



"ALL THE KING'S MEN" – A THEMATIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss the thematic aspects of *All the King's Men* from political and corruption point of view. Theme of the novel is that all activities have outcomes, and that it is unimaginable for a single person to stand detached and be a simple spectator of life, as Jack tries to do (first as a graduate understudy doing authentic research and later as a wisecracking newspaperman). In the air of the 1930s, entire populaces appeared to relinquish obligation by living vicariously through messianic political figures like Willie Stark. Accordingly, Stark satisfies the wishes of a number of the characters, or appears to do so. Case in point, his dedicated bodyguard Sugar-Boy, who stammers, adores Stark on the grounds that "the b-manager could t-talk so great"; Jack Burden can't bring himself to rest with Anne Stanton, whom he cherishes, however Stark does so; et cetera. (It is in this feeling that the characters are "all the lord's men"; other than obtaining this well known expression, the title has nothing to do with the story of Humpty Dumpty. The title is potentially gotten from the saying of Huey P. Long, whose life was like that of Willie Stark, "Every Man a King".) But this vicarious accomplishment will inevitably come up short; at last Jack understands that one must "go out of history into history and the dreadful obligation of Time."

المستخلص:

يتناول البحث مناقشة الجوانب الموضوعية لرواية (كل رجال الملك) من وجهة نظر السياسة والفساد، ويتلخص موضوع الرواية في ان لابد من نتيجة لاي نشاط ولا يمكن ان نتصور ان الانسان بمفرده يبقى منعزلا ومتفردا فقط في هذه الحياة كما يحاول (جاك) ان يفعله في البدء كمتخرج يقوم ببحث أصيل ومن ثم كمراسل ساخر، وفي أجواء الثلاثينات من القرن العشرين ظهر الناس وكأنهم أبتعدوا عن الألتزام والعيش بقلق من خلال شخصيات سياسية (مهذوية) منتظرة (كولي ستارك) وبالتالي يلبي (ستارك) رغبات العديد من الشخصيات او يحاول أن يظهر كذلك وكمثال على ذلك هو الأخلص الشديد للمتلعثم (شوكر بوي) الحارس الشخصي لـ (ستارك) الذي يكن له الولاء على أن سيده العظيم (جاك بيردن) لن يستطيع أن يحقق الراحة لنفسه مع (أن ستون) الذي كان يعتز بها مثلما فعل (ستارك) وهلم جرا، وبهذا الشعور تكون الشخصيات (رجال الملك) على خلاف الحصول على هذا التعبير المعروف فإن العنوان لايمت بصلة لقصة (همبتي ديمتي) حيث تم الحصول على هذا العنوان من خلال مقولة (ليهوي بي لونك) وهي (كل رجل هو ملك) والتي كانت حياته شبيهة بحياة (ويلي ستارك)، بيد أن هذا الأجاز بالأنابة لا بد أن يفشل، وفي نهاية المطاف يفهم جاك انه على المرء (أن يخرج من التأريخ الى التأريخ والألتزام المخيف للزمن).

INTRODUCTION

Jack Burden, the hero and additionally a storyteller is the "rootless and distanced current man."¹ In the early phases of his life, Jack needs data toward oneself on the grounds that he fails to offer the very premise of hood toward oneself - the connection between his present activities, his past furthermore a conceivable future. Jack from the start rejects the past under the feeling that it was corrupted and does not worry about understanding its genuine worth. Therefore, in his dismissal of the past, he has rejected history and convention which unite man's existence with his group by providing for him the awareness of other's expectations and blame. He likewise gets to be inhumane to the interrelating and incorporating nature of time, and accordingly, "one thing had nothing to do witt anything else."² However, under the weight of occasions including his own particular life, Jack is accordingly ready to recuperate the past to lead a coordinated life (Nelson, Randy, 1981).

