He is limited not by his own inadequacies, but by circumstances beyond his control. No matter what he does, even when he does what he has been taught is right, he is defeated.

Ellison uses Booker T. Washington for the model for the Founder. In an article entitled "Washington, Booker Taliaferro" in the *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, Raymond W. Smock relates that Washington was born a slave in Alabama in 1856, and after the Civil War ended, his family moved to Maldin, West Virginia where young Washington worked as a house boy

for a retired general and his school teacher wife who taught him to read. He went on to finish his education at Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. After teaching for several years he founded the Tuskeegee Institute and built it up into the most prestigious African-American college in the country. Washington, in a speech in Atlanta in 1895, urged Negroes to "...accommodate to the segregation and discrimination imposed upon them by custom and by state and local laws". He advocated that Negroes and Whites should work together to further mutual economic advancement, but that Negroes should put up with segregation in social circumstances. This speech made him famous and gained him the respect of white Americans as well as African-Americans. Smock points out that Washington built Tuskeegee by eliciting donations from wealthy New Englanders and leading industrialists (Smock 2777-2779).

The story told by Reverend Barbee about the Founder is very similar to Washington's life. The Founder "was born a slave and a son of slaves, knowing only his mother" (Ellison 116). Barbee goes on to say that the Founder "...worked noontime, nights and mornings for the privilege of studying" (Ellison 117). The Reverend Barbee describes the Founder as humble and patient "moving slowly as he surmounts each and every opposition. Rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's, yes; but steadfastly seeking for you that bright horizon which you now enjoy..." (Ellison 117). The Founder, like Washington, solicits donations from wealthy businessmen. Invisible Man describes how every year on Founders Day the millionaires would arrive to make speeches and leave a big check (Ellison 36).

Ellison has stated that Ras the Exhorted is not based on Marcus Garvey, but there are similarities which are very apparent. Both are foreign born, Black leaders who preached Black unity and the separation of the races. Robert A. Hill, in an article entitled "Garvey, Marcus Mosiah" in the *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, explains that Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and was considered to be a messiah of his people. He was born in Jamaica in 1887 and came to Harlem to found the American branch of the UNIA (1090-1092). In her book *Marcus Garvey*, Mary Lawler points out that he emphasized "universal black solidarity"(56). He encouraged blacks to look to their own race for their heroes. He preached that loyalty to members of their race should come before loyalty to their country, and that Black and White societies should remain separate (Lawler 38,56). He would not join with other Black political groups whose ideology was different than his, and engaged in lengthy disputes with them (Lawler 58).

The character of Ras the Exhorter is foreign born, but his country of origin is never mentioned. His political ideology is revealed in the meeting in which Invisible Man meets Tod Clifton for the first time. Brother Jack asks Invisible Man, "Brother, you have heard of Ras? He is the wild man who calls himself a Black Nationalist" (Ellison 357). Ras' feelings about race relations are revealed by the big woman at the meeting; "He goes wild when he sees black and white people together" (Ellison 358).

Because the point of view is first person and related by the protagonist, who sees things very differently at the beginning of the story than he does at the end, the reader is not able at first to discern what is the truth, because of the narrator's naiveté. As the story proceeds and Invisible Man learns more about himself through his trials and tribulations, he begins to see things more realistically, and the reader begins to trust his observations more. This point of view is very effective at showing the reader the changes which are slowly taking place inside the main character in a way that gives the novel universal significance.

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