



WEEK 6 ESSAY

Ashley Blake



FEBRUARY 26, 2024

LEAD 2030

DR. STEPHANIE SCOTT

WEEK 6 ESSAY

In what ways are Hemingway and Anscombe, respectively, appealing to the tenets of pluralism and/or universalism in the arguments that they put forth? Where do they agree, and where do they disagree? How do different understandings of pluralism and/or of universalism undergird and/or animate their disagreements? Word count: 600-750.

In this essay, we venture into the realms of pluralism and universalism in leadership through the perspectives of Ernest Hemingway and G.E.M. Anscombe. Hemingway's "The Sling and the Pebble" and Anscombe's "Mr. Truman's Degree" and "Influence of Pacifism" serve as focal points for this exploration. This essay aims to dissect how Hemingway and Anscombe employ pluralism and universalism in their arguments, how these philosophies inform their views on leadership, and the points of convergence and divergence in their thought. By examining their agreements and disagreements, I aim to illuminate how their understandings of pluralism and universalism animate their views on ethical leadership and decision-making.

In "The Sling and the Pebble," Ernest Hemingway illustrates a nuanced appeal to pluralism, subtly yet profoundly embedded within his narrative. Through his reflection on the post-World War II era, Hemingway articulates a vision of leadership and societal conduct that transcends rigid, authoritarian structures, favouring a more adaptive, empathetic approach. This perspective is encapsulated in his assertion, "It is a man's duty to understand his world rather than simply fight for it." This statement underscores the pluralistic ethos of recognising and accommodating diverse viewpoints and complexities inherent in the human condition. Hemingway's narrative does not explicitly endorse universalist principles of absolute moral standards; instead, it leans towards a recognition of the multifaceted nature of moral and ethical decision-making. His emphasis on understanding over blind obedience suggests a departure from universal absolutes, advocating for a leadership style that values the plurality of experiences and perspectives, resonating with a more relativistic, context-dependent approach to ethics and leadership.

The chapter on Hemingway from Clemens and Mayer also underscores the power of influence over authority in guiding an organization. As discussed, influence inspires followership not through coercion, but through shared vision and goals, mirroring Hemingway's emphasis on understanding and empathy in leadership.

Anscombe's works present a contrasting perspective deeply rooted in universalism. In "Mr. Truman's Degree," Anscombe's critique of President Truman's decision to use atomic bombs is grounded in universal moral absolutes, explicitly condemning actions that target innocents, regardless of the context. She asserts, "in the bombing of these cities, it was certainly decided to kill the innocent as a means to an end," reflecting her unwavering commitment to universal ethical standards that stand firm even amidst the complexities of war. This universalist stance is further elucidated in "Influence of Pacifism," where she argues against the moral justifiability of deliberate acts of murder in war, differentiating them from inevitable casualties. Anscombe's approach, marked by a rigorous adherence to moral absolutes, offers a stark contrast to Hemingway's more nuanced, context-sensitive view. While acknowledging the diverse and complex scenarios of war, her work firmly upholds the supremacy of unchanging moral

principles, emphasising the necessity of steadfast ethical guidelines in leadership and decision-making, even in the most extreme circumstances.

Despite their contrasting approaches, Hemingway and Anscombe converge on the fundamental belief that leadership, particularly in times of conflict, is inherently laden with complex ethical dilemmas. Through his narrative in "The Sling and the Pebble," Hemingway suggests that effective leadership requires an empathetic understanding of the human condition, recognising the diverse experiences and moral complexities that define our world. Anscombe, while maintaining a universalist stance, similarly acknowledges the weight and gravity of ethical decision-making in leadership. Her critique of Truman's actions during World War II, especially the decision to use atomic bombs, is a testament to the severe moral responsibilities shouldered by leaders. Both authors underscore the intricate and often burdensome nature of leadership, marked by the necessity to navigate moral complexities and make decisions that can have far-reaching consequences. This common ground in their perspectives illuminates a shared understanding of the challenging yet crucial role of ethical deliberation in effective leadership.

In conclusion, Hemingway's "The Sling and the Pebble" reflects a pluralistic view valuing adaptability and empathy, while Anscombe, through "Mr. Truman's Degree" and "Influence of Pacifism," champions a universalist perspective, emphasising firm moral principles. Despite their varied approaches, both authors converge on recognising the intricate ethical challenges inherent in leadership, particularly in times of conflict. Their insights collectively highlight the importance of balancing moral flexibility with steadfast ethical commitment, offering enduring lessons for effective leadership in complex moral landscapes.

Word count: 697 words.

WORKS CITED

- Anscombe, G. (1956). Mr. Truman's Degree. Retrieved from https://projectintegrity.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/mr_trumans_degree.pdf
- Anscombe, G. (n.d.). Influence of Pacifism. Retrieved from <https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1758223/modules/items/28418391>
- Hemingway, E. (2015, 02 19). The Sling and the Pebble. *Bill Downs, War Correspondent*. Retrieved from <https://www.billdownscbs.com/2015/02/1946-sling-and-pebble-by-ernest.html>
- Mayer, J. K. (1999). *The Classic Touch: Lessons in Leadership from Homer to Hemingway, Revised Edition*. Contemporary Books.