Jack's distance from the past is attributable to his dismissal of his guardians. He rejects his mom on the grounds that she is self centered and scurrilous and as he says, she has had a parade of spouses: the Scholarly Attorney, the Tycoon, the Count, and the Young Executive, her latest spouse. Jack is under the feeling that Ellis Burden, the Scholarly Attorney, lecturing in slums is his dad, yet he rejects the Attorney as a feeble individual in light of the fact that he couldn't hold his wife. Further, he rejects the lawyer's obsession and scorns him. Anne Stanton, who is Jack's adoration, rightly challenges against Jack for his absence of feeling for his guardians, and says fairly that he doesn't comprehend why they went about as they did. On the other hand, as Jack has rejected his individual past and his family, he has no sureness of the present for a decided future and there, fore "he is rootless and fails to offer any genuine purpose"³ notwithstanding being untrustworthy. Jack, on watching out of a train window, sees a lady toss out

a dish of water. He has a craving for crying in light of the fact that he feels that at any rate she has a home, a reason and henceforth reality.⁴

With character lost in his dismissal of the past Jack needs "to know himself through his insight into another."⁵ This empowers his student of history's interest to study the verifiable diary of his predecessor, Cass Mastern⁶. The explanation behind Jack's beginning interest with this scene is that Cass Mastern, in the same way as Jack, needs time sense, and is "a seeker and a visionary, careless in regards to the way that activities include responsibility" in the interrelating nature of time. Further, Jack longs to compose a doctoral thesis on this diary (Ehrlich, Eugene and Gorton Carruth, 1982).

In a nutshell, the Journal talks about Cass Master's frightful experience of his companion's suicide which Mastern brought on by his relationship with his companion's wife, and which thus prompted the offering endlessly of the negro cleaning specialist, Phebe.

Cass gains from his experience that all men including himself are interrelated by Time as far as the swells created by their activities in the pool of Time and, accordingly, he needs to impart the trouble of obligation and blame with others. Warren beautifully typifies' this "moral in the focal allegory of the novel.

... (cass) learned that the world is like an enormous spider web and if you touch it, however lightly, at any point, the vibration ripples to, the remotest perimeter and the drowsy spider feels the tingle and is drowsy no more but springs out to fling the gossamer coils about you who have touched the web and then injects the blank numbing poison under your hide. It does not matter whether or not you meant to brush the web of things. Your happy foot or your gay wing may have brushed it ever so lightly, but what happens always happens and there is the spider bearded black and with his great faceted eyes glittering like mirrors, in the sun, or like God's eyes and the fangs dripping.⁷

To Jack who fails to offer the feeling of the interrelating and bringing together nature of time as

a result of his dismissal of the past, the dialogues in Cass' Journal

... could only be words to him, for to him the world then was simply an accumulation of items, odds and ends of things like the broken and misused and dust- shrouded things gathered in a garret. Or it was a flux of things before his eyes [or behind his eyes] and one thing had nothing to do, in the end, with anything else.⁸

As Charles Bohner says, Jack "thinks that its significance just when he sees it in the more extensive point of view gave by his second research project,"⁹ of looking for the "proof of debasement in the life of Judge Irwin,"¹⁰ However, Jack's disappointment in the early stages to understand the ethical feeling of Cass Mastern's history disheartens him and he withdraws from the world and time. Jack's retreat is typically communicated in his "Extraordinary Sleep" (Patrick).

He laid aside the Journal and entered upon one of the periods of the Great Sleep. He would come home in the evening, and because he knew that he could not work he would go to bed immediately. He would sleep twelve hours, fourteen hours, fifteen hours, feeling himself, while asleep, plunge deeper and deeper into sleep like a diver grouping downward into dark water feeling for something which may be there and which would glitter if there were any light in the depth, but there is not any light.¹¹

Willie, the Governor, first enters legislative issues as a visionary with an enthusiasm to evacuate debasement. However consequently he gets to be degenerate, power tipsy, a pioneer and a Machiavelli via disposing of the past and its conventional qualities. Despite the fact that Jack is not persuaded of Willie's logic of making great out of malice, he turns into Willie's 'private criminologist in light of the fact that to careless Jack, Willie, a man of

activity, appears a man of direction (Wood, Edwin Thomas, 1984).

At the point when Judge Irwin declines to help, Willie requests Jack to scrape out some earth from Irwin's life, Jack and Willie face one another on the inquiry of the genuineness of the judge. Jack does not concur with Willie's conviction that

... man is conceived in sin and born in corruption and he passes from the stink of the didie to the stench of the shroud. There is always something.¹²

Jack in his standard method for being oblivious of vibrations that include obligation attempts the "instance of upright Judge" who had been a symbol of his adolescence "to refute Stark's hypothesis that there is confirmation of detestable in the life of each man."¹³ But amazingly and stun, Jack finds that the Judge had once acknowledged a pay off, and Governor Stanton (father of Adam and Anna Stantons) secured the Judge. Jack's deception about the Judge's uprightness is broken. As Willie's conviction about liberated intelligence seems genuine, Jack's interest for Willie, a man of activity, develops and he stays not interested in the advancement of Willie's debasement. At the point when Willie requests Jack to get him Adam Stanton, the uncompromising visionary, to head the healing facility which Willie needs to shield from corrupt and pollution. Jack utilizes the confirmation of Governor Stanton-s join with the Judge's debasement, as an intends to smash Anne's and Adam's fine father-picture and power Adam into tolerating the directorship. Be that as it may, Jack does not promptly confront the Judge with the proof (photograph details) of defilement. Jack's unendurable revelation he could call his own woman love, Anne Stanton, turning into Willie's paramour drives him into the West from where he comes back with another guiltlessness – his confidence in "Extraordinary Twitch", which clears him he could call his own obligation regarding

what has transpired. Jack feels that he is double-crossed by both past and the present spoke to by his solid any expectation of Anne's unwaveringness and Willie Stark separately. We may note that Jack unreasonably anticipates that Anne will be devoted when his own particular unwillingness to disregard her virginity blinds him to time and change, and makes him exceptionally ambivalent about wedding her. Anne, then again, is not drawn towards him in view of his purposeless life (Metress, Christopher, 1996).

Now, in spite of what has happened to him, Jack, as ordered by Willie, faces Judge Irwin with the evidence (Photostats) of corruption to force the Judge to influence MacMurfee who is now demanding Willie's Senate-seat as a cost for silencing Tom's (Willie's son) sex-scandal. Jack forces Irwin to realise that in order to save himself from disgrace he should disgrace himself by supporting Willie. But though Irwin admits his guilt, he refuses to support Willie.

Later, Jack is awakened by his mother's "Bright, beautiful, silvery, soprano scream,"¹⁴ and is shocked when she announces Irwin's suicide and reveals "that it has been his fault that his father has committed suicide."¹⁵ Jack now discovers that not Elis Burden but Irwin is his father.

However, the conspicuous in-pact of the scream is that it totally disintegrates Jack's whole conception of his paternity and himself. The scream, in fact, signalizes Jack's rebirth" It has revealed the truth about his paternity which his mother had suppressed for long, and destroys his conception of his mother as a woman of vanity and as one without heart. Now it reveals to him his mother's capacity for love. Further, the scream disintegrates his conception of his father as a weak scholarly Attorney, and makes him find in Judge Irwin a father he can accept. Jack happily swaps the weak father for the strong Judge whom he always liked and who had been more of a father to him than Elis Burden. Thus, the scream

gives Jack a new mother and a new father, both of whom he can accept (National Book Foundation, 2012).

Now Jack is a different man because in accepting his mother he has regained the past he had rejected before and through his mother's love he has realized that the past he has rejected is not tainted but is lovable. Jack says:

She gave me a new picture of herself and that meant, in the end, a new picture of the world ... And that meant that my mother gave me back the past. I could now accept the past which I had before felt was tainted and horrible. I could accept the past ... and be at peace with myself.¹⁶

Here it may be noted that this "peace" that Jack achieves "contrasts with the unresolved conflicts of the earlier novels."¹⁷ Thus through "his acceptance of his personal past and his family Jack attains a worthy tradition,"¹⁸ that gives him a purposeful and responsible life. With the recovery of the past in the mother's scream, Jack has now a certainty of the present for a determined future. Jack says, "if you could accept the past you might hope for the future, for only out of the past can you make the future."¹⁹ Jack now understands the meaning of Cass Mastern's web. He "finds that the web operates in his own life as it had in Cass Mastern's," in that the vibration of his detective work rippled in the pool of time causing the Judge's suicide; and like Cass he "had not meant to touch the web, but it had vibrated to the remotest perimeter.

Jack further discovers that as he did in his father's case, he has also unawares "set the events in motion which culminate in the Boss's own death.", Thus, here too, Jack finds the web operating and though "he had not meant to touch the web it had vibrated to the remotest perimeter" causing Willie's assassination (Robert Penn Warren, 2013).

He comes to see that "past comprises with the present a universal whole. It is the fate of men to be caught in an evil which makes them, past and present, brothers. With philosophical awareness of the vibration of an act in the web of time, Jack further says that "reality is not a function of the event as event, but of the relationship of that event

to past and future events."In other Words the "... meaning is never in the event but in the motion through event. Jack understands the Worth of history, and the burden of responsibility and guilt, preparing the way for salt, knowledge (The Penn Warren, 2014). The web-education has integrated Jack's life by giving him the sense of the past and the future participating in the present, and now, matured and chastened, Jack accepts Anne with love wrung from his mother's scream and enter, "convulsion of the world, out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time."

Corruption and Innocence of the Protagonist

Jack Burden narrates the story of Willie Stark. Jack, a newspaperman sent by his editor to get the lowdown on the unknown Willie, becomes Willie's friend, teacher, chronicler, and pupil. Willie Stark, often seen as a barely fictional portrayal of Huey Long, is the stereotypical southern demagogue,²⁰ using his political power to accumulate benefits for himself and his political allies. Even if this view of Willie Stark is true as far as it goes, it does not go far enough. Willie Stark is not a mindless political shark, ingesting whatever smaller fish happen to swim in his way—he is a politician with a philosophy, and that philosophy provides the foundation for the action of the novel (Baumbach, Jonathan. 1987)

Willie is an idealist turned utilitarian whose serious career in politics began with an accident. As the County Treasurer of Mason County, Willie made the mistake of favoring the low bid on a school construction project,²¹ a bid that would involve hiring Blacks to work on the construction crews. Willie had gotten his job as County Treasurer because he was supported by the Chairman of the County Commission, Dolph Pillsbury. But the stir Willie caused by supporting the low bid for a school construction project, a bid not supported by the Chairman and the rest of the County Commission, cost his wife Lucy her teaching job, for she was fired, and cost Willie his position when he was defeated in his bid for re-election.

After Willie's electoral defeat, the Commission awarded the school contract to a high bidder, who proceeded to cut corners and use inferior materials in the construction. During a fire

drill at the school, the emergency escape collapsed, killing three children in the accident. One consequence of this accident was Willie's political resurrection. The accident provided Willie with a local identity as a politician who stood for honesty and against corruption. As one of the grieving parents cried at the funeral, "Oh, God, I am punished for accepting iniquity and voting against an honest man." (Blair, John, 65. 1993) Willie became known as that rarity among men, an honest politician.

Willie's reputation for honesty led him into his first race for governor. His honesty and small-town background made him the perfect tool for the urban (Harrison) machine to use to split the rural vote and to keep the governorship away from a rural boss. Willie did not make a deal with the Harrison people—he simply believed Harrison's crony Tiny Duffy when Duffy appealed to his political ideals and told him that he was the saviour of the state (Bloom, Harold. 1987).

Willie's honesty and naïveté were slowly replaced by a more realistic or cynical view of life. Willie does not move to this philosophy immediately, but he slides into it over the course of the novel. The evolution of Willie's philosophy can be seen in his campaign speeches, in the development of his sense of Realpolitik, and in his reflections on his political education. During his first campaign for governor, his speeches were a combination of "facts and figures on the one hand" and of "fine sentiments on the other hand." These sentiments, according to Jack Burden, were "a faint echo, somewhat dulled by time, of the quotations copied out in the ragged, boyish hand in the big ledger" (69) Willie (1999) had kept as a student.

Willie's speech changed dramatically when he learned—not that he would lose the race for governor, for he had already figured that out on his own—that he had been gulled into entering the race in order to split "McMurfee's hick vote" and thus ensure Harrison's reelection. His message then became immediate and simple: "Whatever a hick wants he's got to do for himself." (93) Willie withdrew from the sham race and campaigned for his former opponent McMurfee, arguing that the hick vote should show its strength by electing

McMurfee and holding him accountable: "Yeah, nail him up if he don't deliver. Hand me the hammer and I'll nail him."²²

Willie addressed the crowds he spoke to as "Friends, red-necks, suckers, and fellow hicks," (94) and delivered his straightforward message in unmistakable terms: "You are a hick and nobody ever helped a hick but the hick himself. Up there in town they won't help you. It is up to you and God, and God helps those who help themselves." (Blotner, Joseph. 1966, 95)

Willie's withdrawal and subsequent support helped McMurfee win the election, but Willie had not surrendered. He entered the next gubernatorial primary after McMurfee's first term and unleashed his newfound populism. As Jack Burden put it, "It wasn't a primary. It was hell among the yearlings and the Charge of the Light Brigade and Saturday night in the back room of Casey's saloon rolled into one, and when the smoke cleared away not a picture still hung on the walls. And there wasn't any Democratic party. There was just Willie...." (97) Willie was elected Governor in 1930. He was aided by Hugh Miller, a man with "the eyes of a dreamer" and with "clean hands, pure heart, and no political past." Miller was to be Attorney General of the state, and represented the victory of clean government over corrupt practices—business-as-usual political favoritism.

Despite this outer show of clean government, Willie's campaign and administration maintained some of the corrupt practices of his opponents. His political realism, an understanding of the need to make deals, can be seen in the fact that behind the scenes he was willing to accept assistance from many of Joe Harrison's former supporters. It is further seen when Hugh Miller decides he must resign as Attorney General because Willie is protecting the State Auditor from prosecution. From Willie's standpoint, State Auditor Byram White is just a tool to be used, like a calculator. (136) From Willie's perspective, "You got to use what you've got. You got to use fellows like Byram, and Tiny Duffy, and that scum down in the Legislature. You can't make bricks without straw, and most of the time all the straw you got is secondhand straw from the cowpen. And if you

think you can make it any different, you're crazy as a hoot owl." When Miller refuses to reconsider his resignation, Willie tells him, "You're leaving me all alone with the sons-of-bitches. Mine and the other fellow's."²³

Willie's strategic use of "the sons of bitches," however, does not wholly obscure his earlier commitment to good government. The final, and greatest, legacy of his administration will be the hospital he plans to build.²⁴ Willie tells Jack that as soon as he consolidates power in the legislature he is going to build a hospital.

I'm going to build me the God-damnedest, biggest, chromium-platedest, formaldehyde stinkingest free hospital and health center the All-Father ever let live. Boy, I tell you, I'm going to have a cage of canaries in every room that can sing Italian grand opera and there ain't going to be a nurse hasn't won a beauty contest at Atlantic City and every bedpan will be eighteen-carat gold and by God, every bedpan will have a Swiss musicbox attachment to play "Turkey in the Straw" or "The Sextet from Lucia," take your choice (Roosevelt, Franklin D. 1938).

Willie is determined to keep this hospital and clinic free from the dirty hands that have infiltrated the rest of his administration. Tiny Duffy, the Lieutenant Governor, wants to throw the contract to Gummy Larson, MacMurfee's biggest backer, to buy his support. Finally Willie is forced to make a deal with Larson, but threatens Larson not to attempt to cut corners in construction methods. "Yeah, it's arranged, but you—you leave one window latch off, you leave one piece of iron out of that concrete, you put in one extra teaspoon of sand, you chip one piece of marble, and by God—by God—I'll rip you open." At this point Willie still thinks of the hospital as his. After his son Tom Stark is hurt in a football accident, and Willie decides to name the hospital after Tom, he reneges on the deal with Gummy Larson. Willie has become even more determined that the hospital will be built without the muck of dirty hands. At this point it becomes ever more critical to Willie to engage the good doctor, Adam Stanton, in his hospital enterprise.²⁵

Willie's evolution is also in evidence in his own account of his political education. Looking back

on his education, Willie captured his movement from simple innocence to Realpolitik. Willie laughed about his preparation for the bar examination.

"I sure was a fool," Willie said to me once, talking about those times, "I thought you had really to learn all that stuff. I thought they meant for you to learn law. Hell, I got down to that bar examination and I looked at the questions and I nearly busted out laughing. Me sitting up there bearing down on those books, and then they gave me those little crappy questions. A corn-field nigger could have answered them if he'd been able to spell. I ought to have looked twice at some of the lawyers I'd seen and I'd have known a half-wit could pass it. But, oh, no, I was hell-bent on learning me some law." (Shepherd, Allen. 1987).

On another occasion Willie showed Jack Burden his American history book and said, "I durn near memorized every durn word in it. I could name you every name. I could name you every date." But, Willie concluded, "the fellow that wrote it didn't know a God-damned thing. About how things were. He didn't know a thing. I bet things were just like they are now. A lot of folks wrassling around."

"A lot of folks wrassling around" is a description not only of Willie's understanding of politics, but of morality also. "Good with a capital G," Willie tells Adam Stanton, is made up by man as he goes along.²⁶ Willie's view of the good is evolutionary in nature.

When your great-great-grandpappy climbed down out of the tree, he didn't have any more notion of good or bad, or right or wrong, than the hoot owl that stayed up in the tree. Well, he climbed down and he began to make Good up as he went along. He made up what he needed to do business, Doc. And what he made up and got everybody to mirate on as good and right was always just a couple of jumps behind what he needed to do business on. That's why things change, Doc. Because what folks claim is right is always just a couple of jumps short of what they need to do business. Now an individual, one fellow, he will stop doing business because he's got a notion of what is right, and he is a hero. But folks in general, which is society, Doc, is never going to stop doing business. Society is just going to cook up a new notion of what

is right. Society is sure not ever going to commit suicide. At least, not that way and of a purpose (Tocqueville, Alexis. 1979).

Willie's view of the law is much like his view of morality. When Hugh Miller tells Willie that he is resigning, Willie says that the law is "like a single-bed blanket on a double bed and three folks in the bed and a cold night.... The law is always too short and too tight for growing humankind. The best you can do is do something and then make up some law to fit and by the time that law gets on the books you would have done something different." The law, too, must be made up as we go along, according to Willie, and the law always seems to be a step behind our needs (Zuckert, Catherine. 1990).

CONCLUSION

Based on his studious efforts to avoid knowing, Jack is able to describe himself variously as "a piece of furniture" a "hired hand" and an "office boy." He is able to carry out assigned tasks without remorse or even pangs of conscience because he is able to block from his field of vision knowledge about the origins or impact of the items that he happens to be working on at the time.

Jack uses his principle of ignorant happiness to give himself what today might be called "plausible deniability," but this runs counter to his deeper inclination, the necessity to know. These two inclinations run headlong into each other in "The Case of the Upright Judge." This case eventually leads Jack Burden to an understanding of human responsibility and to an understanding of the necessity of understanding one's past. As Jack puts it, "if you could accept the past you might hope for the future, for only out of the past can you make the future."

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